

RELIGION, POLITICS, AND GENDER: CHILDBIRTH IMAGES IN EDO JAPAN

by

Jung Hui Kim

BA, Seoul National University, 2002

MA, University of Pittsburgh, 2010

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of the Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2018

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

THE KENNETH P. DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This dissertation was presented

by

Jung Hui Kim

It was defended on

March 30, 2018

and approved by

Katheryn M. Linduff, Professor Emerita, History of Art and Architecture

Barbara McCloskey, Professor, History of Art and Architecture

Gabriella Luckas, Professor, Anthropology

Dissertation Advisor: Karen Gerhart, Professor, History of Art and Architecture

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This dissertation explores birth imagery in Edo Japan (1608-1868) by focusing on how cultural and socio-political conditions affect the ways of representing childbirth. Traditionally, birth scenes printed in *jokunsho* (女訓書, female educational books) have been regarded simply as supplementary illustrations that record visual aspects of birth practices. As the first comprehensive study of this subject, my dissertation provides a detailed visual analysis of the iconographical changes in birth scenes, which places Edo birth imagery in the socio-historical context in which it was produced. Central to the discussion are two iconographic issues. First, from the medieval to Edo periods, the emphasis in birth scenes shifted from the moment of giving birth to the post-partum care. Second, the mother figure as a central player in birthing events gradually disappeared from later Edo birth imagery; and the scene of the infant's first bath took center stage. By taking an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates studies of religion, demography, gender, and visual culture, my dissertation demonstrates that such specific transformations are closely associated with political, ideological and cultural factors, such as the foundation of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the promotion of Confucian ideology, population crisis and the regulation of local government over birthing bodies, and the enactment of the Kansei reforms and the reinforcement of conservative cultural policy. Through these in-depth

analyses, this dissertation addresses three main research questions: how birth imagery represents the diverse social values invested in the event of childbirth, how the shift of cultural paradigms changes the way of depicting childbirth, and how birth imagery shapes people's perception of childbirth and actively functions as a means to promote the authority of ideology.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to my advisor Professor Karen M. Gerhart for her steadfast support for this dissertation from its inception to its completion. She guided me through this long process with wise counsel and incredible patience. I also thank Professors Katheryn M. Linduff and Barbara McCloskey for their moral support and invaluable advice on my draft. Special thanks go to Professor Gabriella Lukacs, who generously shared her knowledge and time.

My appreciation extends to others who supported me in various ways during my graduate years at the University of Pittsburgh. Professor Oshimo Junzo kindly helped me translate difficult documents in Japanese. Hiroyuki Good and Yu-Lien Lotus Liu at the East Asian Library assisted me with finding important primary materials. The lively discussions at the *Women, Rites, and Objects in Pre-Modern Japan Workshop* helped improve the argument of my dissertation. I wish to thank Professors Patricia Fister, Hank Glassman, and Naoko Gunji for their comments on my paper.

Generous fellowships and grants enabled my study at the University of Pittsburgh and provided substantial support for my dissertation project. With the School of Art and Sciences of the University of Pittsburgh Scholarships, I was able to take courses in art history and other disciplines, which laid the foundation for my research. Japan Iron and Steel Federation/Mitsubishi Foundation Fellowships and Dietrich Summer Funds granted me valuable time to focus on writing this dissertation. Friends of Frick Fine Arts and Wilkins Travel Funds, Dean's Summer Research Fund Grants, Japan Studies Graduate Students Conference

Participation Grant, and Japan Studies Doctoral Research Grant allowed me to do on-site research in Japan and to present papers at conferences.

My deep gratitude also goes to my teachers at Seoul National University. I was privileged to study with Professors Youngna Kim, Hwi-joon Ahn and Juhyung Rhi, whose lectures and seminars sparked my enthusiasm for art history. Without Professor Chin-Sung Chang's encouragement, I would not have thought to continue my study in the United States. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Soyoung Lee for the invaluable experience at the Department of Asian Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

I am grateful for the camaraderie that Susan Zitterbart, Sara Sumpter, Shalmit Bejarano, Morishima Yuki, Elizabeth Self, Elizabeth Morrissey, and Carolyn Wargula have shown me. Pittsburgh became my second home thanks to the friendship of Alexandra Oliver, Lihui Dong, Brianne Cohen, Saskia Beranek, Rachel Miller, Jennifer Donnelly, Amy Cymbala, and many others. My appreciation also goes to my dear friends, Jungeun Lee, Seokwon Choi, Su Young Choi, and Heeryoon Shin for their emotional support. Without Young-Ah Rho and Jaejin Lee, who treated me like family, I would not have been able to hold up through one of the most difficult years of dissertation writing.

I also thank my parents-in-law, Yongsoo Park and Junghee Oh, for always encouraging me to continue my study. I am indebted to my late grandparents, Sungdae Kim and Wonyi Choo, who instilled in me the love of the arts and learning. My sister, Jungmyeong Kim, did more than her fair share in taking care of my parents for many years. Words cannot describe my love and appreciation for my parents, Soohee and Changsoo Kim. My mother frequently visited this foreign land to take care of my son whenever I needed large blocks of time to make progress in research and writing, and my father had to endure months of her absence. I also recognize the

role of my son, Matteo Park, in shaping the idea of this dissertation. The experience of having Matteo led to the realization of the complexities of motherhood and drew me to the imagery of childbirth. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Jeongho Park, with love and gratitude. Jeongho has been by my side at every stage of my graduate work. From taking care of Matteo to reading and commenting on my drafts, to cheering me up on unproductive days, his support was crucial to the completion of this dissertation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In every culture, childbirth is an essential life event that assures the continuation of a household and maintains society. Regardless of its anthropologically-universal nature, however, the culture of childbirth and reproduction takes on multifarious dimensions depending on its context.

Historical moment and geographical location often play significant roles in shaping different practices surrounding birth. Class and religion also function as key factors in the formation of diverse birth customs. It is needless to say that gender and medical knowledge are also main issues to be addressed when dealing with the history of childbirth.

In other words, childbirth is located at the intersection of various social values – religion, class, ideology, and gender. Numerous studies in different disciplines have examined its complex aspects and attempted to define the socio-historical meaning of birth, as well as elucidate its cultural distinctiveness.¹ Building on such a foundation, my dissertation explores birth imagery in Edo Japan (1608-1868) by focusing on how birth scenes represent the diverse social values

¹ There are countless studies on childbirth. Although being different disciplines from art history, they guided me to formulate essential thoughts and arguments for my research subject. I will mention them throughout my dissertation. The studies that were not cited in this dissertation but provided crucial ideas are as follows: Charlotte Furth, “Concepts of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infancy in Ching Dynasty China,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 46, no. 1 (1987), 7-35; Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Suzuki Nanami, *Shussan no rekishi jinruigaku: sanba sekai no kaitai kara shizen shussan undō he* (Tōkyō: Shinyōsha, 1997); Hasegawa Mayuho. *Osan isu e no tabi: mono to karada no rekishi jinruigaku* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 2004).

invested in the event of childbirth and the power struggles among them. Furthermore, my study examines not only how birth imagery reflects the shift of religious, social, and cultural paradigms but also how changes in social values and institutions affected ways of perceiving and depicting childbirth.² In so doing, my study analyzes the ways in which birth imagery played a role in shaping people's perception of childbirth and thus how it functions as an active means to claim and promote the authority of ideology in the social order. My research is the first comprehensive study to examine the purpose and meaning of Edo birth imagery from an art historical perspective that involves broader interdisciplinary issues, such as gender study, demography, anthropology, religion, and material culture.

1.1 RESEARCH SUBJECT: *JOKUNSHO* AND PRINTED MATERIALS

Most Edo-period birth images were published as woodblock prints, including female educational books (*jokunsho*, 女訓書), picture books (*ehon*, 絵本), comic books (*kibyōshi*, 黄表紙), and obstetrical books. Although there are some cases found in other genres, including album paintings, handscrolls, and even Buddhist paintings, most birth imagery is found in printed materials commercially produced for public circulation.

This dissertation concentrates primarily on birth images published in '*jokunsho*.'

Marriage in the Edo period was under the strong ideological influence of Confucianism. The

² Childbirth cannot be explained or defined only with the actual act of giving birth to a baby. It indicates the entire reproductive process that encompasses everything from pregnancy to prenatal preparation to delivery to postpartum care for mother and baby. Likewise, in this dissertation I use the word 'birth imagery' in a comprehensive manner. It includes all types of birth-related depictions from prenatal arrangement to parturition to postpartum recovery. I will even consider infanticide scenes as birth imagery, too.

goal of marriage was to produce a child, especially a male heir, and therefore, the purpose of sex in marriage was to give birth to children. The failure to produce an heir was considered one of the seven legal reasons (*shichikyo*, 七去) for which the husband could ask his wife for a divorce. In this social atmosphere, the foremost objective of a married woman was to secure her position in her husband's family by having a healthy baby. Mothers usually depended on private and informal ways to obtain information and advice associated with pregnancy and childbirth. In addition to folk wisdom orally transmitted from elder women, *jokunsho* played a central role in providing the necessary skills and knowledge for a successful pregnancy and safe delivery.³

Jokunsho, which first emerged around the late seventeenth century, were widely disseminated until mid-nineteenth centuries.⁴ According to *Compilation of Women's Literature of the Edo Period* (*Edo jidai josei bunko*, 江戸時代女性文庫), over two hundred *jokunsho* were published under different names.⁵ While they varied in format and content to meet the diverse needs of their audience, a majority of them dealt with pregnancy and birth-related issues as standard components.

³ Many scholars have conducted research to illuminate what the lives of women were like in the Edo period. See Marcia Yonemoto, *The Problem of Women in Early Modern Japan* (California: University of California Press, 2016); Yamakawa Kikue, *Women of the Mito Domain – Recollections of Samurai Family Life* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1992); Anne Walthall, "The Life Cycle of Farm Women in Tokugawa Japan." In *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1991), 42-70; Noriko Sugano, "State Indoctrination of Filial Piety in Tokugawa Japan – Sons and Daughters in the Official Records of Filial Piety," *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, eds. Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003), 170-189.

⁴ According to Joshua Mostow, words, such as *joshō* or *nyōshō* (女書), that refer to 'women's books' began to be included in booksellers' lists by 1670. Joshua Mostow, "Illustrated Classical Texts for Women in the Edo Period," in *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan*, eds. P.F. Kornicki, Mara Patessio, and G.G. Rowley (Ann Arbor, 2010), 63.

⁵ *Edo jidai josei bunko* consists of one hundred volumes. It compiled literary works, encyclopedias, and almanacs geared toward girls and young women. The selected works were originally published between 1649 and 1847. Reproductions of original manuscripts are also included. Some examples are only text-based, but many of them are accompanied with a wealth of illustrations. After the first publication of one hundred volumes of *Edo jidai josei bunko* from 1994 to 1998, the works left out in the previous series were newly collected under the title of *Edo jidai josei bunko. Hoi: Nyohitsu tehonrui*. Aikawa Yoneshige, *Edo jidai josei bunko*, 100 vols. (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1994-1998); Koizumi Yoshinaga, *Edo jidai josei bunko. Hoi: Nyohitsu tehonrui*. 12 vols. (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1999-2000).

Saitō Junkichi has meticulously analyzed the contents of over forty *jokunsho* published from the mid-seventeenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries and enumerated the kinds of reproductive issues that were included and emphasized. According to Saito's research, *jokunsho* prescribed a wide range of birth-related matters related to each stage of pregnancy. Beginning with instructions on how to get pregnant and confirm pregnancy, the texts included a discussion of popular beliefs, such as the way to transform the gender of the fetus and to give birth to a son. A long list of precautions covered health cultivation and prenatal education. Dietary habits, behavior, and even the emotions of the expectant mother were to be controlled according to the instructions in *jokunsho*.⁶

Jokunsho contains numerous birth-related illustrations particularly useful in helping women understand the complicated process of childbirth, which would have been difficult to follow if presented only in text. Previous studies of childbirth have centered on the textual analysis of *jokunsho*, as seen in the research of Saitō, and paid relatively little attention to the accompanying images. My dissertation fills this gap by analyzing the visual illustrations and the iconographical changes represented in various types of birth scenes of *jokunsho*.

In addition to *jokunsho*, there are other 'printed materials,' such as picture books (*ehon*, 絵本), comic books (*kibyōshi*, 黄表紙), ukiyo-e prints, that include birth scenes. Although these are not the main subject of this dissertation, I will mention or address examples from them when analyzing the birth imagery contained in *jokunsho*. In terms of format, *ehon* (picture book) simply refers to a volume with illustrations in woodblock prints. In a narrow sense, picture books target young boys and girls. In terms of content, they deal with didactic fables featuring

⁶ Saitō Junkichi, "Edo jidai no katei kyōiku (II): shussan to taikyō," *Nihon shigaku kyōiku kenkyūjo kiyō*, vol. 22, no. 1 (1986), 419-454.

anthropomorphic characters that appeal to children. Many of the stories are associated with a person's entire life, oftentimes including scenes of wedding ceremonies and childbirth. *Kibyōshi* (comic books) are usually composed of three ten-page volumes.⁷ Their audience, contrary to the case of *ehon*, was mainly educated male adults. Most of them are devoted to satirical stories. *Kibyōshi* authors lampoon political situations such as maladministration cases of the Tokugawa regime and power struggle between two influential political leaders. Some works deride even Neo-Confucianism. *Kibyōshi* contain a large number of illustrations that increase their sarcastic effect. Birth scenes usually appear in the section in which the birth of the main character of the story is narrated.

Despite their diversity in audience and content, representations of childbirth in these printed materials are similar to those in *jokunsho*. In my opinion, the iconography of Edo birth imagery seems to be first formed in the genre of *jokunsho* and then adopted in books of other genres. It can be easily assumed that the books written about women's reproductive issues needed the illustrations of birth scenes the most. Many birth images that I examined from *ehon*, *kibyōshi*, and *ukiyoe* were produced after the mid-eighteenth century, which is significantly later than the earliest *jokunsho*, published in the early seventeenth century. We can assume, therefore, that the creators of *ehon* and *kibyōshi* picked up the iconography of birth imagery that had already been established earlier. It seems highly possible if we consider that the publishers, writers, carvers, and artists who worked in the publishing industry were usually engaged in the production of several different genres of printed materials at the same time. Taking this into consideration, my dissertation puts all of the birth images published in *jokunsho*, *ehon*, and

⁷ The name of *kibyōshi* comes from their yellow-back covers.

kibyōshi in the same ‘printed materials’ category and examines the social and cultural context of the Edo period in which they were produced.

1.2 CULTURAL BACKDROP: PRINTING INDUSTRY AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION

We need to ask, then what are the historical contexts that these ‘printed materials’ share? More specifically, what is the general cultural backdrop against which the birth imagery of the Edo period was produced, disseminated, and accepted? The issues regarding ‘printed materials’ in the Edo period have thus far been discussed in conjunction with the publishing boom during the Genroku era (元禄, 1688-1704). As Mary Elizabeth Berry shows in her imagined story about a senior clerk of a silk cloth retail store in Kyoto, who visits the store’s Edo branch for the first time, printed books were so ubiquitous in everyday life by the late eighteenth century that people were able to easily obtain books on almost any topic. If we were the senior clerk facing his first trip to the capital city, our top priority would be to examine the entries associated with ‘Travel’ and ‘Famous Places’ published in bookseller’s catalogues, such as *A Catalogue of Publications for Public Utility* (*Kōeki shojaku mokuroku*, 公益書籍目録, 1692). According to Berry, this catalogue has over seven thousand book titles under forty-six categories.⁸

Matthias Hayek and Annick Horiuchi provide more accurate numbers in their research. In 1670, the titles of printed books amounted to 3,866 and in about 20 years the number almost doubled, reaching 7,181. The increase does not simply indicate the quantitative growth of the

⁸ Mary Elizabeth Berry, “A Traveling Clerk Goes to the Bookstores,” *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and California: University of California Press, 2006), 1-12.

publishing industry. It also implies several historical changes of significance. As Hayek and Horiuchi point out, the development of the publishing industry correlates with the formation of a ‘knowledge market,’ which resulted from the rising thirst for knowledge among the population regardless of class and regional background. The ‘knowledge market’ circulated myriad types of information ranging from practical and educational, such as vocational ability, social decorum depending on their class, and writing skills for children, to more recreational ones, such as lists of kabuki plays and actors and commentaries on ancient classical novels. Knowledge of elite culture and their lifestyle was also one of the favorite types of information that was always in high demand.⁹ All this valuable information was distributed as ‘printed materials’ or ‘printed books,’ with various titles such as “mirrors (*kagami*, 鑑),” “records of treasures (*chōhōki*, 重宝記),” “admonitions (*kun*, 訓),” “fabrics (*ori*, 織),” and “storehouses (*kura* 蔵).”¹⁰

As one of the major elements that factored into the wide circulation of printed materials, the educational aspirations of rising-middle class families for their children should be mentioned.¹¹ It is not difficult to imagine that among the readership were the parents of young

⁹ Matthias Hayek and Annick Horiuchi, “Editor’s Introduction,” *Listen, Copy, Read: Popular Learning in Early Modern Japan*, eds. Matthias Hayek and Annick Horiuchi (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 1-18. For more information on the publishing industry and culture of the Edo period, see Konta Yōzō, *Edo no hon’yasan: kinsei bunkashi no sokumen*, (Tokyo: Heibonsa, 1977).

¹⁰ In his article, Michael Kinski examines how the printed materials of the Edo Japan can be categorized and how they were named depending on their contents. See Michael Kinski, “Treasure Boxes, Fabrics, and Mirrors: On the Contents and the Classification of Popular Encyclopedias from Early Modern Japan,” *Listen, Copy, Read: Popular Learning in Early Modern Japan*, eds. Matthias Hayek and Annick Horiuchi (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 70-88.

¹¹ Many scholars have pointed out that behind this educational aspiration are the desire for a better social status and the longing for the taste and lifestyle of the upper class. Young women and girls from wealthy merchants, well-off farmers, and low-ranking samurai families were expected to go into service at high-ranking samurai and noble households. Parents believed that being employed at a daimyo’s mansion would increase the possibility for their daughters to go beyond the bounds of their class and would possibly guarantee a successful marriage closer to the world of the nobility. Scholars such as Toshio Yokoyama define this social phenomenon as “kuge-fication” and “samurai-zation.” There have been numerous studies on the dissemination of *jokunsho* and the socio-cultural significance of female education. For more information, see below; Joshua Mostow, 59; P. R. Dore, “The Education of Women,” in *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 67; Martha C. Tocco, “Norms and Texts for Women’s Education in Tokugawa Japan,” in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, eds. Dorothy Ko, Jahyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley, Los

girls and an active female audience, who looked for general information associated with women's education or special expertise related to pregnancy and childbirth. If we were parents who cared about education for daughters, we would probably look up the catalogues associated with '*jokunsho*' first, hoping that the books listed in '*jokunsho*' would help their daughters gain intellectual refinement and cultural capital, or the essential qualities that make a good mother and wife. Considering that the education of women at the time was mostly carried out at home, the presence of '*jokunsho*,' as the only source that shaped women's awareness of themselves and the world around them, cannot be underestimated.

Likewise, parents of young women and girls believed that knowledge related to births, as prescribed in '*jokunsho*,' contained the cultural authority they desired to help mold their daughters' futures. Recognizing the high demand and influence of '*jokunsho*,' social institutions surrounding the event of childbirth intended to make use of these printed materials to propagate the dominant ideology that they supported. Female audiences, therefore, ultimately took in birth-related information laden with the Confucian messages written by male Confucian authors. In other words, birth imagery circulating in late seventeenth century 'knowledge market' was never value-neutral. Rather, it was regarded as a carrier of ideology—a perspective of birth imagery that will be maintained throughout this dissertation.

Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003), 211; Shibukawa Hisako, "Jokunsho to joshikyōiku – kinsei joshi kyōiku eno ichi kosatsu," *Ochanomizu joshi daigaku jinbunkagakukiyo*, vol. 14 (1961), 160; Toshio Yokoyama, "In Quest of Civility: Conspicuous Uses of Household Encyclopedias in Nineteenth-Century Japan," *Zinbun*, no. 34 (1999), 200; Bettina Gramlich-Oka, "A Father's Advice: Confucian Cultivation for Women in the Late Eighteenth Century." *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan*, eds. P.F. Kornicki, Mara Patessio, and G.G. Rowley (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 2010), 123-139; Peter F. Kornick, "Women, Education, Literacy," *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan*, ed. P. Kornick, M. Patessio and G.G. Rowley (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003), 7-38; Ōishi Mababu, *Edo no Kyōikuryoku, kindai nihon no chiteki kiban* (Tokyo, Tokyo gakugei daigaku shuppankai, 2007); Richard Rubiger, *Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Regardless of its potential as a research subject, relatively little attention has been paid to birth imagery in Japan. A few scholars carried out brief studies on birth imagery of the medieval period, but Edo birth images have been hardly discussed at all in the discipline of art history. In general, birth images were more often dealt with by experts from other fields such as ethnology and history, who have begun to study childbirth as a scholarly topic much earlier than art history.

The pioneers who took an academic approach to childbirth and birth images were folk ethnologists, mainly disciples of Yanagita Kunio (柳田国男, 1875-1962), the father of Japanese ethnology. Dominating the postwar discourse, these men conducted nationwide field research on birth practices with government support.¹² The result of the investigation played a central role in popularizing certain traditional birth-related rituals and concepts such as *obiwai* (帯祝い, a ceremony for wearing a pregnancy wrap), *satogaeri* (里帰り), the practice of a pregnant woman returning to her parents' home for delivery), *koshiki otoshi* (甑落とし, dropping a rice steamer), *ubuya* (産屋, birthing hut), and *kegare* (穢れ; defilement caused by female blood). Their ethnological research focus was geared primarily toward elucidating what types of folk practices

¹² This nationwide field research resulted in the compilation of *Nihon minzoku chizu* (日本民俗地図) consisting of eight volumes. *Nihon minzoku chizu* was published by *Bunkachō* (文化庁) from 1969 to 1988. The influence of the folkloristic attitude on the discourse regarding pregnancy and childbirth is well explained in Hitomi Tonomura's article, "Birth-giving and Avoidance Taboo: Women's Body versus the Historiography of Ubuya," *Japan Review*, vol. 19 (2007), 3-45; According Hitomi Tonomura, folkloristic approach pioneered by Yanagita Kunio has been passed onto the next generation of scholars such as Segawa Kiyoko and Ōtō Yuki. Segawa Kiyoko, *Onna no minzokushi: sono kegare to shinpi* (Tokyo: Tokyoshojaku, 1980); Ōtō Yuki, *Kosodate no minzoku: Yanagita Kunio no tsutaeta mono* (Tokyo: Iwata shoin, 1999); Other than these two scholars mentioned by Hitomi Tonomura, I was able to encounter lots of studies affected by folkloristic perspective. See, Idabashi Haruo. *Tanjō to shi no minzokugaku* (Tōkyō: Yosihikawa Kōbunkan, 2007); Idabashi Haruo. *Shussan: san'iku shūzoku no rekishi to denshō - dansei sanba* (Tōkyō: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2009)

were mobilized to ensure a safe delivery and what kinds of supernatural powers people relied on to avoid *kegare*.

The folkloristic approach had a great influence on other disciplines. In the field of history, Kunimoto Keikichi is one of the leading figures who pursued folkloristic perspectives on childbirth. In his book-length study on the culture of pregnancy and childbirth, he looks into historical records, such as the diaries of aristocrats and contemporary obstetrical books, to illuminate how people of the ancient times perceived childbirth. He also explored how people prepared for a successful birth by examining the use of talisman, medication, and superstitious rituals to repel evil spirits.¹³ Shinmura Taku's book-length study follows a similar trajectory as that of Kunimoto Keikichi in that he includes many pages of illustrations and identifies birth-related customs and concepts.¹⁴ He also adds new dimensions by exploring not only the roles of female birth attendants (*sanba*, 産婆) and male physicians, but also their conflicts over the event of childbirth. Sugitatsu Yoshikazu, an obstetrician and a researcher in the history of Japanese medicine, takes a similar position to Shinmura Taku.¹⁵ In a relatively short book, *Osan no rekishi – jōmon jidai kara gendai (The History of Childbirth: From Jōmon Period to Contemporary Era)*, he attempts to explicate the comprehensive history of childbirth in Japan from Jōmon (14,000-300BCE) to modern periods. Beginning with examples of *dogū* (土偶, clay figurines, fig.1.1 and 1.2) and pottery (fig. 1.3) representing women in delivery that were excavated from archaeological sites of the Jōmon period, Sugitatsu addresses birth-related mythical stories from the *Kojiki* (古事記, *Records of Ancient Matters*, 8th c.) and *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀, *The Chronicles of Japan*, early 8th c.) to understand the birth practices of the Kofun period

¹³ Kunimoto Keikichi, *San'ikushi – Osan to kosodate no rekishi* (Iwate: Moriokataimuzu, 1996).

¹⁴ Shinmura Taku, *Shussan to seishokukan no rekishi* (Tokyo: Hōsei daigaku shuppanyoku, 1997).

¹⁵ Sugitatsu Yoshikazu, *Osan no rekishi – jōmon jidai kara gendai made* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2002).

(古墳時代, 250-538). His book also introduces the effect of *Ishinpō* (医心方, late 10th c.), the first medical book in Japan, on the culture and knowledge of childbirth in the Heian period, as well as the active role of monks and nuns in child deliveries during the Kamakura period. With regards to the history of childbirth in the Edo period, he concentrates on how the Kagawa School of Obstetrics, established by Kagawa Genetsu (香川玄悦, 1700-1777), spread new obstetrical knowledge and how female birth attendants, who originally supervised the process of parturition, criticized and confronted male obstetricians. In sum, folk ethnologists tried to reconstruct the various cultural aspects of birth customs transmitted from the remote past and documented them, while historians extended the historical knowledge of the reproductive process that pre-modern society experienced through the examination of contemporary textual references.

It seems natural that at the beginning of the study of childbirth scholars paid attention to the efforts to introduce birth-related cultural traditions and to excavate uncovered historical facts. This positivistic scholarly attitude toward the topic of childbirth was prevalent until the late 1990s, when Edo specialists proposed new directions that shifted childbirth from the realms of objective narratives to battlefields of different social ideologies. For example, Ochiai Emiko argued that the first reproductive revolution in Japan occurred in the late 18th century and thereby raised an objection to the common belief that the reproductive revolution of Japan happened in the late 19th century only after the modernization and westernization of the midwifery profession. According to her, not only the discourse over infanticide and abortion was already active around the mid-18th century in local belief systems, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Nativism but also the foundation of the Kagawa School of Obstetrics enhanced the understanding of the development of fetus inside the womb. Ochiai claims that these local efforts and advance in medicine brought about the change in people's attitudes toward abortion and infanticide, and

finally contributed to population growth of the late 18th century. Her study signals a new departure by analyzing childbirth within a framework of two confronting ideologies – western and local medicines – being respectively represented by the modern midwifery and the Kagawa School of Obstetrics.¹⁶

Previous studies on childbirth in different fields have accumulated research data and added useful references to the topic of reproduction. They have informed art history as well. Many of these earlier studies addressed art works, such as handscroll paintings and Buddhist paintings containing birth scenes from the medieval period, or published printed illustrations from the Edo period as visual references in their articles. For example, the late-twelfth century handscroll *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* (彦火火出見尊繪卷, late 12th c. fig.2.5) is most often used as a supplementary visual device to explain the practice of ‘*koshiki otoshi* (dropping a rice steamer).’ Among the most frequently cited Edo examples is probably a post-partum scene from *A Compendium Treasures for Women* (*Onna chōhōki*, 女重宝記, 1692, fig.2.2). It is, in particular, introduced by gender historians who scrutinize the admonitory role of female educational books distributed in the Edo period.

The utilization of birth imagery can help understand unfamiliar birth-related concepts and visualize how practices were actually performed. Especially, it helps art historians identify birth customs depicted in images with much more precision. This treatment of birth imagery as a supplementary visual device, however, ignores the temporal and spatial circumstances in which certain birth images were produced. The random choice of birth scenes and their insertion as accompanying illustrations decontextualize and isolate them from other similar or dissimilar

¹⁶ Ochiai, Emiko, “The Reproductive Revolution at the End of the Tokugawa Period,” in *Women and Class in Japanese History*, eds. Anne Walthall, Wakita Haruko, and Tonomura Hitomi (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1999), 187-215.

examples. In other words, the approach of previous studies to birth imagery neglected the possibility that birth scenes can be observed based upon their connection with other examples, obtained from the formal and thematic similarities, which is a fundamental methodology of art historical study. Studies by Hotate Michihisa and Yui Suzuki, therefore, should be mentioned. Even though their focus remains mainly on medieval examples, it can be said that they were among the first who approached birth imagery with art historical perspective. Hotate Michihisa, a medievalist, draws well-known examples of birth imagery together from medieval handscrolls for the first time. By identifying recurring common visual elements, he attempts to find the dominant iconography of Medieval birth imagery, which is mostly associated with shamanic practices.¹⁷ Among the most recent cases, Yui Suzuki's research, the first to appear in English, is noteworthy. Suzuki includes as many as examples of birth images and gives an explanation of the common visual symbols depicted to represent critical birth rituals for a safe delivery. Unlike Hotate Michihisa who centers only on a few shamanic practices such as 'ubusuna (the act of throwing sand and rice)' and 'ushirodaki (holding an expectant mother from behind)', she does not confine her visual analysis to folkloric and shamanic birth tradition. She furthermore elucidates that ancient people's fundamental fear for the failure in safe delivery is the reason why as many as religious practices by Buddhist monks, Yin-Yang diviners, and shamans were represented in birth scenes.¹⁸

Finally, Inamoto Mariko suggests a new potential for the study of medieval birth imagery by situating its production in a socio-political context. In her article, published in 2003, Inamoto explores interesting interplays in the characteristics of the genre of handscroll, the influences of

¹⁷ Hotate Michihisa, "Shussan no jōkei – miko, wobusuna, ushiro daki," in *Chūsei no ai to jūzoku: emaki no naka no nikutai* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1986), 182-216.

¹⁸ Yui Suzuki, "Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding off in Medieval Japanese Birth Scene," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. LXXIV, no. I (2014), 17-41.

patronage, cultural meanings of childbirth, and political circumstances.¹⁹ She claims that *Illustrated Handscroll of Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* was commissioned by Emperor Go-Shirakawa (後白河天皇, Go-Shirakawa-tennō, 1127-1192, r.1155-1158) with the intention to reestablish imperial authority against a newly rising warrior power.²⁰ The myth of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*, written in two ancient chronicles, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, tells about the birth of the father of Emperor Jinmu (神武天皇, r. 660-585 BC), who becomes the founder of Japan. The story of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*, in other words, is about the establishment of Japan, as well as the beginning of the imperial family. According to Inamoto, the presence of Toyotama-hime, the sea-god's daughter and the birthing mother in the birth scene of the father of Emperor Jinmu, mirrors the position of Taira no Tokushi (平徳子, 1155-1213), Taira no Kiyomori's (平清盛, 1118-1181) daughter and Prince Tokihito's mother. The origin of Toyotama-hime as the other worldly being who comes from the sea world alludes to the status of Taira no Tokushi who was born to a warrior clan and later married into the imperial family. In the same context, the birth of Emperor Jinmu's father in the scene interestingly mirrors the birth of Prince Tokihito (言人親王, 1178-1185), who is the grandson of Emperor Go-Shirakawa and later becomes Emperor Antoku (安徳天皇, r.1180-1185). Inamoto claims that Emperor Go-Shirakawa projected the event of the birth of Prince Tokihito onto the birth in the story of *Hikohohodemi no*

¹⁹ Inamoto Mariko, "Inamoto Mariko, "Egakareta Shussan – Hikohohodemi no mikoto emaki no seisaku ito wo yomitoku," in *Seiiku girei no rekishi to bunka – kodomo to zendā*, eds. Hukutō Sanae and Kojima Naoko (Tōkyō: Shinwasa, 2003), 110-164.

²⁰ It is said that Emperor Go-Shirakawa supported the rise of warrior power at first to curb the influence of the Fujiwara clan on the imperial family. His neglect for the growth of the samurai finally enabled Taira no Kiyomori to attain power and also brought about the foundation of Kamakura shogunate, the first samurai government, by Minamoto no Yoritomo.

mikoto, visualized the succession of the bloodline of the imperial family, and thereby reconfirmed the origin of the imperial family as the direct descendants of Emperor Jinmu.²¹

Inamoto's research is meaningful in that it overcomes the limitation of previous studies that have viewed birth imagery as a neutral reflection of reality and considers political and cultural significance attached to the act of producing birth imagery. She does not consider the handscroll *Hikohohodemi no mikoto* simply as visual material that displays various types of religious birth rituals. Rather, she recognizes that birth imagery can demonstrate political conflicts and social tensions that exist behind its production and also can function as an active visual device to convey its producers' or commissioners' intentions to persuade their audiences.

While medieval birth imagery in the field of art history has generated scholarly attention that highlighted its iconography as well as its cultural and political connotations, birth images created in the Edo period, by contrast, have received far less focused analysis. In fact, there has been no serious research dedicated to a single work depicting the event of childbirth, much less to a comprehensive monograph on the history of Edo-period birth imagery. This dissertation, thus, will be the first to explore the development of the iconography of birth scenes dating to the Edo period.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

In order to overcome the limitation of the previous studies and to apply the achievement of the medievalists to my research on Edo birth imagery, first of all, my dissertation connects birth

²¹ Inamoto Mariko, 144-152.

images published in different volumes of Edo-period *Jokunsho*. By reconsidering them in a relationship with the examples made in other periods, I place Edo birth images in a social, cultural, and historical context. More specifically, I trace the iconographical changes in birth imagery respectively produced in the medieval, early, and later Edo periods.

Second, study of birth imagery in Edo Japan requires more than detailed visual analyses. This dissertation takes advantage of the wealth of documents from this period by examining official government publications and classical literature as critical sources that place these images in historical and cultural context.

Third, looking into the iconographical change of birth imagery and its historical meaning requires me to take interdisciplinary approach that incorporates religion, ideology, politics, and gender. I do not confine my research to one certain field. For instance, in order to find out the interplay between population decrease and representation of birth scenes, I investigate demographic history of the late Edo period. To connect population policy and iconography of birth imagery, my dissertation examines the written sources like government documents. In this respect, historical studies done by Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, Mary Fissell, Susan Burns, and Sawayama Mikako have greatly informed my work.

Although Musacchio and Fissell are not the experts of Japanese studies, their research on the material culture of Renaissance birth and the seventeenth-century birth imagery of England were useful to me. Musacchio analyzes hundreds of objects and images – from the birth trays (*desco da parto*, fig. 1.4) used to decorate birth chambers to the cloaks and veils worn by mothers – needed in the post-partum process of the birthing event.²² Notably birth scenes of the

²² Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

Renaissance period share many similarities with those of the Edo period in that they also display a wide range of objects—from furniture, such as screens with auspicious motifs, specially designed chairs and altars, to small votive ornaments intended for a safe delivery. Musacchio’s study helps me to reconsider the presence of birth-related objects in the images of the Edo period. Adopting her research approach, I delve into why those items were in demand, how and by whom they were consumed, how birth-related commodities can be associated with the user’s class, what dominant ideology was conveyed through the inclusion of certain items, and finally how their presence influenced the understanding of contemporaries about childbirth.

Fissell’s study was also greatly influential in shaping my perspective of Edo birth imagery in printed *jokunsho*. Her monograph on seventeenth-century birth imagery in England covers birth scenes depicted in broadsides, pamphlets, and gynecological manuals, which she categorizes as “cheap prints.” By analyzing visual and textual information documented in “cheap print,” she demonstrates how pregnancy and childbirth, considered as spiritual experiences in the sixteenth century, became stigmatized as controversial and troublesome events in the seventeenth century after the experience of the Reformation.²³ The accessibility to the large populace, the most outstanding feature of “cheap print,” is in fact a critical characteristic of Edo birth images as well.²⁴ Their wide circulation and instructive function make them important visual references that shed light on the shared perception of childbirth in Edo Japan. Her approach to “cheap print” enabled me to rethink the role of Edo birth imagery not as a simple accompanying illustration but

²³ Mary E. Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²⁴ Susan L Burns has already mentioned in her review of *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* that how Fissell’s research can be applied into Japanese cases. Susan L Burns, ““Cheap Print” as Method: New Possibilities for the Gender History of Early Modern Japan,” *Journal of Women’s History*, vol. 22, no.3 (2010): 185-89.

as a meaningful visual reference that informs the shared thoughts of Edo people who consumed the printed materials on pregnancy and childbirth.

Most of all, various gender-centered studies by two gender historians –Susan Burns and Sawayama Mikako - played a crucial role in developing my argument, which interprets the iconographical transformation of Edo birth imagery as a product of the confluence of such ideological, political, and social factors. The purpose of *jokunsho*, my main research subject, was to educate women in various aspects—literal, cultural, and ideological. To acquire *jokunsho* and read the written texts was a gender-specific experience. Susan Burns scrutinizes a number of documents written by male Confucian scholars for female education and claims that most Confucian texts consider the female body as a place in which women’s liability for pregnancy and childbirth is recorded. According to Burns, these Confucian texts including *jokunsho* tried to valorize female sexuality through its reproductive purpose. Fertility is encouraged as the most important virtue of women, and female identity is reduced to the prime reproductive organ, the womb.²⁵ Her insight into the contents of *jokunsho* charged with Confucian ideology made it easier for me to interpret the visual strategies chosen to devalue women’s birthing bodies and to exclude them from birth scenes in which the mother cannot help but appear as a focal player. While Susan Burns’ study demonstrates how the dominant ideology regulated female birthing bodies, Sawayama Mikako expounds how political institutions control the process of pregnancy and childbirth. She examines pregnancy reports recorded by the officials of local governments and reveals how the government interceded in every reproductive process, thereby effectively preventing abortion and infanticide. In Sawayama’s study, the pregnant female body embodies

²⁵ Susan L. Burns, “The Body as Text: Confucianism, Reproduction, and Gender in Tokugawa Japan.” In *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam*, eds. Benjamin A. Elman, John B. Duncan, and Herman Ooms (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 178-219.

the struggle to gain the initiative in supervising the whole process of reproduction between pregnant women, who are the parties directly involved in childbirth, and village elites, mainly consisting of men.²⁶ My dissertation has been greatly influenced by Sawayama's approach in that it offers me an understanding of the socio-political change encoded in the transformation of mother figures in late Edo birth imagery. Her insight into the relationship between the political system and reproduction played a crucial role in elucidating how mothers and their birthing bodies came to be regarded as secondary and subordinate to one of the most significant events in their life.

1.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 deals with medieval birth imagery. It usually appears in the handscroll paintings, of which their subject matters range from ancient myth to a monk's biography. We can easily see that the emphasis of the scenes is on the impending moment of labor and the active role of religious rituals and specialists who would help with a safe childbirth. In this chapter, I argue that medieval birth images highlight the prenatal moment because it is the time when religious efficacy is in most need and also can be best displayed and promoted. In medieval birth culture, people were afraid of the presence of evil spirit (or *monono-ke*) that is unseen but believed to be lurking around them. They also believed that the pollution entailed by bleeding during parturition can put the mother and the baby in danger. Especially the moment right before the birth of a

²⁶ Sawayama Mikako, "The "Birthing Body" and the Regulation of Conception and Childbirth in the Edo Period." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, vol. 24 (2003), 10-34.

baby is considered to be the most precarious because *monono-ke* can easily attack the expectant mother and the baby. To prevent the harmful influence of an evil spirit, they mobilized every possible religious measure for a desirable outcome. It is natural, from this perspective, that medieval birth scenes employ as their central theme the prenatal moment in which the performance of religious practices is most intense. By doing so, birth imagery demonstrates that how influential religions were in managing and shaping the process of pregnancy and childbirth.

Chapter 2 examines the formal and ideological backdrop of the formation of early Edo birth scenes that present the comparable features with those of the medieval period. *A Compendium of Treasures for Women*, the typical example of early Edo birth imagery, focuses on post-natal recovery process for the mother and the baby. Unlike medieval examples displaying religious rituals, the scenes arrange several essential items such as folding screens, *oshioke* vessels, and birth shelves and also contain the depiction of the bathing the infant. There are many similar ones to *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* and they were widely disseminated among the populace as standard iconography of early Edo birth imagery.

While searching for the reason of the clear distinction between the birth images from the Edo and Medieval periods, I found the polychromatic Momoyama works depicting the birthing events of Empress Akashi and Naka no kimi, important female characters in the *Tale of Genji*. Their delivery scenes interestingly include birth-related visual elements, similar ones seen in later printed birth images of female educational books. I argue that these Momoyama birth scenes featuring female figures from ancient tales served as visual precedents for later printed birth images. Female educational books targeted daughters and young women of middle-class families, who admired the aristocratic culture and were eager to acquire the noble customs. It can be assumed that the publishers tried to adapt to the need of their target audience by appropriating

birth customs from aristocratic birth scenes and encapsulating them for the creation of a new type of birth imagery.

The second section of this chapter delves into the ideological background of early Edo birth imagery. It is notable that among many other birth-related episodes in *the Tale of Genji* only birthing events of Empress Akashi and Naka no kimi were specifically selected and represented in *the Tale of Genji Album* (*Genji Monogatari Tekagami*, 源氏物語手鑑 1612). The examination of the details of their lives demonstrates that these two women lived up to the expectation of the accepted morality of aristocratic society. Compared to unfaithful women in the story, Empress Akashi and Naka no kimi set an example as a daughter, a wife, and a mother. Their successful deliveries in the tale are regarded as a result of their exemplary conducts. In this context, the post-partum scene seems to be the visual record of a rewarding moment for their womanly virtues, and I argue that such a perspective of the post-natal scenes depicting a successful childbirth can be also applied to early Edo printed birth images. The written texts of *jokunsho* permeated with Confucian thoughts provide lots of instructions on prenatal education and the accompanying printed illustrations of the post-natal scene are given as examples of a successful outcome for the observance of the *jokunsho* directions. It seems that the intent of the illustration is to remind women of their responsibility for a safe delivery by presenting a positive image of which the soon-to-be mother becomes part only when following the moral and medical guidelines prescribed in the books. Without any religious rituals to rest on for a safe delivery, only women are to accountable for an undesirable situation.

Chapter 3 examines how and why the standard iconography of childbirth transformed in the late Edo period, focusing on the representation of the two main players – the mother and the baby. The first case study compares birth images included in the two different editions of *A*

Compendium of Treasures for Women, published respectively in 1692 and 1847. My detailed visual analysis confirms that the mother figure is gradually pushed out the periphery and the depiction of an infant's first bath occupies the center of the composition. It is notable that the removal of the mother figure and the emphasis on the baby are neither an isolated case nor a result of a sudden change. I argue that such a significant iconographic change resulted from the enforcement of strict population policies prompted by serious depopulation. In the late 18th century, climate disaster and subsequent famine brought about a demographic crisis. In order to increase population, the local government carried out official interventions in childbirth and women's birthing bodies. The entire process of pregnancy was regulated and micromanaged by the policies such as the submission of pregnancy report, the mutual surveillance within the community, and the mobilization of medical professionals as overseers. Female birthing bodies and their reproductive process came under multiple layers of surveillance system in which the continuation or the discontinuation of pregnancy was determined by the state. In my opinion, the disappearance of mother images in 19th century birth scenes mirrors the historical context in which the government's intervention was gradually excluding women's voices as decision-maker from all matters related to pregnancy and childbirth.

The second case study of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* (*Shingaku hayasomegusa*, 心学早染草), first written in 1790 by Santō Kyōden(山東京伝, 1761-1816), demonstrates more clearly how the regulation of the government affected the alienation of mothers in the scene of childbirth. The comparison between the first three editions and the last edition of 1796 shows that the interesting discontinuity of mother images also happened here too. I argue that this sudden change derives from the enactment of the Kansei reforms (寛政改革, 1789-1801) in the late 18th century. The reform's conservative cultural policies brought about the revalidation of

kegare (穢れ) concept that considers a parturient woman as the source of pollution. In this social context, it is possible that the author, Santo Kyoden, with the personal traumatic experience of being punished for violating censorship laws, would probably decide to remove the mother figure to avoid any troublesome situations that might catch the eye of the government.

The final section of the third chapter briefly deals with infanticide images that spread in the late Edo period. Printed in child-rearing manuals, infanticide scenes aimed at admonishing against the act of abortion and infanticide, which was believed to be one of major causes of low fertility. The first two case studies suggest that the government regulation over the process of pregnancy and the reinforcement of *kegare* (穢れ) concept had an impact on the representation of the mother figure. But, they do not give a complete explanation of why the scene of ‘the first bath’ remains as a significant indicator of childbirth. I argue that within the historical context of population decrease, infanticide scenes in child raising manuals discouraged the evil deed while the first bath images were intended to encourage the alternative. Although they depict the opposite sides of a baby’s destiny (death and life), together they served as an effective visual propaganda to abolish infanticide and encourage population growth. In this process, images of mothers suffered effacement or malicious distortion. Emphasized in their stead were representations of babies as valuable social assets to be protected and well taken care of.

2.0 BIRTH IMAGERY IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD: PRE-NATAL MOMENT AND OMNIPRESENCE OF RELIGION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Edo-period female targeted books, *jokunsho* (女訓書, writings on women's education), often include birth imagery that illustrates how childbirth was carried out in pre-modern Japan. *The Collection of Women's Etiquette* (*Onna shorei shū*, 女諸礼集, 1660, fig. 2.1) is a representative example. It displays a clear image of birth-related customs commonly observed in Edo society and particularly focuses on how postpartum care for mother and baby was conducted for the upper classes.²⁷ As seen in *the Collection of Women's Etiquette* (fig. 2.1), most Edo birth scenes feature a mother, baby, and birth attendants. The mother is usually depicted in the middle of recovery from childbirth. The baby and birth attendants are engaged in the 'first bath after birth (*ubuyu*, 産湯).' As the major players in the event of childbirth, these individuals become the main visual motifs essential to the occurrence of 'birthing,' and they recur in birth imagery throughout the Edo period.

²⁷ The mother wears her long hair in the *sagegami* (下げ髪) style that was popular in the early Edo period among upper class women.

With regards to the manner of portraying the birth in *The Collection of Women's Etiquette*, one notable feature is that the birth scene specifically brings 'a moment after parturition' into focus rather than 'during labor and delivery.' Moreover, *the Collection of Women's Etiquette* is not the only case that chooses 'post-natal care' as the main theme to indicate the event of childbirth. Birth images shown in other *jokunsho* such as *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (*Onna chōhōki*, 女重宝記, 1692, fig. 2.2), *A Mirror of Women* (*Onna kagami*, 女鑑, early 17th c. fig. 2.3), and *The Supplementary Illustrated Manuals for Children's Daily Life* (*Zōho eiri shōni hitsuyō ki*, 増補絵入小児必用記, 1714, fig. 2.4) share the same visual elements; a mother recovering from delivery, an infant receiving the first bath, and a few attendants helping a mother and a baby in the post-natal process. Although the details of the elements – the number of attendants and the visual motifs on the garments and the folding screens – are slightly different, they are all engaged in the post-partum event. Given that there are many such examples of post-natal scenes in similar compositions, I assume that this specific type of birth scene must have been very widespread and popular in the early stage of the development of *jokunsho*. They must have played a role as a visual model that illustrates upper class birth customs.

This feature—the adoption of the post-natal scene as the main focus—takes on more complex and thought-provoking aspects when we compare Edo-period birth scenes with those from previous eras. Birth scenes produced before the Edo period are mostly found in narrative handscrolls, which are different in their medium and target audience. What is significant here is that these earlier depictions usually display the impending moment of childbirth. Unlike their counterparts made in the Edo period, they do not portray the newborn receiving the first bath, but instead highlight the condition of the mother suffering from labor pains. Rather than reassurance

and relief after a safe delivery, the urgency and tension of the imminent parturition are emphasized.

The disparity between the birth scenes from the two eras poses several interesting questions: What different social circumstances can be found in medieval birth scenes stressing the urgency of parturition and Edo post-natal scenes emphasizing a relaxing atmosphere after the safe delivery, and what brought about the changes in the iconography of childbirth? We should also explore how the artists create an iconography of birth imagery that would fit into the educational purpose of *jokunsho* and to what visual precedents they refer.

To answer these questions, I will begin with a detailed examination of birth imagery made before the Edo period. As briefly mentioned earlier, the majority of pre-Edo birth imagery is portrayed in narrative handscroll paintings. The dissimilarity in the medium, the readership, and the nature of the patron, however, are not enough to account for such a different approach to rendering childbirth. In this chapter, I will scrutinize the visual elements that reappear in the birth scenes of the medieval handscroll paintings. By doing this, this chapter will serve as a preliminary study to understanding the transformation from medieval birthing images highlighting ‘religious powers’ to Edo birth scenes presented as civilized rituals dependent on a woman, in particular, the ‘mother figure.’

2.2 ILLUSTRATED HANDSCROLL OF HIKOHODEMI NO MIKOTO

Among the early medieval handscroll paintings that portray the event of childbirth, the late twelfth century handscroll *Hikohodemi no Mikoto* (彦火火出見尊繪卷, late 12th c. fig. 2.5)

well represents the rowdy, bustling, and strained atmosphere of an imminent delivery.²⁸ The story of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* is based on a Shintō myth recorded in the *Kojiki* (古事記, A.D.712) and the *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀, A.D. 720). It has slight variations depending on its source, but roughly tells about the grandfather of Emperor Jinmu (神武天皇, r. 660-585 BC), the founder of Japan. The myth can be summarized as follows: Hikohohodemi no Mikoto went to the palace of the sea-god and married Toyotama-hime, one of the sea-gods' daughters. She gave birth to Ugaya-fuki-ahezu no Mikoto and later he married his aunt, Tamayori-hime, Toyotama-hime's sister. Finally, that couple gave birth to Emperor Jinmu.²⁹ Among several episodes of the story, the handscroll *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* illustrates the birth of Ugayafuki-ahezu no Mikoto. The birth scene from the *Kojiki* is as follows:

Hereupon the Sea-Deity's daughter Her Augustness Luxuriant –Jewel- Princess herself waited on [His Augustness Fire Subside], and said: "I am already with child, and the time for my delivery now approaches. But me thought that the "august child of a Heavenly Deity ought not to be born in the Sea-Plain. So I have waited on thee here." Then forthwith on the limit of the waves upon the sea-shore she built a parturition-hall, using cormorants' feathers for thatch. Hereupon, before the thatch was completed, she was unable to restrain the urgency of her august womb. So she entered the parturition-hall. Then when she was about to be

²⁸ The original copy of this handscroll is presumably from the late 12th century. This handscroll is a 17th century copy housed in Myōtsuji. *Kanmon gyōki* (看聞御記) written by GoSuikō-in (1375-1456) has an important record regarding this painting. The record of 1441 says that GoSukō-in borrowed three handscroll paintings including *Hikohoho dem i no Mikoto emaki*, *Kibi no daijin emaki*, and *Ban dainagon ekotoba* from the Shin-hachiman Shrine in Matsunaga. He borrowed these handscroll paintings to show them to Emperor Gohanazono (1419-1471). Komatsu Shigemi, "Denrai wo megutte," *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Bijutsu, 1974), 2-3.

²⁹ Boleslaw Szczesniak, "The Sumu-Sanu Myth. Notes and Remarks on the Jimmu Tenno Myth," *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol.10, no. 1/2 (1954), 121-123.

delivered, she spoke to her husband, [saying]: “Whenever a foreigner is about to be delivered, she takes the shape of her native land to be delivered. So I now will take my native shape to be delivered. Pray look not upon me! Hereupon [His Augustness Fire-Subside], thinking these words strange, stealthily peeped at the very moment of delivery, when she turned into a crocodile eight fathoms [long], and crawled and writhed about; and he forthwith, terrified at the sight, fled away.³⁰

The scene (fig. 2.5) in which Toyotama-hime is about to bear Ugaya-fuki-ahezu no Mikoto is in the sixth section of the scroll. At a glance, we can easily see that a large group of figures are involved in Toyotama-hime’s parturition. Their urgent movements not only add a busy and boisterous atmosphere to the event but also indicate that the birth of Ugaya-fuki-ahezu no Mikoto is close at hand. The exaggerated gestures of the figures, as seen from the two male figures in the upper right corner, allow us to assume that a space for parturition must have been replete both with the excitement over the impending arrival of a new baby and with the tension aroused by the fears of an unsuccessful outcome – the death of the mother or baby.

Referring to the records of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, a few visual elements – the maternity room and the eaves of cormorants’ feather – can be identified. The maternity room of which the floor is covered with green mats is shown on the left side of the long horizontal composition. The half-naked woman holding onto a post in the center of the room must be Toyotama-hime. In the middle of the composition run the long black eaves made of cormorant’s feather. As it is told in the myth, the eaves are represented unfinished. Except for these evident

³⁰ *The Kojiki – Records of Ancient Matters*, trans. Basil Hall Chamberlain (Tōkyō, Rutland, and Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 1982), 151-152.

visual motifs mentioned in the myth, however, it is difficult to explain the meaning of the series of events happening in the birthing scene of Ugaya-fuki-ahezu no Mikoto. Because the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* do not provide detailed contents regarding how Toyotama-hime's parturition proceeded, the reason why the scroll renders so many figures absorbed in seemingly religious birth-related rituals remains unclear.

In order to understand delivery practices and rites at the time, other than the visual representations of childbirth, we must depend on medieval documents that have literary descriptions. *The Diary of Lady Murasaki* (紫式部日記, 11th c.) written by Murasaki Shikibu (紫式部, c.978-1014) exemplifies what types of religious professionals Heian aristocrats employed and what kinds of rituals they performed to ensure safe delivery. The story recounts Empress Shōshi's (藤原彰子, 988-1074) delivery at her father's mansion as follows:

Loud spells were cast in order to transfer evil influences. All the priests who had been at the mansion for the last few months were present, of course, but they were now joined by everyone worthy of the name exorcist who had been ordered down from the major temples...Those famed as Yin-Yang diviners had also been asked to attend...All day long there were messengers leaving to request the reading of sutras...To the west of the dais were the women acting as mediums...I felt, to call up the manifestation of Fudō in living form...There must have been over forty people crammed into that narrow space between the sliding screens to the north and the dais itself...They were all in a trance, quite carried away by it all...His Excellency was shouting orders to all and sundry in such a loud voice that the priests were almost drowned out...A group of women...squeezed their way in

front of the curtains that hung as a divider behind us, with the result that people could barely pass along the narrow corridor at the back.³¹

As a daughter of Fujiwara no Michinaga (藤原道長, 966-1028), the most powerful figure of the aristocratic circles of the time, the prayer service for Shōshi's safe delivery was held on a large scale.³² The scene recorded by Murasaki Shikibu tells us that Michinaga relied on every possible religious power, including Esoteric Buddhism, Shintoism, Shamanism, Onmyōdō, and Shugendō. He mobilized priests, exorcists (*yamabushi*, 山伏), yin-yang diviners (*onmyōji*, 陰陽師), and mediums (*miko*, 巫女) to perform religious practices, recite sutras, or offer prayers to five Myōō guardian kings (Godai Myōō, 大明王)—Fudō, Gōzanze, Gundari Yasha, Daitoku, and Kongō Yasha. Five altars were installed for each deity and priests performed the ritual of the Five Great Mystic Kings for a safe delivery.³³ As Murasaki Shikibu recalls, the birthing chamber and the space around it were crowded and bustled with such religious specialists and their paraphernalia. The literary description of childbirth, in other words, corresponds with the visual representation seen in the scroll of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*. Because of the fear of defilement and pollution (*kegare*, 穢れ) caused by blood, childbirth was supposed to be dealt with only by a handful of people usually consisting of women in a sequestered place.³⁴ The memoirs by Murasaki Shikibu, however, tell the opposite. Childbirth, particularly in the case of the Heian

³¹ *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, trans. Richard Bowring (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 8-9.

³² In fact, it was intended not only for an easy delivery but also for the birth of a boy. It reflects Michinaga's political ambition to become a future emperor's grandfather and regent. Ōsumi Kazuo, "Historical Notes on Women and the Japanization of Buddhism," in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), p. xxxv.

³³ *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, 3.

³⁴ *Kegare*-related issues in the discourse of pregnancy and childbirth have been often discussed by scholars, such as Tonomura Hitomi and Shinmura Taku, whose research mostly focus on gender studies and medical history. As one of the main concepts explaining childbirth in pre-modern Japan, *kegare* and its theoretical issues will be covered in later chapters of this dissertation in a more detailed manner.

aristocratic household, must have been a noisy, energetic, and strained event engaging the participation of large group of religious players.

Many scholars have discussed why the event of childbirth in the ancient Japan needed the involvement of diverse groups of religious specialists. Unlike the modern experience, which is accompanied by joyful and festive emotion, childbirth at the time entailed great agitation and anxiety rather than pure delight. The fear derived from the inextricable connection of childbirth with the uncertainty about outcomes and, in particular, the risk of death. Yui Suzuki claims that, because of the underlying anxiety and disquiet, the event of childbirth and its process comprise endless human efforts, represented in a multitude of religious rituals, to conquer the fear.³⁵ There have been many scholarly studies that elucidate what types of religious practices were performed to abate the fear. Based on these previous studies that analyze the visual and literary records on Heian childbirth, the next section of this chapter will attempt to demonstrate what types of rituals took place in the birthing event in a more detailed manner. Some of them are visualized in the birth scene of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*, briefly examined above, and others are included in famous medieval handscrolls such as *Legends of Kitano Shrine* (北野天神縁起絵巻, early 13th c.) and *Narrative Painting of the Life of Honen the Buddhist Saint* (法然上人絵伝, 14th c.).

2.2.1 Dropping a Rice Steamer

The presence of the four women sitting around Toyotama-hime is noteworthy in the birth scene of *Hikohoho demi no Mikoto* (fig. 2.5). It seems that all of them are intent upon their own actions

³⁵ Yui Suzuki, “Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding off in Medieval Japanese Birth Scene,” *Artibus Asiae*, vol. LXXIV, no. I (2014), 17-18, 39; Anna Andreeva, “Childbirth in Aristocratic Households of Heian Japan,” *Dynamis*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2014), 357-358.

to help the expectant mother. They could be simply female attendants, but it is also highly possible that they are ‘*miko*,’ or ‘mediums’ with spiritual powers. They show the unusual gestures alluding to religious rituals. Among them, what stands out most here is exemplified by the practice called ‘dropping a rice steamer (*koshikiotoshi*, 甑落とし).’ A woman dressed in red and green in the foreground is stepping on and breaking several cylindrical earthenwares. Under her feet broken pieces, presumably rice steamers (*koshiki*), are scattered. According to Nakamura Teiri, the rice steamers in the birthing event metaphorically represented the womb or a placenta and that *koshiki* acted as a symbol for female reproductive organs because of its features and purpose. As a vessel to steam grains, it has a perforated bottom and this appearance was easily likened to the physical structure of women’s womb.³⁶ Also, the purpose of *koshiki* as a utensil to contain grain, or ‘the source of life,’ could be linked to the reproductive function of a womb as a vessel to conceive and grow ‘a new life.’³⁷

There are written records that help us to surmise how and when the practice of ‘dropping a rice steamer’ was performed. *Sankaiki* (山槐記), the diary of Nakayama Tadachika (中山忠親, 1131-1195), an influential court noble, explains that in 1178 ceramic wares were shattered and the fragments, after being gathered and wrapped in hemp again, were thrown at the roof during the birthing ceremony of Prince Tokohito, later Emperor Antoku (安徳天皇, 1178-1185).³⁸

³⁶ Nakamura Teiri, *Ena no inochi* (Tokyo: Kaimeisha, 1999), 49.

³⁷ In fact, the concept that considers *koshiki* as women’s womb with the power of fertility traces back to the Jōmon period. Several Jōmon experts claim that the potteries imitating women in labor originated from such a metaphorical idea that considers the female body as a conceiving vessel for a life. It is symbolically equated with a pottery as a storing vessel for grains. Yamagata Mariko, “Tokushū nihon genshi bijutsu jōmonIII – chūki,” *Kokka* 1293 (2003): 40-41. Sugitatsu Yoshikazu, 22-23.

³⁸ Nakayama Tadachika’s original name is Fujiwara Tadachika. He was from the Fujiwara clan, the most influential and powerful family, during the Heian period. ‘Nakayama’ originally refers to the region located in the eastern part of then-capital Heian-kyō. Tadachika spent his last days in Nakayama area. Adopting the name, he became the founder of the Nakayama family. His diary, *Sankaiki*, documented from 1151 to 1194, provides valuable information on historical events that happened in a transition period when political power moved from aristocrats to military rulers.

While *Sankaiki* does not address the reason why the practice of ‘dropping a rice steamer’ was carried out, *Kinhirakō ki* (公衡公記) written by Saionji Kinhira (西園寺公衡, 1264-1315), a courtier in the late Kamakura period, clarifies when it was presented. In the entry of the fifth month of 1303, Kinhira writes of the delivery of his sister, Shōkunmon’in (昭訓門院, 1273-1336).³⁹ She was successful in giving a birth to a healthy son, but had difficulty releasing the placenta. In order to induce the discharge of the placenta, people broke earthenware containers by dropping them from the roof.⁴⁰ There is a clear difference in the actual way of executing the practice of ‘dropping a rice steamer’ between the two stories of *Sankaiki* and *Kinhirakō ki*. While *koshiki* in the former case was put together again right after being broken and then thrown ‘onto’ the rooftop, in the latter case it was first thrown ‘from’ the roof and then left fragmented. The question about where this difference originated remains unclear, but might be explained by the gap of time when both diaries were written. In any event, what is apparent here is that the act of ‘dropping a rice steamer’ was one of the main childbirth rituals on which people in the Heian and Kamakura periods depended to bring about a successful delivery.

From the metaphorical relation between *koshiki* and women’s womb, scholars Nakamura Teiri and Yui Suzuki have assumed that people, particularly during the childbirth of the aristocracy, carried out the ritual of ‘*koshikiotoshi*’ in order to quicken the release of the placenta. In the process of a delivery the delayed expulsion of the placenta sometimes caused a major complication that could threaten a mother’s life. By breaking steamers in advance, people believed that they were able to prevent a difficult delivery. The logical grounds for ‘*koshikiotoshi*’ described in the courtiers’ diaries, however, remain ambiguous, as Yui Suzuki

³⁹ Shōkunmon’in is a daughter of Saionji Sanekane (西園寺実兼, 1249-1322), a courtier in the late Kamakura period. She was married to Emperor Kameyama (龜山天皇, 1249-1305).

⁴⁰ Yui Suzuki, “Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding off in Medieval Japanese Birth Scene,” 19-20.

states.⁴¹ In my opinion, people seemed to believe that bad luck transferred to the ‘*koshiki*’ as a medium or substitute for the womb can be suppressed by destroying a rice steamer.

Apart from the predominant view of such symbolic relations between ‘*koshiki*’ and womb, there are also different interpretations that emphasized the practical function of ‘*koshikiotoshi*.’ Satō Chiharu suggests that rice steamers were shattered to create a sound that was believed to lessen labor pains by distracting the parturient mother. The act of ‘*koshikiotoshi*’ in the birth scene of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*, in fact, is occurring simultaneously with Toyotamahime’s labor rather than after her delivery to induce the expulsion of the placenta as described in *Sakaiki* and *Kinhirakō ki*. In her article, Satō also mentions that ‘*koshikiotoshi*’ is likely to function as the announcement of a baby’s safe birth or its gender.⁴²

It is difficult to decide which explanation for the purpose of ‘*koshikiotoshi*’ is the most convincing and reasonable. As J.R Davidson maintains and Yui Suzuki reconfirms, in any case, the practice of ‘*koshikiotoshi*’ can be understood as a performance to abate the emotion of fear and powerlessness in the face of dire situations – the death and sickness of a mother and a baby – that people cannot control.⁴³

2.2.2 Holding an Expectant Mother from Behind

Another important birth practice depicted in the scroll is that of ‘holding an expectant mother from behind (*ushirodaki*, 後ろ抱き).’ The practice is performed by the woman in the blue dress with flower patterns. (fig. 2.5) That her head fully tilted back in the reverse direction from

⁴¹ Yui Suzuki, 19-20.

⁴² Satō Chiharu, “Koten to osan,” *Osan no minzoku: tokuni sono zokushinshū* (Tōkyō: Nihon Tosho Kankokai, 1997), 84.

⁴³ Yui Suzuki, 19-20.

Toyotama-hime indicates how hard she is struggling to buttress the princess who is experiencing labor pains. This gesture recurs in the birthing scenes of later handscroll paintings and even appears in Edo-period birth images. By holding an expectant mother from the back and supporting her waist and abdomen, people believed the position would induce easy and safe delivery. Scholars such as Anna Andreeva and Shinmura Taku consider the act of massaging the back and the belly of a pregnant woman as a kind of simple procedure that could reduce labor pain.⁴⁴ Hotate Michihisa, however, proposes a different opinion that ‘*ushirodaki*’ is a shamanistic practice that reflects a belief at the time that mediums (*miko*) or yin-yang diviners (*onmyōji*) were able to hear the voice of the gods and communicate with them through the performance of ‘*ushirodaki*. In some cases, ‘*ushirodaki*’ was regarded as a method to transfer evil spirits that might attack a pregnant mother into a medium.⁴⁵

2.2.3 Sprinkling Rice

To the right of Toyotama-hime, is a woman raising her right hand and opening her mouth wide as if uttering an incantation. A closer look at her right hand tells us that she is scattering what appears to be rice, originally from a large cylindrical receptacle, toward the expectant mother. The empty receptacle immediately in front of Toyotama-hime indicates that a considerable amount of the rice is already gone and the ritual is fully underway. Called “sprinkling rice (*uchimaki* 打ち撒き or *sanmai* 産米),” the act of tossing rice at the mother is also one of the major birthing rituals witnessed in several visual sources.

⁴⁴ Anna Andreeva, 369-370; Shinmura Taku, *Nihon iryō shakaishi no kenkyū* (Tokyō: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 1985), 257.

⁴⁵ Hotate Michihisa, “Shussan no jōkei – miko, wobusuna, ushirodaki,” in *Chūsei no ai to jūzoku: emaki no naka no nikutai* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1986), 199-204.

Although we generally designate such performances as sprinkling ‘rice,’ there have been, in fact, diverse opinions on the identity of the material contained in the receptacle. While here the substance depicted looks brown, the birth scene in an early thirteenth century illustrated handscroll, *Legends of the Kitano Shrine* (北野天神縁起絵巻, fig. 2.6), clearly displays the mound of a ‘white’ material instead of brown. In this scene, the delivery is taking place inside a room laid with jade green floor mats, the same color as the the flooring in *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*. To the right of the expectant mother receiving ‘*ushirodaki*’ by an attendant in dark green clothing, is an image of a woman chanting and scattering a white powder-like material. Hotate Michihisa claims that the powder is presumably sand collected from a family shrine. According to him, the sand is charged with magical properties that can purify blood pollution caused by childbirth, as well as counter evil spirits that may harm a parturient mother and an infant.⁴⁶

It is also highly possible that the white material represents ‘rice.’ According to Yui Suzuki, in Japan’s ancient culture rice was considered as a purifying agent holding religious power to consecrate a space and presented to the gods (*kami*) as spiritual food. The ritual of ‘sprinkling rice,’ for that reason was performed at important ceremonies such as Luck-wishing at the Great Palace (*Ōtono-hogai*, 大殿祭). *Ceremonial Procedures of the Engi Era* (*Engishiki*, 延喜式) records that prestigious Yin-Yang masters and female attendants (*miko*) made their entrance into the Great Hall throwing rice along with sake into each corner of the Hall. The rice was tossed with the clear goal of repulsing malicious spirits. The purpose of rice in birth rituals seems quite similar to the case in the *Engishiki*. The record of Empress Shōshi’s delivery also includes a passage that proves the act of throwing rice was actively observed. It states that ‘rice falls on our heads like snow’ during Shōshi’s labor. As to the issue of which one is used as a

⁴⁶ Hotate, 195-198.

purifying agent—sand or rice—the answer seems to depend on class. Rice was valuable and expensive, particularly for the common class in the Heian Japan. Thus, rice was probably used by high aristocrats while sand was chosen by lower-class people as a replacement for rice.⁴⁷

The last point that needs to be examined is the identity of the performer. Suzuki does not discuss in detail who carried out ‘*sanmai*’ in the birth ritual. Referring to the record on Empress Shōshi’s delivery, she claims that an expectant mother’s most intimate ladies-in-waiting assumed the role of throwing rice. Pictorial evidence, however, illustrates a different story. In both cases—*Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* and *Legends of Kitano Shrine*—the female figures involved in the act of ‘*sanmai*’ wear a red sash, a visual indicator of the profession of a *miko*. The birth scene of the *Legends of Kitano Shrine* clearly marks the professional identity of the *miko* by portraying her in blue dress and red sash. The red sash, in particular, is worn across the body from one shoulder to one forearm, and the woman’s long hair is also untied. All of these visual features are quite similar to other examples in medieval handscrolls in which *miko* appeared. Compared to the case of *Legends of Kitano Shrine* (fig. 2.6), *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* represents the *miko* in a less obvious way: the red sash is closer to pink and also rendered as if it is a part of the trimmings on garment. The woman breaking the earthenware vessels in the foreground is also wearing a similar type of a long sash that is green, not red. In my opinion, therefore, the question as to who undertook the practice of ‘*sanmai*’ cannot be clearly answered.

⁴⁷ Yui Suzuki, 36-38.

2.2.4 Protective Blessing

Along with the above-mentioned three female figures faithfully playing their roles—breaking the rice steamer, holding Toyotama-hime from her back, and sprinkling rice—the woman in the orange robe should also be noted. Closing her eyes and joining her hands, she seems to be immersed in prayer for the birth of a healthy baby or a protective blessing (*kaji-kitō*, 加持祈祷). *Kaji-kitō* was the Esoteric Buddhist rite utilized to eliminate malicious spirits by mobilizing Buddha's omnipresent force.⁴⁸ It was considered as an effective means to protect a mother and a newborn from unknown evils and for this reason it showed up in almost every birth scene of medieval handscrolls.

Another notable (visual) feature about the woman in the orange robe is that unlike other female figures in the scene she is represented as “old.” The thinner, lighter hair, as well as wrinkles on her face, indicate her age. Interestingly we can see only women in the space adjacent to the maternity room. This is in stark contrast to the situation in the outer area where most of the religious professionals depicted are male. Except for the four women keeping vigil beside Toyotama-hime in labor, two other female figures also appear in the back of the maternity room. They look busy carrying a ewer-like pot and preparing water or herbal tea, probably to ease the labor pain and induce fast delivery. Although the work assigned to them does not seem to be involved with any religious and spiritual activities, their outfits and hair-dos are the same as those of the three women performing *koshikiotoshi*, *ushirodaki*, and *sanmai*. Their age, above all,

⁴⁸ The *kaji* ritual was originally transmitted from China by Kūkai (空海, 774-835). Buddhist monks practiced *kaji* by performing mudras, reciting mantra, and meditating with images of Esoteric deities, such as Fudo. By doing so, they believed that they could build up Buddha's energy inside their bodies and transfer it to the ones in need of healing. Yui Suzuki, “Possession and the Possessed—The Multisensoriality of Spirits, Bodies, and Objects in Heian Japan,” in *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice*, ed. Sally M. Promey. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 77.

appears to be similar to those of the three young women near Toyotama-hime. The woman in the orange robe, therefore, is the only person portrayed as old. Among all these young women, what does the conspicuous presence of the old woman mean? Anna Andreeva mentions that aristocratic childbirth in ancient society was presided over usually by older family members or experienced ladies-in-waiting. She also adds that a parturient woman's mother, in particular, often tended to superintend matters regarding the medicine.⁴⁹ As one of important players in the event of childbirth, the image of an old woman recurs in later birth scenes produced in the Edo period.

2.2.5 The Delivery of *Kanzu*

Between the maternity room and the garden run the long black eaves made of cormorant's feathers. In the left corner of the eaves two additional female attendants make an appearance. The one in red dress is about to come out from the maternity room and reach out her hand toward outside. She seems to try to grab a wooden stick tied with white paper held by the other woman, wearing blue and red, who is running from the opposite direction. According to Hotate Michihisa, the white paper is *kanzu* that records the Buddhist sutra recitations that were carried out during childbirth. It contains information on what types of sutras were recited, which priests conducted the recitations, and how many times they were repeated. After the recitations are completed, the temple or shrine send *kanzu* to the petitioner, probably a parturient woman's husband or father. The delivery of *kanzu* was performed because people at the time believed that the power of prayer could guarantee a safe delivery.⁵⁰ As Yui Suzuki notes, it was 'a well-

⁴⁹ Anna Andreeva, 369.

⁵⁰ Hotate Michihisa, 204.

established visual motif” frequently represented in birth scene. *Legends of Kitano Shrine* also displays a scene of the delivery of *kanzu*. At this time, however, it was rendered in a different manner. While the players of the *kanzu* delivery are female attendants in *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*, *Legends of Kitano Shrine* illustrates a young shaved monk carrying a long, thin bamboo branch—much longer than the stick seen in *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*—also tied with white paper. He is presenting the branch to a male courtier who is standing on the veranda in official uniform.⁵¹

2.2.6 Purification of Seven Rivers

The area outside the maternity room was taken over by more religious practitioners and their bustling activities. The first noticeable visual element is the person who is standing in front of the cormorant-feathered eaves. He does not show his face, but stands with his back toward the viewer. Also, his feet are slightly lifted and his arms are outstretched. This effortful and mysterious pose makes us wonder who he is and what he is doing. According to Inamoto Mariko, the man with the black cap is Hikohohodemi no Mikoto, Toyotama-hime’s husband, and the scene captures the moment that he peeps into his wife’s delivery room through a gap in the eaves.⁵² Unlike Inamoto, Komatsu Shigemi identifies this mysterious man as a yin-yang diviner (*onmyōji*) and claims that he stands in front of an unfinished part of the eaves. The myth of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* contains mention that the eaves could not be completed because Toyotama-hime’s delivery occurred earlier than expected. The cormorant-feathered eaves were

⁵¹ Yui Suzuki identifies this man as the manservant, but she does not provide the reason. Yui Suzuki, “Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding off in Medieval Japanese Birth Scene,” 21.

⁵² Inamoto Mariko, “Egakareta Shussan – Hikohohodemi no mikoto emaki no seisaku ito wo yomitoku,” in *Seiiku girei no rekishi to bunka – kodomo to jendā* (Tōkyō: Shinwasha, 2003), 139.

believed to function as a charm against evil and any defectiveness in the eaves could have put a parturient mother in a hazardous situation. It may be, therefore, that the yin-yang diviner is performing an incantation to protect against the incompleteness of the eaves.⁵³

To secure an impregnable space for an expectant mother by perfecting the eaves was not the only assignment undertaken by the yin-yang diviner. In some respects, the religious activities taking place in the yard are all associated with onmyōdo.

The most notable object here are the altars on which several small white flags are installed. Called ‘seven rivers purification’ (*nanase no harae*, 七瀬の祓), this Shintō-originated ritual was performed to ward off evil spirits that might bring about bad luck to a pregnant mother. People believed that a yin-yang diviner could transfer evil spirits into those white flags through the ritual of the ‘seven rivers purification.’⁵⁴

Three altars with white flags have been installed and three men dressed in different styles are seated in front of each altar. The man in the middle, wearing the loose orange hood, is probably an exorcist (*yamabushi* 山伏 or *shugenja* 修験者).⁵⁵ He is holding a wooden wand decorated with streamers of white paper. Called ‘a purification wand’ (*haraegushi*, 祓串), it was used in performing purification rituals. Priests usually cleanse people, objects, and places by

⁵³ Komatsu Shigemi, *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto emaki, Urashima Myōjin engi*, vol. 19 of *Zoku Nihon no emaki*, ed. Komatsu Shigemi (Tōkyō: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), 40-41.

⁵⁴ The origin of ‘*nanase no harae*’ traces back to the mid-Heian period. Bialock explains that this ritual was performed at seven places to remove defilement (*kegare*) from an emperor and thereby purify the capital. *Kegare* once transferred into an effigy was eliminated by being thrown away to flowing water. David T. Bialock, *Eccentric Spaces, Hidden Histories: Narrative, Ritual, and Royal Authority from the Chronicles of Japan to the Tale of the Heike* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 6; It seems incorrect to include Shintō practice that originated from the Heian period in the representation of childbirth of the mythical age. As mentioned earlier, the original copy of this handscroll was probably painted in the late 12th century, or the late Heian period. In my opinion, therefore, the inclusion of the scene of ‘*nanase no harae*’ can be understood as the result that the painter of the handscroll reflects his contemporary customs rather than attempts to reconstruct childbirth of the mythical age.

⁵⁵ For the religious practices of Shugendō, Hitoshi Miyake, “Religious Rituals in Shugendō: A Summary,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2/3 (1989), 101-116.

waving this wand. The scene shows a man assumed to be *yamabushi* chanting a spell and shaking the purification wand.

The man who is blowing his nose in the most foreground seems to be a yin-yang diviner. He wears a black hat with a pair of wing-like flaps at the back. A similar style hat can be found in early thirteenth-century illustrated hand scroll *Legends of the Kitano Shrine* (北野天神縁起絵巻, fig. 2.6). Here, in the yard, a man with a black official uniform is sitting in front of the same type of altar with white flags as the ones displayed in the scroll of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*. From his costume, we can see that he is a yin-yang diviner employed at court. He recites prayers written on a scroll to ward off evil or may be performing a purification ritual.⁵⁶

The role of the yin-yang diviner was not limited to the practice of *harae*. During the delivery, he carries out divinations and verifies the identities of harmful spirits. By paying tribute, he also soothes the household gods—the gods of the gate (*kadogami*), entrance (*togami*), well (*igami*), and garden (*niwagami*)—who might be offended by the event of childbirth. The yin-yang diviner is actively involved also in post-natal rituals. Once a baby is safely born, the yin-yang diviner determined the favorable direction for the burial of the placenta as well as the auspicious dates for the baby's bath.⁵⁷

At the moment of Toyotama-hime's delivery, in short, everyone participating in the event seems to be agitated, knowing that the childbirth could put Toyotama-hime's life in a vulnerable condition. The restless and nervous atmosphere is magnified by their exaggerated gestures and

⁵⁶ In Heian Japan, there were two types of *onmyōji*. The first type was employed at the Bureau of Yin and Yang (*Onmyō-ryō*). They were involved in the interpretation of astronomy, calendar, and climatic phenomena. They were sometimes summoned for the diagnosis of aristocrats' illness and for the prayers for a safe delivery. The second type was called *kakure onmyōji*. They worked freely usually for aristocrats without being employed at the government. For *onmyōji*'s types and their activities, see Shigeta Shinichi, *Onmyōji to kisoku shakai* (Tōkyō, 2004). For information on *onmyōdō*, see also Lee Butler, "The Way of Yin and Yang: Tradition Revived, Sold, Adopted," *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol.51, no. 2 (1996), 190-94.

⁵⁷ Yui Suzuki, "Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding Off Evil in Medieval Japanese Birth Scene," 35.

rushed movements. As in the description of Empress Shōshi's delivery, all the participants at Toyotama-hime's childbirth are immersed in efforts to yield the best result and guarantee the safety of the pregnant mother and the birth of a healthy child. Every possible religion and miraculous divine power is employed for a safe delivery.

2.3 ILLUSTRATED HANDSCROLL OF LEGENDS OF THE KITANO SHRINE

Although the types of religious professionals and rituals are slightly different from those in *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*, the birth scene from the illustrated handscroll *Legends of the Kitano Shrine* (北野天神縁起絵巻, fig. 2.6) seems to share a similar anxiety over the impending birth as well as a dependence on religious practices and their efficacy.

The birth scene in *Legends of Kitano Shrine*, in fact, has little to do with the main narrative of the scroll. The birthing scene appears in the last part of the scroll, which illustrates the Buddhist six realms where childbirth is represented as one of the major life events in the human worlds.⁵⁸ Among various types of life events or conditions—happiness, illness, and death—arranged in the long horizontal composition, the scene of childbirth appears in the center.

⁵⁸ The handscroll of *Legends of Kitano Tenjin* narrates a story of the origin of the Kitano Tenjin Shrine. The birth scene introduced in this dissertation is contained in the Jōkyū (承久) version (1219). Consisting of four parts, the first part of the scroll illustrates the life and career of Sugawara Michizane (菅原道真, 845-903), a prestigious scholar and politician. In his later years, Michizane lost in the power struggle with his political rival, Fujiwara no Tokihira. The second part deals with the revenge of the spirit of Michizane after his death. The third part depicts the priest Nichizō (日像, 1269-1342)'s trip to the afterworld. The final part shows the six worlds (*rokudo*, 六度) of Buddhist reincarnations, or six realms of existence – the state of hell, the world of hungry ghosts, the world of animals, the world of demigods, the state of human, and the world of heavenly beings. In fact, the story of Nichizo's trip and the scenes of the six worlds do not have much to do with *Legends of the Kitano Tenjin Shrine*. A satisfactory explanation of this attachment is yet to be given. The birth scene depicted here comes from the scene of the human world, one of the six worlds. Miyamoto Toyomune, *Kitano Tenjin Engi*, vol. 9 of *Shinshū Nihon emakimono zenshū*, ed. Miyamoto Toyumune (Tōkyō: Kadokawa Shoten, 1977), 5-6.

A number of religious practices are underway, many of which overlap with those of *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*. With the expectant mother as the center, *ushirodaki* by the woman in the green garment, as well as *sanmai* by the medium in the blue dress and red sash are taking place. The practice of *harae* by the yin-yang diviner and *kanzu* delivery are taking place in the yard and around the veranda. But, we can also find newly added visual elements distinct from *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto*.

2.3.1 Twanging the Bowstring

One of them involves the man dressed in white and orange and standing on the veranda. He is holding a long-curved branch similar to that used for the *kanzu* message delivery. A closer look at the scene shows that he is about to pull a bowstring. He is performing the ritual act called ‘twanging the bowstring’ (*meigen*, 鳴弦). In this practice, the performer makes a sound by plucking his bowstring and thereby scares away destructive spirits. It was believed that the whistling sound of the action of shooting the arrow could hinder harmful beings from approaching the mother and child. Texts such as the diary of Murasaki Shikibu state that twenty men were called upon to perform *meigen* for Prince Atsuhira’s first bath, one of the most important afterbirth ceremonies.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Hotate, 204; Yui Suzuki, “Twanging “Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding Off Evil in Medieval Japanese Birth Scene,” 38.

2.3.2 Purification Prayers by Buddhist Priests

The distinctive look of the man sitting alone in the room right next to the birth chamber also attracts our attention. He wears a dark purple colored *kesa* or monk's surplice made of several vertical strips of cloth. His joined hands and open mouth indicate that he is praying or performing incantations as Esoteric Buddhist priests do during a birth. His attire, however, tells a different story. He wears a yellow robe, which distinguishes him from typical priests, who wear gray robes. The black vegetal patterns on his robe and a pointed blue hood also make him stand out from the usual look of priests. Yui Suzuki identifies him as 'an itinerant Buddhist ascetic.'⁶⁰ Although they practiced self-discipline, but were not registered as affiliated with specific Buddhist institutions, they must have played a similar role to that of the Esoteric Buddhist priests in events such as childbirth. It is likely that the religious services of itinerant Buddhist ascetics were much more accessible to the common people compared than those of Esoteric Buddhist monks.

2.4 *ILLUSTRATED HANDSCROLL OF THE TALE OF HEIKE*

As we examined in records, such as *the Diary of Lady Murasaki*, the role of the Esoteric Buddhist priests in birth-related rituals was indispensable. It is not difficult to imagine that a number of priests recited sutras in front of the altars dedicated to the Five Myōo guardian kings. Unfortunately, however, there are not many visual sources to show us how Esoteric Buddhist

⁶⁰ Yui Suzuki, 36.

rituals were actually performed at the time. *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* and *Legends of the Kitano Shrine* display many birth-related practices and rituals regardless of their disparate religious roots, but in terms of Buddhist rituals, the visualization is indistinctive. The most obvious representation of Buddhist elements is the image of the itinerant Buddhist ascetic in *Legends of the Kitano Shrine*, which we just saw.

Interestingly, two different versions of the *Illustrated Handscroll of the Tale of Heike* (平家物語絵巻, early Edo period; hereafter *Tale of Heike*) exhibit examples of Esoteric Buddhist rituals conducted during childbirth.⁶¹ Although these scrolls were produced in the early Edo period, much later than *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* and *Legends of Kitano Shrine*, it cannot be denied that they provide invaluable information on how Esoteric Buddhist priests engaged in childbirths, particularly aristocratic childbirths in the pre-modern period. The first example is included in the illustrated book (*ehon*, 絵本) of *Tale of Heike* (fig. 2.7) now owned by Meisei University (明星大学). The third book among of *Tale of Heike* contains a chapter named ‘the document of childbirth (*gosanken*, 御産券)’ and there five Esoteric Buddhist priests appear. They seem to pray or recite sutras written on white paper that they are holding. Each of them wears a robe with different colors and patterns. The priest who takes a seat on the raised prop at the head must be the highest ranking. In front of him, a square altar is prepared along with

⁶¹ *The Tale of Heike*, written in the mid thirteenth century, is the most representative medieval warrior tale. According to *The Tales of the Heike* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) by Burton Watson and Haruo Shirane, the genre of a warrior tale (軍記物語, *gunki monogatari*) began when *the Record of Masakado* (*Shōmonki*, 将門記, ca. 940), the story about the life of Taira no Masakado (平将門, d.940) and his rebellion, appeared in the mid-tenth century. The second phase corresponds to the Kamakura period (1185-1333). Famous examples are *The Tales of Heiji* (*Heiji monogatari*, 平治物語, 1221?), *The Tales of Hōgen* (*Hōgen monogatari*, 保元物語, 1221?), and the *Tales of the Heike*. They deal with military conflicts among powerful warrior families as their subject matters unlike early military tales that focus on an individual warrior. For example, *the Tale of Heike* illustrates the process of Genpei war (源平合戦, 1180-1185) that broke out between two strong clans, Minamoto and Taira, respectively led by Minamoto no Yoritomo (源頼朝, 1147-1199) and Taira no Kiyomori. Burton Watson and Haruo Shirane, *The Tales of the Heike* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 1-9.

various paraphernalia and a red flame burns in the center. They are performing *kaji-kito* for Taira no Tokushi (平徳子, 1155-1213), the daughter of Taira no Kiyomori (平清盛, 1118-1181). She was married to Emperor Takakura (高倉天皇, 1161-1181) and gave a birth to Emperor Antoku (安徳天皇, 1178-1185). She became ill while being pregnant, however, and the illness was attributed to resentful spirits of the political rivals killed and defeated by Kiyomori. Kiyomori attempted to dispel the evil spirits as well as pray for the birth of a grandson by arranging *kaji-kito* to be performed by prestigious Buddhist monks. To the left of the scene, we can see that both Kiyomori and her wife are also participating in the ritual.

In the *Illustrated Handscroll of the Tale of Heike* possessed by Hayashibara Museum of Art (林原美術館), Esoteric Buddhist rituals for the safe delivery of the daughter of Kiyomori are conducted on a much grander scale and occur several times during Tokushi's pregnancy. The first scene depicts the performance of *kaji-kito* when the ritual of binding a special pregnancy sash (*iwata-obi*, 岩田帯) for Tokushi was performed (fig. 2.8). The second ritual of *kaji-kito* was performed when Tokushi's labor pains began (fig. 2.9). The last scene (fig. 2.10) represents the moment right after the birth of a crown prince was announced. A group of priests are congregating in the right upper corner and some of them are still carrying out Buddhist rites in front of several altars probably for the afterbirth ceremony.

2.5 *ILLUSTRATED HANDSCROLL OF THE LEGENDS OF YŪZŪ NENBUTSU SECT*

Unlike the examples seen in the *Tale of Heike*, the early fourteenth-century *Illustrated Handscroll of the Legends of Yūzū Nenbutsu Sect* (融通念仏縁起絵巻 fig. 2.11) focuses on the participation of a monk in a commoner's birth. First created in 1314, the work was frequently reproduced over the Muromachi period. The contents of the narratives are divided into two parts; the first part largely consists of a biography of Ryōnin (良忍, 1073-1132), the founder of the Yūzū Nenbutsu sect and the second part compiles the miraculous events in which people experienced when being converted to the Yūzū Nenbutsu sect and reciting *nenbutsu*.⁶² The story of the birth is introduced in the second part as one of the magical events that might occur by *nenbutsu* practice. As mentioned earlier, the handscrolls were reproduced several times and, for this reason, the way in which the childbirth is represented differs in each version. Despite variations, however, the main religious player in the birth scenes of the *Legends of Yūzū nenbutsu* is a Buddhist priest, not a *miko* or yin-yang diviner.

Among the many different reproductions of the *Legends of the Yūzū nenbutsu* handscrolls, the best known version (fig. 2.11) is housed in the Cleveland Museum of Art provides a good example of the commoner birth practices. According to the inscription written next to the scene, a wife of a herdsman (*ushikai warabe*, 牛飼童) who worked for Mokudera temple (木寺) is giving birth inside the simply structured house. The presence of a black ox, harnessed by a rope and eating, seems to suggest that the house belongs to a herdsman.

⁶² Takagishi Akira, "The Reproduction of Engi and Memorial Offerings – Multiple Generations of the Ashikaga Shoguns and the *Yūzū nenbutsu engi emaki*," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1 (2015), 157-158.

According to the corresponding texts of the ninth section, the wife was in peril from a difficult delivery. As soon as the herdsman enrolled his wife's name on the register of the Yūzū Nebutsu sect, the delivery became easier and her life was saved. After hearing this miraculous story, more people joined the sect and its number reached 272.⁶³

The scene depicts the moment when a monk in a black surplice fills in the name of an expectant mother on a piece of white paper, the so-called 'book of proselytization' (*kanjinchō*, 勧進帳). At the far left corner of the house, the herdsman is kneeling and praying for an easy delivery for his wife. According to Tokunaga Seiko, the herdsman can be recognized by his hairstyle. Herdsman in this period, as seen in the picture, usually tie back their neck-length hair, a different hairdo from that of the upper class adult male. The herdsman's wife is portrayed in the center, surrounded by two birth attendants or midwives, who hold her from the front and the rear.⁶⁴ Interestingly, the clothing of the birth attendants does not give any indication of whether they are *miko* or not; the most prominent attribute of the *miko* profession—a red sash—are not present.

While the scroll rather vaguely renders the professional identity of two birth attendants, the appearance of the monk is distinctive. The black surplice, in particular, is an effective visual device that evinces his professional identity as 'a recluse monk' (*tonseisō*, 遁世層). *Tonseisō* denotes a new type of monk that emerged against the historical background of the advent of

⁶³ Komatsu Shigemi, *Yūzū nenbutsu engi*, vol. 11 of *Zoku Nihon no emaki*, ed. Komatsu Shigemi (Tōkyō, Chūō Kōronsha, 1983), 68-69; Ikumi Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoji Storytelling in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i University, 2006), 89.

⁶⁴ Tokunaga Seiko, "Shomin no shussanzu no kansei—Yūzū nenbutsu engi wo megutte," *Hikaku nihon bunka kenkyū*, no. 15 (2012), 89. Looking at their posture in detail, we can see that the figure in dark green dress, who is positioned in front of the expectant mother is grasping the rope hanging from the ceiling with one hand and embracing the mother's head with the other hand. It is unclear whether this gesture signifies any spiritual or religious help for the delivery, but the act of supporting oneself against the rope in childbirth is found also in different time periods.

Kamakura New Buddhism, which comprises the Jōdo Shinshū sect, the Ji sect, and the Yūzū Nenbutsu sect. As the counterpart to an ‘official monk’ (*kansō*, 官僧) who prays for the emperor and conducts government business (Esoteric Buddhist priests depicted in *the Tale of Heike* handscrolls are examples of *kansō*), a recluse monk involves himself in the personal, private requests of commoners and prays for the salvation of their descendants. They also distinguish themselves by wearing robes of different colors. The uniform of an official monk is a white surplice, suggesting detachment from impurity, while a recluse monk wears, as seen here, a black surplice symbolizing defilement supposedly caused by contact with women and the sick.⁶⁵

Kamakura New Buddhism had brought about the change of the traditional, negative view of women. *Tonseisō* priests such as Hōnen, the founder of the Jōdo sect, denied Buddhist old established taboos related to women’s impurity generated by blood from menstruation and parturition and preached the belief that women can also attain salvation.⁶⁶ They actively involved themselves in the salvation of women, especially those from the lower classes.⁶⁷ Participating in childbirth to guarantee a safe delivery, as seen in the birth scene in the scroll, was also one of the important jobs of the *tonseisō*.⁶⁸

Dainenbutsu Temple 大念仏寺 (1390) and Seiryō-ji Temple 清凉寺 also own *Illustrated Handscroll of the Legends of the Yūzu nenbutsu*. The compositions of the birth scenes in these two handscrolls are quite similar to that of the Cleveland Museum of Art. Also, both represent

⁶⁵ Matsuo Kenji, “Official Monks and Reclusive Monks: Focusing on the Salvation of Women,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, vol. 64, no. 3 (2001), 372-373.

⁶⁶ Is a menstruating woman allowed to read a sutra? Can woman recovering from childbirth go to a temple? In *Ippyaku-shiju-gokajo mondo*, Hōnen answers that these taboos have nothing to do with Buddhism and he rather criticizes Shintō priests and *onmyōji* for spreading the incorrect idea of women. Nagata Mizu, “Buttenni miru bōseikan – bukkyō wa bōseikuo dou toitaka,” in *Bose wo tou - rekishideki henshen (jō)*, ed. Wakita Haruko (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1988), 262.

⁶⁷ Unlike recluse monks, official monks who worked for the emperor and the nation kept their distance from defilement caused by women. They were not concerned with the salvation of women who were in danger from childbirth, with the exception of empresses and certain aristocratic women. Matsuo Kenji, 376.

⁶⁸ Matsuo Kenji, 373.

commoner births. Although the structure of the houses is slightly altered, the scrolls respectively housed in Monmyōji Temple 文明寺 and Nezu Museum 根津美術館 (1383) also portray commoner birth practices. Except for the farmer himself, there are only one or two birth attendants inside the house. In both works, a monk in a black surplice is the only religious specialist on whom a commoner's wife can depend in the face of a difficult labor.

The last example of *Illustrated Handscroll of the Yūzū nenbutsu* is found in the Freer Gallery of Art (1384, fig. 2.12). In this work, the way of depicting childbirth drastically changes. First of all, the house is not a humble hut anymore. According to Tokunaga Seiko, the architecture of the house definitely follows the style of *shinden-zukuri* (寝殿造), a building design developed for domestic aristocratic mansion in the Heian period.⁶⁹ The floor is raised off from the ground on wooden pillars and the space outside of the room is expanded with wooden planks. Second, unlike other versions of *Yūzū nenbutsu* handscrolls, the wife of a herdsman is receiving plenty of aid from diverse religious specialists.⁷⁰ On the left side of the room, an old woman with a white hood sits in front of a charcoal brazier and seems to be preparing tea or medicine for an easy delivery. The parturient mother is flanked by two women and nearby are several wooden cylindrical vessels that probably contain *koshiki*. The figure in the innermost area of the room is shaking a purification wand (*haraegushi*) over the head of a herdsman's wife to prevent any ominous energy from interfering with the event. While the parturition room is thronged with a group of people who are actively engaged in assisting with the labor, a priest is

⁶⁹ Tokunaga Seiko, 94.

⁷⁰ It seems absurd that a herdsman (a commoner) is depicted as living in the *shinden-zukuri* style house, which is usually considered to be an elite residence. According to her, except for the one of the Cleveland Museum of Art that represent a herdsman as a commoner set in a simply structured house, other copies including the one of the Freer Gallery of Art show such an inconsistency in visual representation and written description of a herdsman to some extent. Tokunaga Seiko explains that this incongruity happens in the process of reproducing the handscrolls. Tokunaga Seiko, 103-104.

seated in a separate room alone. Given that a herdsman is kneeling with joined hands in front of the priest and the scroll of proselytization (*kanjinchō*) does not have any name yet written on it, the scene seems to capture the exact moment in which a herdsman is asking the priest to register his wife's name. It might be said that in the work dedicated to a Buddhist sect the appearance of disparate religious elements conflicts with the original intention of the handscroll or the commemoration of the foundation of the sect and its merit to devotees. In my opinion, however, the role of the priest and his religious power are more emphasized here. As the accompanying text clearly states, the herdsman's wife was in a life-threatening situation because of a difficult delivery. The birth scene in the Freer Gallery of Art scrolls suggests that the mobilization of all other religious and spiritual power was ineffective and that only the act of filling in the mother's name in the *kanjinchō*' and the religious potential of the *nenbutsu* practice could save her life and make a safe delivery possible.

In short, the representation of a *tonseiō* in the scene intends to demonstrate how the thaumaturgic power produced by the *nenbutsu* practice of the *Yūzū nenbutsu* sect works for a safe delivery. According to Hamada Zenshin and Kuroda Toshio, the thaumaturgic power manifested by the practices of *nenbutsu* is the most important feature in the belief system of the sect. While previous *nenbutsu* practices advocated by Genshin (源信, 942-1017) and Shinran (親鸞, 1173-1263) attempted to build a philosophical system based on Buddhist scripture, the *Yūzū Nenbutsu* sect emphasizes the magical and spiritual power of the *nenbutsu* practice, which is collected from its believers. The basic doctrine of the sect is that people can obtain redemption for themselves as well as others by chanting the *nenbutsu* and enrolling in the book of proselytization (*kanjinchō*). The more people who recite and register, the more merit can be

gathered. In other words, the synthesizing power accumulated by the sect's followers is considered to be the most important factor in attaining salvation.⁷¹

Illustrated Handscroll of Legends of the Yūzū nenbutsu scrolls were originally made to be distributed to the public, in contrast to other biographical handscrolls produced to record the career of a high priest that were to be dedicated to a temple.⁷² Thus, the inclusion of the birthing story as a miraculous anecdote promotes the fact that childbirth can be safely handled with only the help from the spiritual power of Buddhism. While substituting the role of other religious specialists, the Buddhist monk with a black surplice in the scene is presented as the performer of this accumulated magical power. Many other people who gathered to see the childbirth in the scene play an important role as witnesses of religious and miraculous power drawn from the *Yūzū nenbutsu* sect.

2.6 NARRATIVE PAINTING OF THE LIFE OF HONEN THE BUDDHIST SAINT AND BIOGRAPHY OF THE BUDDHIST PRIEST KAKUNYO

In addition to the role of monks, two fourteenth-century works, *Narrative Painting of the Life of Honen the Buddhist Saint* (法然上人絵伝, fig. 2.13) and *Illustrated Biography of the Buddhist Priest Kakunyo* (慕帰絵詞, fig. 2.14), highlight the presence of a nun, another important Buddhist professional, in the process of birthing rituals. Both handscrolls illustrate the birth of

⁷¹ Kuroda Toshio and Suzanne Gay, "Buddhism and Society in the Medieval Estate System," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 23, no. ¾ (1996), p. 315; Hamada Zenshin, "Yūzū nenbutsu to kanjin – meichō·emakimono to geinō wo toshite," *Yūzū nenbutsu shinkō no rekishi to bijutsu – ronkōhen*, ed. Itō Yuishin (Tōkyō: Tōkyō bijutsu, 2000), p. 15; Ikumi Kaminishi, 83-92.

⁷² Tashiro Shoko, *Yūzū nenbutsu engi no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Meicho Shuppan, 1976), 39-43.

the scroll's protagonist—Hōnen and Kakunyo—and reproduce the moment in which an expectant mother is undergoing birth pains and about to deliver a baby. The childbirth takes place inside a residence that seems to belong to a member of the upper class. By fully opening the sliding doors and entirely removing part of its roof, the progress of the birth can be seen with ease. Lots of people are gathered inside and outside of the building and seem to be waiting in suspense for the news of the arrival of the baby. Among them is a Buddhist nun, while other religious professionals such as the *miko* are replaced by female servants or midwives.

In the first scroll of *Narrative Painting of the Life of Honen the Buddhist Saint* (fig.2.13), the image of a Buddhist nun is most conspicuous among other several female figures who sit inside the maternity room. Positioned in the center, the nun watches Hōnen's mother who is surrounded by a folding screen and attended by midwives. Not only her imposing and full-figured presence but also her white robe and head covering (*zugin*, 頭巾) draw the viewer's attention to her. The white head covering was a typical marker of nunhood in the Kamakura period.⁷³ This clear indication of the nun is contrary to the generalized representation of the midwives and female attendants. The female figure right behind Hōnen's mother seems to perform *ushirodaki*, which was done by a *miko* in the previous era. Any reference to the profession of a *miko*, such as the red sash, however, is not on display; rather, gray attire and long flowing hair tied up at midpoint are common to every female figure in this scene, making it difficult to distinguish religious practitioners from midwives and female attendants. We are not sure whether *ushirodaki* in this work can be perceived as having shamanistic or supernatural power to bring about a safe delivery. Without the magical power yielded by a *miko*, *ushirodaki* in

⁷³ Lori Meeks, "Buddhist Renunciation and the Female Life Cycle: Understanding Nunhood in Heian and Kamakura Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 70, no. 1 (June 2010), 24.

the birth scene of Hōnen can be understood as a simple gesture to lessen labor pain and facilitate the parturition process.

The presence of the Buddhist nun in *Illustrated Biography of the Buddhist Priest Kakunyo* (fig. 2.14) is portrayed in like manner. The scroll first leads the viewer's attention to the male figures arranged in the foreground. However, in the maternity room the appearance of the nun is the most prominent. The mother is almost hidden by standing curtains (*kichō*, 几帳) and only the top of her head can be seen. The two female attendants, one standing to the left of the nun and the other to the right, wear similar black and white attire and have long flowing hair. In contrast to their simple and plain clothing, the light blue head covering of the nun accentuates her presence as a helper in the delivery.

Why do these two fourteenth century birth scenes emphasize the presence of a Buddhist nun and moderate the images of other religious professionals? As the titles suggest, both of the handscrolls, *Narrative Painting of the Life of Honen the Buddhist Saint* and *Illustrated Biography of the Buddhist Priest Kakunyo*, cover the life of a prestigious monk who left a significant legacy in the history of Japanese Buddhism. It therefore stands to reason that a Buddhist nun, rather than other religious practitioners, appears as the source of religious power on which an expectant mother can depend for the birth of a healthy baby. Presenting the active role of a *miko* or *onmyōji*, whose power originates from Shintō and other Japanese native religions, might not be consistent with the theme of the handscroll paintings that deal with the life of the high priest.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ This explanation seems to be more convincing given that the conflicting relationship among religions in Japanese history. Buddhism as an imported religion continued to conflict and contend with other native religions, especially Shintō. The early Heian imperial court intended to institutionalize its control over temples and shrines by integrating religious powers under the ideology of 'protection of the imperial state.' In the process of unifying Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples, however, Buddhist temples increasingly came to hold a dominant position, from managing basic economic resources to appointing sacerdotal officiants. The precedence of Buddhism at the imperial court also

The emphasis on the image of the Buddhist nun in birthing events should be explained by considering the social context in which the position of the nun as a religious practitioner had become more enhanced within Buddhist circle. These handscrolls were produced against the religious backdrop of the rise of Kamakura New Buddhism that propagated a more positive viewpoint of women. In ancient Japan, nuns shared relatively equal rank with monks. The introduction of Confucian values in the mid-eighth century, however, negatively affected their social standing, and they were soon excluded from national religious ceremonies. By the ninth century quite a number of convents had closed. It was Kamakura New Buddhism that thwarted this historical trend and saw a drastic increase in the number of convents and nuns. The constant warfare of the late medieval period resulted in the demise of many family lines, and women who lost their husbands or fathers eventually became nuns. The Kamakura New Buddhism sects took a supportive stance on the welfare and salvation of those women.⁷⁵ This new attitude toward women, as well as the rise in the number of nuns, encouraged the participation of nuns in various religious activities. It is safe to assume that the religious and social status of nuns recovered in

influenced the status of other religious professionals. For example, the activities of *miko* were strictly restricted. Their psychic abilities—divination and fortune-telling—were regarded as witchcraft by this time. The priest Jien (1155-1225) blamed a group of *miko* as ‘crazy people’ when they claimed that the soul of Go-Shirakawa possessed the wife of priest Nakakuni, a man who served the deceased sovereign. The activities of *miko* were allowed only within official shrines and they finally came to lose their political power. Likewise, the imperial court did not support the Bureau of Yin and Yang anymore. Shingon and Tendai esoteric Buddhism took over the ritual performances that had belonged to the domain of the *Onmyōdō*. While Buddhism as a state religion occupied the center of political power, indigenous religions such as Shintō, Onmyōdō, and Shugendō were absorbed into the Buddhist system and were pushed to the periphery of society. The disapproval and disregard for other disparate religious powers in the birth scenes of Buddhist themed handscroll paintings may reflect this historical circumstance. Allan G. Grapard, “The Economics of Ritual Power,” in *Shinto in History--Ways of the Kami*, eds. John Breen and Mark Teeuwen (Honolulu: University of Hawai’I Press, 2000), 74-87; Wakita Haruko, “The Formation of the *Ie* and the Position of Women: Motherhood, Household Management and Sexuality,” *Women in Medieval Japan: Motherhood, Household, Management and Sexuality*, trans. Alison Tokita (Tōkyō: University of Tokyo Press, 2006), 27; Delmer M. Brown and Ichirō Ishida, *The Future and the Past: A Translation and Study of the Gukanshō, an interpretative history of Japan written in 1219* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 169-170; Lori Meeks, “The Disappearing Medium: Reassessing the Place of *Miko* in the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan,” *History of Religions*, vol. 50, no. 3 (2011), 213-214.

⁷⁵ Ushiyama Yoshiyuki, “Buddhist Convents in Medieval Japan,” *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), 132.

the Kamakura period enough to substitute for monks in certain rituals. Nuns, as well as monks, carried out Buddhist memorial services for the dead and raised funds for the projects such as temple restoration and the dedication of Buddhist scriptures.⁷⁶ Participation in childbirth and praying for expectant mothers were also among the major tasks performed by nuns.

It is highly possible, in particular, that nuns were able to take over the responsibility of the *miko* as a midwife because there had been a significant overlap between the roles of Shintō *miko* and Buddhist nuns. In the Heian period, for instance, Buddhist nuns often acted as *mikō* delivering oracles from Shintō gods or Buddhist bodhisattvas and predicting future events such as the death of an emperor or empress. Kamakura-period sources also commonly mention the overlap that existed between nuns and *mikō*.⁷⁷ The use of a red shoulder sash by nuns also underpins the fact that nuns performed the religious practices originally belonging to *miko*. It is believed that *miko* wore red sashes to prevent their sleeves from impairing the offerings. *Bodai shinshū*, written by Chinkai (1091-1152), notes that nuns also wore a red sash to make offerings and to distinguish themselves from their male counterparts.⁷⁸ I think, therefore, that this fluidity between the roles of nuns and *mikō* can explain why only nuns appear in *Hōnen shōnin e-den* and *Boki ekotoba*. In the two scrolls, the magical power of nuns displaced that of *mikō*, and even that of monks.

⁷⁶ Nishiguchi Junko, “Josei to mōjyakijijitsukuyō,” *Chūsei no josei to bukkō* (Kyōto, Hōzōkan, 2006), 14-17.

⁷⁷ Lori Meeks, “The Disappearing Medium: Reassessing the Place of Miko in the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan,” *History of Religions*, vol. 50, no. 3 (2011), 255.

⁷⁸ Lori Meeks, “Buddhist Renunciation and the Female Life Cycle: Understanding Nunhood in Heian and Kamakura Japan,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 70, no. 1 (June 2010), 28-29.

2.7 DEPENDENCE ON RELIGIOUS EFFICACY FOR A SAFE CHILDBIRTH

In short, many pre-Edo birth scenes including the above-mentioned examples touch upon the prenatal situation. The scenes focus on the moment right before a baby is born. The expectant mother struggles with the extreme labor pain and a large number of people do their best to help a mother in distress and to ensure a safe delivery. The active engagement of a great diversity of religious specialists fills the scenes of childbirth. Their agile movements, such as the act of breaking earthenware, create a busy, bustling atmosphere. Unique shamanistic gestures, as seen in the practice of sprinkling rice, amplify not only the mysterious mood but also the fear of the unknown and of unfavorable results. Selected ritual practices and religious professionals vary somewhat, depending on the themes of the paintings, but the common ground that can be read from pre-Edo birth scenes is that the people at the time relied to a great extent on religious efficacy for the safe childbirth. Religions and religious activities are the pivotal driving force that lead and manage the entire process of pregnancy and childbirth.

How can we understand this high dependence of humans on religion in terms of the birthing events? It is easy to understand that childbirth was the leading cause of death for women in ancient and medieval Japan. A good source for information regarding the births of aristocratic women, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (*Eiga monogatari*, 栄華物語) relates the delivery of forty-seven consorts. Compiled between 1028 and 1107, it records that eleven out of the forty-seven women died over the course of the pregnancy process. According to Satō Chiharu, the mortality rate for women by childbirth in *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* was almost twenty-five

percent.⁷⁹ Given the lack of general medical and obstetrical knowledge, the death rate from childbirth among commoners was not any better. Religious and miraculous powers were the best options at the time.

2.7.1 Presence of *Mononoke*

From the perspective of those living in ancient Japan, the most frightening presence that threatened the life of a pregnant woman were invisible spiritual entities called *mono no ke* (物の怪). Simply translated as ‘evil spirit,’ *mono no ke* was always condemned as the cause of bad luck or fatal disease. People were more afraid of *mono no ke* because it could not be seen. As a formless and hidden presence, it could harm anyone at any time. It revealed its identity through dreams or by possessing a human body for communication. Childbirth was a precarious event for a pregnant woman, as the blood defilement caused by parturition could irritate the gods and place a mother in a vulnerable condition when *mono no ke* could easily strike.

There are two painted visualizations of *mono no ke* looming over a parturient woman and roaming around during childbirth. The first example is from *Hungry Ghost Scroll* (Gakisōshi, 餓鬼草紙). Produced in the late twelfth century, *Hungry Ghost Scroll* provides the earliest scene of a birth. Among other ancient and medieval birthing scenes, it is the only one that chooses the post-partum moment as its theme. As with other medieval handscrolls examined above, the birth

⁷⁹ Satō Chiharu, “Eiga monogatari no osan,” *Osan no minzoku: tokuni sono zokushinshū* (Tōkyō: Nihon Tosho Kankokai, 1997), 19-20; *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* written by several authors narrates aristocratic life and society of the Heian period. It especially focuses on the life of courtier Fujiwara Michinaga (藤原道長, 966-1028) and his family history. For more information and translation of the tale, see William H. McCullough and Helen Craig McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes – Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980).

scene of *Hungry Ghost Scroll* (fig. 2.15) shows many figures involved in the delivery. In the center of the maternity room, the crouching mother looks down at her baby with a face distorted by labor pains. Next to the mother, two birth attendants and an old woman in a white headdress smile happily after confirming the newborn's condition. Given that empty wooden vessels and fragmented earthenware are scattered around the maternity room, the birth attendants must have already performed *koshikiotoshi*. The ritual of *kanzu* message delivery can be seen in the left corner, where a man is about to enter the room holding a long bamboo stick tied with white paper. Drawing attention to the right corner of the scene, a woman with loose hair and red trousers is recognizable as a female shaman. She would have played an important role as a medium (*yorimashi*, 憑坐) who can host evil spirits if they attack the parturient mother. Next to her, a priest wearing Buddhist robes and a string of prayer beads reacts with an open mouth; he must have heard that the baby was born safely. The most striking visual element in this birth scene, however, is a hungry ghost called a *shiei jiben gaki* (伺嬰兒便餓鬼), which is said to like to eat afterbirth and kill newborns.⁸⁰ The hungry ghost, with dark skin and bristled hairs, is creeping over to the newborn, but nobody in the room can see its presence.

The second example that attempts to portray invisible malicious spirits is found in *Illustrated Handscroll of the Yūzū nenbutsu* (1497, Yoshihisa edition, fig. 2.16) owned by Dainenbutsu-ji Temple. As in *Yūzū nenbutsu* scrolls in the Freer Gallery and Chion-in Temple,

⁸⁰ Komatsu Shigemi, *Gakisōshi, Jigokusōshi, Yamainosōshi, Kyūsōshiemaki*, vol. 7 of *Nihon emaki taisei*, eds. Komatsu Shigemi (Tōkyō: Chūō Kōronsha, 1977), 4-5. Originally, *Gaki sōshi* represents a part of Pictures of the Six Paths (*Rokudō-e*). This Buddhist theme illustrates the reincarnation in the Six Worlds: hell, hungry ghosts, animals, fighting spirits, humans and heaven. *Gakisōshi* shows the world of hungry ghosts among these six worlds. Hungry ghosts are depicted in the background of the human world. Only human beings cannot see their presence. Ienaga Saburo, *Scrolls of Hells, Scrolls of Hungry Ghosts and Scrolls of Diseases*, Vol. 7 of *Shinshū Nihon emakimono zenshū*, ed. Ienaga Saburo (Tōkyō: Kadokawa Shoten, 1976), 3. For the background of *Gakisōshi*'s production, see Fernando G. Gutiérrez, "Emakimono Depicting the Pains of the Damned," *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 22, no. 3/4 (1967), 278-289; Yui Suzuki, "Twanging Bows and Throwing Rice: Warding Off Evil in Medieval Japanese Birth Scene," 18.

parturition is taking place inside a house similar to an aristocratic mansion, with a raised and extended floor. Against the backdrop of a painted folding screen adorned with a group of pine trees, the parturient woman is assisted by several female attendants including an old woman. In the next room, a *miko* and a yin-yang diviner can be seen. The *miko*, whose skin appears reddish, is stretching her arms and stamping her feet toward the yin-yang diviner. The red skin and threatening body movements indicate that she is possessed by *mono-no-ke*. By waving a purification wand, the yin-yang diviner is trying to ward off the evil spirit. While every effort is made to secure the safety of a mother and soon-to-arrive baby, an invisible spirit similar to a goblin can be seen lurking behind the folding screen. The *mono-no-ke* grins as if mocking the people who do not know about his presence.⁸¹

2.8 CONCLUSION

Returning to Edo-period birth scenes introduced in the beginning of this chapter, we can ask the question again about the transformation in the ways of representing birth imagery from the medieval to the Edo periods. Why do the birth scenes painted in the handscrolls of the Heian and Kamakura periods focus on the pre-natal moment while the those of the Edo period portray only the post-partum care for the mother and baby? In my opinion, it was because the moment before a baby was born is the time in which insecurity and uncertainty are most heightened. It is the most dangerous time when an expectant mother could be attacked by invisible *mono-no-ke*. By drawing scenes portraying religious professionals performing their specific rituals at the most

⁸¹ Komatsu Wazuhiko, “Mienai mononoke wo egaku – oni, yōkai, yūrei wo megutte,” *Zenkenkyūjo kiyō*, vol. 41 (2012), 10.

unpredictable time when nobody can guarantee a safe birth, the artist suggests that the intervention of religion can protect the expectant mother from bad luck engendered by evil spirits. The emphasis of the birthing scenes is on religious rites and their specialists, rather than on the parturient mother, thereby allowing religions to prove their potency and value in childbirth regardless of the differences in their roots, whether Shintō, Buddhist, and Onmyōdō. In other words, the birth imagery in the medieval period reflects people's perspective on the relation between religion and childbirth. It demonstrates how influential religions were in managing and shaping the process of pregnancy and childbirth.

If so, what significance was connoted in the post-partum birthing scenes of the Edo period? What changed when artists in later times made up their minds to adopt post-natal care for the mother and baby as their themes and draw the first bath of a newborn in a serious manner? It is certain that for most people in pre-modern times childbirth was not a simple and comprehensible event. Without advanced medical knowledge, it must have entailed a lot of controversial issues, such as miscarriages, stillborns, and the deaths of mothers and newborns. When people in the medieval period tried to figure out the causes of their failures and misfortunes, they were able to blame the presence of *mono-no-ke*, the unintended mistakes in carrying out religious rituals, and furthermore, religions themselves. In other words, the responsibility for a safe delivery was wholly dependent upon religions and religious specialists, not the mother. Thanks to religions, the mother was able to stay out of the controversy, avoiding accountability for successful or unsuccessful childbirth. Once the mother became the focus of birthing scenes, along with the newborn baby in the early Edo period, however, she began to be recognized as the main player of the birthing event. The mother was obliged to accomplish a safe delivery and, at the same time, was placed in the position of being responsible for any failure in

the childbirth. The next chapter will examine the process of the shift from medieval birthing scenes that focus on the pre-natal moment to the early Edo scenes that emphasize post-natal care. I will examine the visual precedents for Edo birth imagery and how those childbirth images were inserted in educational books for women, that contributed to shaping and solidifying the ideology of being a dutiful and modest wife.

3.0 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EDO BIRTH IMAGERY: THE EMPHASIS ON POST-PARTUM CARE AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF IDEAL MOTHERHOOD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to say that the transformation of iconographical elements in birth imagery was abrupt, and it is impossible to trace exactly when the change occurred. Although the birth images of *the Tale of Heike* (figs. 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10) examined in the first chapter were produced in the early Edo period, they still followed an earlier medieval way of visualizing various religious efforts to project the dangerous nature of childbirth and to emphasize the protective role of religions. Even before the Edo period, a few post-partum scenes similar to the birth images printed in Edo female educational books (*jokunsho*) are in evidence and are, in my opinion, worth mention as visual precedents of Edo birth imagery.

In this chapter, I will visually analyze those pre-Edo birth images and will scrutinize what kinds of birth-related customs were newly introduced and why certain items were incorporated into the birth scenes. By focusing on the ideological background of the formation of early Edo birth scenes, this chapter will elucidate how and why post-partum scenes, different from medieval pre-natal scenes, developed as an indicator of the event of childbirth in the illustrations

in female educational books (*jokunsho*). In my opinion, the conscious choice of the post-partum phase that captures the desirable outcome—the birth of a healthy baby—as the main scene among several crucial processes of a birthing event is closely associated with Confucian ideology that was promoted by the newly established Tokugawa Shogunate and intended to encourage ideal motherhood.

3.2 TRACING VISUAL PRECEDENTS OF EDO BIRTH IMAGERY

3.2.1 *The Tale of Genji Fan Painting*

Four paintings produced in the early 17th century are good examples of this iconographical transformation and can be analyzed as the visual precedents for later Edo birth imagery. The first notable work (fig. 3.1) is a fan painting dated to the early years of the century. According to the exhibition catalogue published by Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History (神奈川県立歴史博物館), this work is known as *The Tale of Genji Fan Painting* (*Genji monogatarizu senmen*, 源氏物語図扇面, 17th c.).⁸² The unknown author renders two different scenes on the fan's surface. Framed by golden clouds, the left side of the fan captures a scene of three female attendants gathered around big wooden basins; they were likely preparing water to bathe an infant. Behind them is shown a set of black lacquerware containers decorated with gold and red

⁸² *The Tale of Genji Fan Painting* is published in the exhibition catalogue *Tokubetsuten shiroe – inori to kotohogi no katachi*. The description says that the work was produced in the 17th century and now belongs to a private collection. *Tokubetsuten shiroe – inori to kotohogi no katachi*, ed. Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan (Yokohama: Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan, 2014), 96.

inside. The three women are spatially separated from a maternity room by a sliding door embellished with auspicious motifs of pine trees and cranes. To the right of the sliding door, a standing curtain and white folding screens (*shiroe byōbu*, 白江屏風) fully enclose a maternity room with eight female figures including the mother.⁸³ The mother is seated on the far right and the women around her are assisting. It is easy to miss the infant figure cuddled up in the arms of the attendant whose back is against the white-colored folding screen—only the face of the baby, dressed in light blue clothes, can be seen peeking above the attendant’s robe.⁸⁴ Another visual element that can be easily overlooked here are four stacks of *oshioke* jars (押桶) placed in between the two folding screens. Adorned with felicitous symbols for childbirth, like the white folding screens, these cylindrical vessels are assumed to be placenta jars (*enaoke*, 胞衣桶) or earthenware vessels used in the birth ritual – *koshikiotoshi* – that we previously examined. Not only the robes of the figures, but also other objects including the folding screens and *oshioke* are white. It seems that the unknown artist attempted to reproduce the traditional aristocratic way of childbirth in which the color white was believed to foster an auspicious atmosphere and bring good luck for the mother and a baby.

3.2.2 *The Tale of Genji Album*

The Tale of Genji Album (*Genji Monogatari Tekagami*, 源氏物語手鑑) produced in 1612

contains two noteworthy examples of birth scenes. According to Ryusawa Aya, a professor at

⁸³ *Shiroe byōbu* will be examined in greater depth later in this chapter.

⁸⁴ Among many other attendants painted in this fan, only two attendants – one is helping a mother and the other is holding a baby – wear underskirts with red hemlines. Considering the fact that female shamans (*miko*) in ancient Japan typically wore red pants, it can be assumed that the red underskirts of the two attendants also indicate their religious affiliations.

Kinjo Gakuin University, Tosa Mitsuyoshi (土佐光吉, 1539-1613) produced this *Genji Album* as a commission for Ishikawa Tadafusa (石川忠総, 1582-1651), a powerful feudal lord in the Azuchi-Momoyama period.⁸⁵ The first birth scene (fig. 3.2), drawn in vivid colors, visualizes the childbirth of Empress Akashi (明石中宮), which is described in ‘New Herbs (*Wakanajo*, 若菜上),’ the 34th chapter of *the Tale of Genji*. The child of Genji and Lady Akashi, Empress Akashi marries Emperor Kinjō. The scene depicts her giving birth to her son at her mother’s palace at Rokujoin (六条院), Genji’s mansion. Against the background of dark green tatami mats, the image of Empress Akashi is rendered at the far right. An attendant is supporting her by holding both of her hands as she tries to reach her son who is nestled in the arms of her step-mother, Lady Murasaki (紫の上).⁸⁶ Right behind her are a set of black lacquerware vessels similar to those in the *Tale of Genji Fan Painting* (fig. 3.1). What is different here is that the *oshioke* (cylindrical vessels) can be clearly seen piled up in four tiers right outside of the maternity room. Against colorfully represented elements, such as the green mats, golden clouds, and the women’s red and blue garments, the plain white *oshioke*, without any auspicious motifs, immediately catch the eyes of viewers. By this time, white *oshioke* must have been regarded as necessary items to

⁸⁵ *The Tale of Genji Album* (1612) carries notes (*kotobagaki*) written by eighteen aristocrats, including Nakanoin Michimura (中院通村, 1588-1653), Karasumaru Mitsuhiro (烏丸光広 1579-1638), Sanjonishi Saneeda (三条西実条, 1575-1640), and Yamashina Tokio (山科言緒, 1577-1620). According to Ryusawa Aya, Yamashina Tokio mentioned in his diary, *Tokio-kyōki* (言緒卿記), that he wrote the foreword for a *Tale of Genji Album* (源氏物語手鑑) owned by Ishikawa Tadafusa on the 30th day of the 7th month of 1612. Ryusawa Aya claims, from this record, that the *Tale of Genji Album* by Tosa Mitsuyoshi was made in 1612. Yotsuzushi Hideki, Yoshikawa Miho, and Ryusawa Aya, *Kaigade tsuzuru genjimonogatari – egakitsugareta genjie no keifu*, ed. Tokugawa Art Museum (Nagoya: Tokugawa bijutsukan, 2005), 137-138.

⁸⁶ It is also possible that Murasaki is just one of the many attendants. The inscription accompanying the scene, however, states that her (Empress Akashi’s) stepmother sat in the maternity room and held her baby. The position of the female figure in the center of the composition and her remarkably colorful multi-layered clothing reflect that she is an important character in the story and also an individual of high court rank. *Tokubetsuten shiroe – inori to kotohogi no katachi*, ed. Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan (Yokohama: Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan, 2014), 95.

properly prepare for birthing events particularly for the aristocratic class. Besides, it seems that around this time *oshioke* became important visual indicators of childbirth scenes.

The Tale of Genji Album also includes the delivery scene (fig. 3.3) of Naka no kimi (中の君), which is described in the 49th chapter titled ‘The Ivy (Yadorigi, 宿木).’ Along with several other of Genji’s descendants, Naka no kimi becomes one of the main characters of the story after Genji’s death. She marries Fragrant Highness (Nio no miya, 匂宮), the grandson of Genji and the third son of Empress Akashi, and bears Fragrant Highness a son. Unlike the birth scene of ‘New Herbs,’ the image of the ‘The Ivy’ chapter combines medieval and Edo traditions in depicting childbirth. Wearing red and white robes identical to that of Empress Akashi, Naka no kimi is surrounded by three attendants. The baby has not yet been born. The way in which other visual elements are represented, however, is more similar to images of birth in the Edo period. For example, the delivery is taking place in a closed space made visible by a technique known as “blown off roof (*fukinuki yatai*, 吹き抜き屋台).” Although the scene also illustrates adjacent rooms, patches of golden clouds obscure our view and confine the attention only to four women involved in the birthing event. It can be easily imagined that religious rituals for Naka no kimi’s safe delivery are in full swing somewhere. Instead of diverse rites and performances by religious professionals, however, Tosa Mitsuyoshi chose to represent only birth-related items – white *oshioke* and a set of black and gold lacquerware vessels in the inner room, which indicate that the scene is about the childbirth of Naka no kimi.

3.2.3 *The Original Reality of Sumiyoshi*

The last important work, *the Original Reality of Sumiyoshi* (*Sumiyoshi no honji*, 住吉の本地, 17thc. fig.3.4), illustrates Empress consort Jingū (*Jingū-kōgō*, 神功皇后, 169-269) giving birth to her son, Emperor Ōjin (Ōjin-tenno, 応神天皇, 200-310).⁸⁷ Unlike the previous three scenes from the stories of *The Tale of Genji*, its birthing scene focuses on the bathing of the baby Ōjin. The bath is taking place right outside of the maternity room, the area of the wooden floor without the green tatami mats. Several female attendants, whose all white dress highlights the symbolic meaning of ‘white’ in birthing events, bathe the naked baby Ōjin inside a black and gold lacquered bathtub. Empress consort Jingū can be seen just inside an adjacent room. Enveloped by a white robe, she watches her son’s first bath. One interesting aspect is that her hair style with large buns neither contemporary to the time of the scroll nor with the style of her female attendants.⁸⁸ It seems that the artist was attempting to make reference to the ancient period in which the mythic story of Empress Jingū was set.

⁸⁷ This work represents a scene from a handscroll painting, *The Original Reality of Sumiyoshi* (*Sumiyoshi no honji*, 住吉の本地, 17thc.). Including the origin of the Sumiyoshi god (住吉神), its first half depicts the miracles that the god performed, such as the conquest of Silla (新羅, 57 BCE -935 CE), which was performed by Empress Consort Jingū. Based on military tales, such as *Rise and Fall of Genji and Heike: Ancient Family Saga* (Genpei seisuiiki, 源平盛衰記) and *The Tale of Heike* (Heike monogatari, 平家物語), the second half delineates how the miraculous power of the Sumiyoshi god protected the country. *Tokubetsuten shiroe – inori to kotohogi no katachi*, ed. Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan (Yokohama: Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan, 2014), 98.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

3.2.4 The Emphasis on Postpartum Care: The Iconographical Transformation of Birthing Images in the Early Edo Period

The aforementioned four birth scenes are dissimilar from each other in their genre, which are respectively categorized into fan painting, album painting, and handscroll painting. They are also different in the way of rendering mother and baby figures, arranging architectural elements, and adopting or rejecting certain birth rituals.

However, shared traits still exist, and none of the four images entirely follow the medieval manner of depicting births. They do not accentuate the specific types of religious efforts that were traditionally mobilized to make childbirth safe. Instead, they focus on how the participants are dealing with the post-partum situation, as seen in the later birth images published in female educational books. The scenes show birth attendants taking care of the mother and the bathing of the infant.

The way of representing birth-related implements, such as lacquerwares and *oshioke* vessels, is also analogous with examples of the later birth imagery. In medieval handscrolls, birth-related items were mostly rendered as ‘being used’ in some way— thrown and broken in the *Illustrated Handscroll of Hikohohodemi no Mikoto* (fig. 2.5) and *Hungry Ghost Scrolls* (fig. 2.15) and to hold sand or rice (*Illustrated Handscroll of Legends of the Kitano Shrine*, fig. 2.6). But the four paintings made in the transitional years of the early seventeenth century simply ‘place’ lacquer wares and *oshioke* vessels on the floor at the scene. This is similar to the way in which the birth images of *The Collection of Women’s Etiquette* (fig. 2.1), *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (fig. 2.2) and *A mirror of Women* (fig. 2.3) ‘arrange’ various birth-related items on the birthing shelves. The presence of lacquer wares and *oshioke* vessels is to remind the

viewers of the fact that a birthing event is taking place. Otherwise the scene could be easily mistaken as a simple interior setting for a story involving many female characters.

Returning to the question regarding the iconographical formation of the birth imagery in the Edo period, such similarity found in the way of arranging birth-related items and depicting a mother and an infant allows us to assume that these early 17th century polychromatic birth images played a certain role as a visual prototype. Each of the aforementioned birth scenes feature at least one or more birth-related visual elements, ranging from objects such as *oshioke* vessels and white folding screens to the ritual of infant bathing, all of which later became emblematic motifs for a birthing event. All of these visual motifs appear together in later birth images in female educational books and serve as essential features that determine the occurrence of childbirth. It is highly probable that authors and printmakers referred to these early 17th century polychromatic works when they produced the birth imagery for female educational books.

This “borrowing” or “adopting” from previous images was not exceptional. Edo woodblock illustrations, for example, often “borrowed” certain scenes from handscroll, album, and fan paintings that were produced in the earlier periods, usually from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Once adopted, they soon became the standard iconography for some thematic scenes through endless reproduction. Genji paintings are the most representative case of such a repetition and appropriation. As Haruo Shirane points out, Genji paintings, drawn usually by the Tosa artists in the sixteenth century, provided a source of visual reference for subsequent Genji-related paintings. For example, Yamamoto Shunshō (山本春正, 1610-1682) borrowed the iconography of *The Tale of Genji Fan Painting Screen* (*Genji monogatari-e senmen chirashi byōbu*, 源氏物語繪扇面散屏風, 16th c.), now housed in Jōdoji temple (浄土寺), for the

illustration of ‘Evening Faces (Yūgao, 夕顔)’ chapter in *Illustrated Tale of Genji* (*Eiri Genji monogatari*, 絵入源氏物語, 1654), the first printed edition of Genji paintings.⁸⁹ Likewise, it seems that the later printed versions of birth scenes contained in *The Collection of Women’s Etiquette* (fig. 2.1), *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (fig. 2.2), and *A Mirror of Women* (fig. 2.3) may collectively encapsulate birth-related visual motifs derived from early 17th polychromatic scenes. Against the social backdrop of the popularity of classical texts in the early Edo period, the next section of this chapter looks more deeply into how visualized classical texts influenced the printed images of female educational books and why birth scenes taken from classical *Genji* images attracted female viewers, particularly from middle class samurai families.

3.3 THE FORMATION OF EDO BIRTH IMAGERY: THE APPROPRIATION OF THE CULTURAL AUTHORITY OF GENJI PAINTINGS

Among many other visual sources, birth scenes from *Genji*-themed paintings had the biggest influence on the formation of birth imagery in female educational books in the late 17th century. This can be attributed to the cultural authority that *The Tale of Genji* acquired among female audiences in the Edo period. There were some classics that gained great popularity as ancient literary sources regardless of gender or class, but *The Tale of Genji* was especially appreciated and acknowledged by female readers as the cultural capital that could provide courtly taste and aristocratic customs, including birth customs.

⁸⁹ Haruo Shirane, “The Tale of Genji and the Dynamics of Cultural Production – Canonization and Popularization,” in *Envisioning the Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 32-35.

According to Joshua Mostow, not every classical text was received with high demand. In the Edo period, the three most read classical texts were: *A Hundreds Poems by a Hundred Poets* (*hyakunin isshu*, 百人一首), *the Tale of Ise* (*Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語), and *the Tale of Genji*. These three ancient literary works, dating to the Heian period, experienced multiple transformations into various media, including illustrated handscrolls and screen paintings. During the Edo period, lots of commentaries and printed editions of these texts were circulated in great numbers. In 1608 the very first printed version of *The Tale of Ise* (called the *Saga-bon Ise*, 嵯峨本伊勢) with illustrations appeared on the book market. In 1630s the commentaries of *A Hundreds Poems by a Hundred Poets* and *the Tale of Ise* by Hosokawa Yūsai (細川幽齋, 1534-1610) reached the populace. Finally, by the mid 17th century, illustrated versions of *The Tale of Genji* were introduced to Edo audiences in all its myriad forms: these included *Illustrated Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari-e senmen chirashi byōbu*, 源氏物語繪扇面散屏風, 16th c.) by Yamamoto Shunshō, *Ten-Book Genji* (*Jūjō Genji*, 十帖源氏, 1654) by Nonoguchi Ryūho (野々口立圃, 1595-1669), and *A Mirror of Genji Hair-Styles* (*Genji binkagami*, 源氏鬢鑑, 1660) by an anonymous compiler.⁹⁰ Interestingly, among these widely circulated classical texts, including *A Hundred Poems by a Hundred Poets* and *the Tale of Ise*, *the Tale of Genji* is the only work that contains several episodes related to the birth of its characters and, at the same time, introduces to the public the visual representation of the birthing stories using various genres.

In terms of reading and learning classical texts, *The Tale of Genji* had more significant meaning for its female audience at the time. It certainly went beyond a simple means for

⁹⁰ Joshua Mostow, “Illustrated Classical Texts for Women in the Edo Period,” in *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan*, eds. P.F. Kornicki, Mara Patessio, and G.G. Rowley (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 2010), 59-85; Joshua Mostow, “Genji monogatari to jokunsho,” *Genjimonogatari to edo bunka: kashikasareru kazoku*, eds. Kojima Naoko, Komine kazuaki, and Watanabe Kenji (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2008), 337-346.

enhancing literary skills. *The Tale of Genji* was accepted and appreciated as a cultural repository of traditional courtly practices and polished aristocratic tastes. The acquisition of the knowledge and information about ancient culture through *Genji* story and *Genji*-themed paintings were essential prerequisite for well-educated and refined elite women.⁹¹

The aspiration for ancient classical texts such as *the Tale of Genji* was soon extended to the desire to pictorialize the ancient court society on which the story was based. The important episodes of the *Genji* story were visualized and transformed into multiple forms – albums, fans, and screens. It seems that at first these *Genji*-themed paintings were made with clear educational purpose. For example, *Genji*-themed paintings first produced in the forms of albums and fans would be later pasted into folding screens. McCormick mentions that folding screens with principal scenes of the fifty-four chapters of *Genji* were possibly placed and displayed in front of audiences during lectures to facilitate the understanding of the story.⁹²

⁹¹ There was, in fact, a conscious endeavor by the imperial family behind the revival of *the Tale of Genji* as canonical classics. According to Mitamura Masako, the imperial family regarded the *Tale of Genji* as ‘its own familial work (家の学文).’ Emperor Go-Yōzei (後陽成天皇, 1571-1617), who reigned in the late 16th century, was the very first and central court figure who attempted to restore courtly culture with *The Tale of Genji* as its center. He gave a lecture on *the Tale of Genji* himself and also commissioned many *Genji*-themed paintings including those by Tosa Mitsuyoshi. As Emperor Go-Yōzei intended, *The Tale of Genji* was soon acknowledged as an “ancient classic” that represents courtly taste and splendor, and its cultural authority was ardently admired by newly emerging military class. Mitamura Masako, “Genjimonogatari no seijigaku – kyoiku sisutemu toshiteno genjie to hina,” *Japanese Literature*, vol. 55, no. 10 (2007), 53-54.

⁹² Melissa McCormick and Laura Allen introduce in their research more detailed circumstances regarding how *the Tale of Genji* was studied and appropriated into other artistic genres. Two major activities were copying *Genji* manuscripts and recording lectures. A group of court figures interested in medieval aristocratic culture eagerly transcribed *Genji* manuscripts entirely or partly and circulated them not only in the capital but also into the local areas. At the same time, they were the authors of secondary *Genji* texts, such as commentaries and manuals, derived from the contents put down in *Genji* lectures. Referring to the gathering once held in 1516 by Sōseki (1474-1533), a famous *renga* master, at the Sue family residence, McCormick presents what types of contents Sōseki delivered to his audience in *Genji* lecture. Sōseki dealt with a wide variety of matters ranging from the author, Murasaki Shikibu, to the titles of the fifty-four chapters. He also addressed the intention of each chapter, the whole structure of the narrative and the lesson of the story. On a more practical level, the lecture handled the court practices and rituals that appeared in the story. It included the explanations even on how to style dress for court men and women and how to cook and eat proper food in court. Although the lecture by Sōseki occurred earlier (early 16th c.) than the time that we deal with here, it still allows us to understand how *the Tale of Genji*, 11th century court novel, first began to be revered, commemorated, and finally spread into the public in later times. Melissa McCormick, “Genji Goes West: The 1510 “Genji Album” and the Visualization of Court and Capital,” *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 85, no.1 (2003), 65-67.

The act of visualizing *The Tale of Genji* soon came to retain more serious cultural significance beyond its simple educational purpose. All courtiers and men with military background were eager to own reproductions of *Genji* paintings. Ownership of recreated *Genji* arts did not only represent a desire to acquire knowledge of ancient history and culture through classical texts. It also stood for the refinement of the owner and was closely associated with the social aspirations among rising warriors and commoners, who sought to identify themselves with court tastes.

Returning to the issue of female education, in this social context, the possession of *Genji*-related arts became in itself a symbol for the cultivation of women and the bridal family. *Genji*-themed paintings, thus, were occasionally included among the lists of wedding presents and bridal trousseaux especially for the women from the warrior class who were trying to validate their cultural identity as a fledging social group. One representative example is a dowry set of small lacquer boxes and a set of shells adorned with *Genji*-related visual motifs. Both were items presumably owned by high nobles, such as Empress Tōfukumon'in (東福門院), wife of Emperor Go-mizunoo and the daughter of Tokugawa Hidetada (徳川秀忠, 1579-1632), the second shogun of the Edo period.⁹³ Being born to a family with a military background, she needed to present herself as a person of ideal womanhood suited for an aristocratic courtly life when she married into the imperial family. As Laura Allen suggests, the possession of such objects indicated that women were well aware of the ideal of womanhood described and encouraged in the *Genji* story and, thus, she would eventually lead a successful marriage as a good wife and mother. Likewise, bringing objects with *Genji*-themed motifs as a dowry set to a marriage must

⁹³ Her original name is Tokugawa Masako (徳川和子, 1607-1678).

have helped Empress Tōfukumon'in put herself forward as a proud member of the imperial family who was well versed in courtly tastes and practices.⁹⁴

I propose that illustrations of childbirth in late-17th century female educational books can be understood in the same vein. The aforementioned birth scenes from *The Tale of Genji Fan Painting* (fig. 3.1) and *the Tale of Genji Album* (figs. 3.2 and 3.3) could be simply illustrated versions of the story to explain major scenes of certain chapters. As McCormick addresses, they would probably have assisted the audience who participated in *Genji* lectures in identifying the titles of each chapter and its narrative. We cannot overlook, however, that at the same time these works were recognized as the faithful portrayal of the birth customs practiced and cherished by aristocrats and the imperial family. In this case, the birth scenes from *The Tale of Genji Fan Painting* (fig. 3.1) and *the Tale of Genji Album* (figs. 3.2 and 3.3) would function as supplementary visual references to show how birthing events were carried out and performed among the upper classes long ago, as studying *the Tale of Genji* implied not only reading classical literature but also rediscovering ancient customs and practices that were long forgotten.

If then, we can understand the purpose of *The Collection of Women's Etiquette* (*Onna shorei shū*, 女諸礼集, 1660, fig.2.1) in a similar context. The book was published in 1660 by Tanaka Bun'nai (田中文内), a publishing house established in Kyoto. Although the author is anonymous, the publication had a clear objective; it consisted of six volumes of information on female etiquette from military families and attempted to standardize it. According to Masuda Toshimi, information on the manners and decorum for men of the samurai class was already compiled and systemized during the Muromachi period. The publication of female educational

⁹⁴ Laura W. Allen, "Japanese Exemplars for a New Age: Genji Paintings from the Seventeenth Century Tosa School," in *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Paintings, 1600-1700*, ed. Elizabeth Lillehoj (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 103-113.

books specifically targeting women from the military class, thus, corresponded to the compilation of the manner books for samurai men, and *The collection of Women's Etiquette* was the first in that effort.⁹⁵ There is no doubt that the publisher of *the Collection of Women's Etiquette* endeavored to establish high standards and comprehensive norms to which women with military backgrounds could aspire to conform.

As its two small titles – the birth of nobles (*gozensama tanjau*, 御ぜんさまたんじゃう) and birthing shelves for parturition rooms (*sanya no ubutana*, さんやのうぶたな) – indicate, the birth scene (fig. 2.1) in *the Collection of Women's Etiquette* illustrates how a mother and an infant should be cared after delivery and what kinds of objects should be prepared in an upper class birth. As already seen above, this birth scene shares principal visual elements – the presence of the mother, the bathing of an infant baby, and the arrangement of *oshioke* vessels – in common with those of *The Tale of Genji Fan Painting* (fig.3.1) and *the Tale of Genji Album* (figs.3.2 and 3.3). I think the unknown author of this book intended to instruct his/her targeted female readers on how childbirth should be prepared at the highest level of standard. It was an inevitable choice for the author to refer to ancient visual sources, such as *Genji*-themed arts, which were regarded as legitimate and prestigious.

In sum, early 17th century polychromatic birth scenes depicted in album, fan, and screen paintings that based their themes around classical stories such as *the Tale of Genji* contributed to the formation of late 17th century printed birth images by playing a crucial role as visual precedents. It can be said that they had an effect on the producers of female educational books when artistic decisions had to be made regarding how main characters – mother, baby, and attendant – should be represented, what birth-related objects should be included, and in how

⁹⁵ Masuda Toshimi, “Kaidai – onna shorei shū,” *Edojidai josei bunko*, vol 61. (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1997), 1-2.

architectural space should be arranged. It is highly probable that the authors relied on the old visual sources that exhibited the lifestyles of aristocrats and the royal family, anticipating easy reception and high circulation among female readers who were eager to emulate the upper classes.

The next part of this chapter examines the socio-cultural meaning of the printed illustrations of childbirth in the early Edo period and traces their ideological background. While the previous section looks into where the stereotypical birth imagery of female educational books originated, focusing on their visual similarity with the pictorial versions of classical texts, I will scrutinize what didactic meanings female audience were intended to read from the birth scenes of classical stories with an emphasis on the case of *The Tale of Genji*. As mentioned above, *The Tale of Genji* as an edifying text was encouraged and promoted, not just because of its cultural authority, but also because of its contents regarding ideal womanhood and especially motherhood. Thus, the last part of this chapter will examine in a more detailed manner whose childbirth was usually depicted among the many characters of the Genji story, how modern critics abstracted the image of ideal motherhood from those birthing stories, and finally how such educational intentions were incorporated into the printed version of childbirth.

3.4 THE IDEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE FORMATION OF EARLY EDO BIRTH IMAGERY: GENJI PAINTINGS AS DIDACTIC VISUAL TEXTS AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF MOTHERHOOD

3.4.1 The Destiny of Unfaithful Mothers

As a story that covers the entire life span of Genji and his descendants, *the Tale of Genji* recounts several events associated with the births of its characters. The first ‘childbirth’ mentioned in the story is that of the protagonist, Genji, in the first chapter, “The Paulownia Pavilion (*Kiritsubo*, 桐壺).” Genji was born as an imperial prince to the Emperor (Kritsubo no Mikado) and his favorite concubine, Lady Kiritsubo. Although the emperor loved Kiritsubo more than any of his other wives, she was of low rank and, thus, did not have the familial backing to confront the jealous resentment of Lady Kokiden, an emperor’s consort of higher rank. The lack of political support from her natal family put Lady Kiritsubo in a disadvantageous position at court, and this unfortunate circumstance hastened her early death. When she died, Genji was only three years old.

As scholars have already pointed out, the loss of his mother at such an early age affected his relationships with other women throughout his life. His many attempts to find a mother figure, or a woman who looked like his mother, and his longing for his mother becomes a crucial plot device that determines and twists Genji’s karmic destiny in the story.⁹⁶ Later when the

⁹⁶ After a series of disappointing romantic relationships with women, Genji leaves for the Kitayama mountains in the northern area of Kyoto, and there he meets Murasaki (Murasaki no ue, 紫上), a 10-year-old girl, who turns out to be a niece of Lady Fujitsubo. Genji takes her to his residence, educates her, and finally falls in love with her. According to scholars such as Saito, Ikeda, and Knapp, the reason why the encounter with Murasaki strikes Genji is because Murasaki greatly resembles Lady Fujitsubo, who in turn resembles Lady Kiritsubo. Saito Satsuki, “Genji monogatari ni okeru haha to iu sonzai – Murasaki no Ue ron ni mukete,” *Musashino daigaku daigakuin nigenshakai*

Emperor (Kiritsubo no Mikado) married Lady Fujitsubo (藤壺) because she resembled the deceased Lady Kiritsubo, Genji also fell in love with her. But, a secret love affair between Genji and his stepmother soon ended with the illegitimate birth of their son, Reizei (冷泉), who later became Emperor Reizei. Genji deceived his own father and had improper relations with his stepmother, and Reizei was the living evidence of his misconduct. Genji's deed returns to him with the betrayal of his youngest wife, the Third Princess (Onna san no miya, 女三宮), who gives birth to Kaoru (薫) as the result of an affair with Genji's nephew, Kashiwagi (柏木).

Genji pays for his misdeed by being placed in the same situation as his father and having to accept Kaoru as his own son, but what happened to the mothers—Lady Fujitsubo and the Third Princess—who were unfaithful to their husbands? How did this experience shape their lives? Omori Junko's research gives us an interesting perspective on the pregnancy and childbirth in *The Tale of Genji*. She divides the maternal experiences of each female character from classical stories into two types. In the first type, accepted as 'normal,' the story describes the entire process of childbirth from pregnancy to delivery to bringing-up the child. The symptoms of pregnancy are expressed as physical and physiological changes, such as 'the delay and cease of menstruation'. But the second type of pregnancy is vaguely intimated by the emotional unrest of the expectant mother. The process of childbirth, including the confirmation of pregnancy, is omitted from the storyline. Rather than detailed and concrete experience, a feeling of anxiety and anguish dominates the entire pregnancy. According to Omori, childbirths described in classical stories, such as *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (*Eiga no monogatari*, 栄華

bunkakenkyu, vol.3 (Tokyo: Musashino daigaku daigakuin kenkyūshi henshūinkai, 2009), 160-161; Bettina L. Knapp, *Images of Japanese Women: A Westerner's View* (Troy, NY: Whitson Publishing Company, 1992), 40-42; Ikeda Setsuko, "Genji monogatari ni okeru haha," *Nihon bunka kenkyu*, vol. 10, (2013), 16-17.

物語, 11th c.) and *The Tale of the Hollow Tree* (*Utsubo monogatari*, 宇津保物語, late 10th c.), are of the first type –ordinary experience. On the other hand, several birthing stories introduced in *the Tale of Genji* follow the second type where the expectant mother first ties herself in knots, shakes with fright, and then becomes anxious during the entire pregnant period. Omori suggests that the fear of childbirth in this type comes from the fact that the expectant mother does not know for sure who is the father of the child she is carrying. For this reason, Omori Junko calls such pregnancies in *the Tale of Genji* represent ‘time on the verge’ because the expectant mother lives in the moment of destiny when her infidelity will be revealed by the birth.⁹⁷

Following the research of Omori, we can easily categorize the childbirth of Lady Fujitsubo and the Third Princess as ‘the second type.’ In the story of *Genji*, Lady Fujitsubo and the Third Princess could not escape the fears that would come at the birth and therefore chose a religious way to atone. After the birth of Reizei, Lady Fujitsubo is afflicted by the consequences of her immorality and distances herself from Genji. She becomes more nervous about having her secret exposed because of Reizei’s resemblance to Genji, and believes that the only way to escape from all the pressure was to take vows and become a nun. The case of the Third Princess is similar. She decides to take the tonsure following the difficult delivery of Kaoru. During the Heian period “leaving home and taking vows (shukke, 出家)” commonly occurred among lay people. Taking vows was believed to be a quick way to accumulate virtue that could cure ailments as well as clear away bad karma. Lay renunciation, in the case of women, was an effective way to end their marriages without any social or financial conflicts. Also, as Lori Meeks and Katsuura point out, taking the precepts meant for women announcing the

⁹⁷ Omori Junko, “Genji monogatari harami no jikan – kainin, shussan no genjitsu wo megutte,” *Japanese Literature*, vol. 44, no. 6, (1995), 1-3.

abandonment of their sexual lives and female identities. Women desexualized their gender by removing some of their hair and covering it after renunciation.⁹⁸ By taking the tonsure, they were not only able to avoid awkward and guilty relationships with the men—their husbands and lovers—but also able to repent for adultery by rejecting all sexual desire and activity.

The message conveyed by the two episodes related to the birth of Reizei and Kaoru is clear. Infidelity has its retributive consequences, and *the Tale of Genji* employs ‘childbirth’ as a medium to present the outcome of the sinful acts of unfaithful mothers, like Lady Fujitsubo, and the Third Princess.

3.4.2 Empress Akashi as an Emblem of a Faithful Woman

Not every birthing event in *Genji* resembles the cases of Lady Fujitsubo and the Third Princess. As Omori indicates, Empress Akashi’s pregnancy is exceptional in the sense that it can be categorized as ‘normal.’ She marries the crown prince who later becomes Emperor Kinjō and has four children with him. She gives birth to her first son at the age of thirteen and, unlike the cases of other female characters in *The Tale of Genji*, the story of her childbirth is described in a detailed manner from the moment she confirms her pregnancy. Not only her delivery, but the way she raises her first son is also included in the story.⁹⁹

Why the pregnancy of Empress Akashi was made an exception in *Genji* can lead us to another important question about why the previously examined *The Tale of Genji Album* (*Genji monogatari tekagami*, 源氏物語手鑑, 1612, figs. 3.2 and 3.3), housed in Kubosō Memorial

⁹⁸ Lori Meeks, “Buddhist Renunciation and the Female Life Cycle – Understanding Nunhood in Heian and Kamakura Japan,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (2010), 7-40.

⁹⁹ Omori Junko, “Genji monogatari harami no jikan – kainin, shussan no genjitsu wo megutte,” 1-3.

Museum of Arts, Izumi (和泉市久保惣記念美術館), included the scenes of the childbirths of Empress Akashi and Naka no Kimi (中の君) among the many other birth-related episodes in the story.

A similar question was already raised by Nojima Miho.¹⁰⁰ In her article, she compares scenes from *The Tale of Genji Album* in the Kubosō Memorial Museum of Arts with those now stored in the Kyoto National Museum (京都国立博物館). Both album paintings were produced by the Tosa workshop around the same time, but they make different choices in which scenes were depicted. In the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album*, comprised of eighty scenes, Tosa Mitsuyoshi picked one to four scenes from each of the fifty-four chapters. Many scenes correspond to those included in the Kyoto Museum's *Genji Album*, but according to Nojima, the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* adopted additional scenes from certain chapters, such as 'The Shell of the Locust (Utsusemi, 空蟬),' 'Lavender (Waka Murasaki, 若紫),' 'The Jeweled Chaplet (Tamakazura 玉鬘),' 'The First Song of the Year (Hatsune, 初音),' 'New Herbs (Wakana, 若菜),' 'The Oak Tree (Kashiwagi, 柏木),' and 'The Ivy (Yadorigi, 宿木), that did not appear in the Kyoto Museum's *Genji Album*.¹⁰¹

Nojima points out that the newly added scenes are all in some way associated with the birth and upbringing of children, and this feature makes the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* unique because in plots centering on the romantic adventures of male characters, child-related stories and scenes had not heretofore been significantly dealt with.¹⁰² The two birthing events chosen by Tosa Mitsuyoshi in the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* respectively depict 1) the

¹⁰⁰ Nojima Miho, "Tosa Mitsuyoshi hitsu genji monogatari tekagami ni kansuru ichikōsatsu – tosa ha genjie to no jōkei sentaku no hikaku wo tooshite," in *Keisen Academia*, vol.16 (2011), 22-41.

¹⁰¹ Nojima Miho, 22-24.

¹⁰² Nojima Miho, 34.

birth of Empress Akashi's son (fig.3.2) and Genji's grandson, and 2) the birth of Fragrant Highness's (Nio no miya, 匂宮) son (fig.3.3). Because Fragrant Highness is Empress Akashi's third son, his son is Genji's grand-grandson. Nojima asserts that the two birth scenes in the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* were purposely adopted to demonstrate how Genji's family successfully continues.¹⁰³

Furthermore, Nojima assumes that the target audience of the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* were the members of the Tokugawa family, including Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康, 1543-1616), from the fact that Ishikawa Tadafusa (石川忠総, 1582-1650), who commissioned the work, was closely related to Ieyasu. As the head of a military clan, Ieyasu really hoped to learn about aristocratic culture from *The Tale of Genji*, so he attended the Genji lecture arranged by Ishikawa Tadafusa and given by Nakanoin Michimura (中院通村, 1588-1653), a prestigious aristocrat of the time. It is not difficult to assume that Ishikawa Tadafusa, the commissioner of the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album*, would have influenced Tosa Mitsuyoshi's artistic decisions and encouraged him to the interests of Ieyasu, who intended to revive the military regime and its culture. The representation of the succession of Genji's bloodline in the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* would have appealed to Tokugawa Ieyasu, who as the first shogun of a newly emerging military government wished his offspring to prosper¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Nojima Miho, 39.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

3.4.3 The Encouragement of Ideal Motherhood

Building upon Nojima's study, it is my contention that the birth imagery in the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* does not simply illustrate the succession of Genji's bloodline, but rather was adopted and included as one of eighty other scenes in the *Album* because the birth of Empress Akashi's son best demonstrated Empress Akashi as an ideal mother. As Nojima briefly mentions, the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* shows different ways of depicting female characters. In *The Tale of Genji*, the gaze of male characters at female characters is mostly voyeuristic, and women are perceived as sexual objects that can be dominated, conquered, and even raped by the male characters such as Genji and Kashiwagi. The Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album*, however, emphasizes the maternal aspects of women by highlighting the scenes of Empress Akashi's and Naka no Kimi's childbirths.¹⁰⁵ In this visual strategy, the images of Empress Akashi and Naka no Kimi as ideal mothers are accepted as an extension of their images as good daughters and faithful wives by an audience well aware of their personal histories. Thus, in pre-modern social conceptions of women, someone can be a good mother because they were a good wife and daughter.

As the only daughter of Genji, the main protagonist of the novel, Empress Akashi's personal history, in particular, has been often studied by scholars. What is most frequently mentioned about her life is that she was born to a mother with a relatively humble background compared to that of her father, Genji. Her mother, Lady Akashi (Akashi no kimi, 明石の君), was born as a middle-ranked noble based on the Akashi coast. Genji and Lady Akashi met when Genji was living in the provinces, trying to deal with personal hardships incurred by his reckless

¹⁰⁵ Nojima Miho, 36.

pursuit of a love affair with Lady Oborozukiyo, the current emperor's consort. With the active intervention of Lady Akashi's father who was the former governor of Harima, Genji and Lady Akashi had a short love affair that resulted in the birth of Empress Akashi.

When recounting the childhood of Empress Akashi, the studies focus on, first of all, Genji's effort to elevate the status of Empress Akashi within the imperial family and, second, how Empress Akashi behaved when she faced unprecedented predicaments, including the discovery of the truth of her real mother and birth. Among the studies on Empress Akashi's life, Xiaoyan Zhao examines how Genji used ceremonial rites of passage, such as 'wearing loose trousers (*hakamagi*, 袴着)' and 'receiving a pleated skirt (*mogi*, 裳着),' to strengthen and solidify Empress Akashi's rank in the social circle of the aristocrats. According to Zhao, Genji was always distressed about the fact that his only daughter was born to a middle-ranked local noble woman and raised in a remote region far from the capital. The first action that Genji took for his daughter was to send a nanny to Akashi when Empress Akashi had her 'Fiftieth Day Celebration (*ika no oiwai*, 五十日のお祝い),' one of the important birth-related rituals (*ubuyashinai*, 産養) at the time. Genji picked the nanny from court women of high-rank who could educate Empress Akashi on court etiquette.¹⁰⁶ The second intervention of Genji in Empress Akashi's growth happened when she became three and had the ceremony of 'wearing loose trousers (*hakamagi*).' 'Hakamagi' is another essential birth-related ritual of ancient Japanese aristocratic society. The ceremony is usually sponsored by the paternal family and the child is officially acknowledged as a member of his/her paternal family by wearing loose trousers for the first time. According to Zhao, Genji utilized this ceremony not just as an opportunity for the

¹⁰⁶ Xiaoyan Zhao, "Genji monogatari ni okeru Akashi himegimi no jinsei girei – mogi ni yoru tenshin to ekkyō," *Journal of East Asian Studies*, no.13 (2015), 158-161.

acceptance of Empress Akashi to his family, but also as a chance to officially change Empress Akashi's mother from Lady Akashi to Lady Murasaki (Murasaki no Ue, 紫の上), another wife of higher rank. To accomplish his plan, Genji brought Empress Akashi from Akashi to stay with Lady Murasaki at his mansion and put forth Lady Murasaki as Empress Akashi's mother in the ceremony of *'hakamagi'*.¹⁰⁷ At first, Lady Akashi resists Genji's wishes to have her adopted by Lady Murasaki, but the Akashi Nun (Akashi no Amakimi, 明石の尼君), Lady Akashi's mother, persuades her daughter to send Empress Akashi to Genji to guarantee her a better future. After the age of three, then, Empress Akashi lives with Lady Murasaki and considers her her real mother. She does not learn who her real mother is until much later when she gives a birth to her first son.

While Xiaoyan Zhao focuses on Genji's endeavors to assure a better future for Empress Akashi, Suzuki Hiroko analyzes the story from Empress Akashi's point of view. His study highlights how Empress Akashi reacted to unfavorable changes in her life, which sometimes were precipitated by her father, Genji, and bore herself well as a daughter, a wife, and a mother.¹⁰⁸ In the novel, the first description on her lofty manner, which does not seem to belong to that of child, appears in the scene in which she parts with her real mother, Lady Akashi. Although she is three, she does not cry. While growing up, Empress Akashi is an amenable girl who not only follows her stepmother, Lady Murasaki with a keenness and sincerity, but also gets along with her half-brother, Yūgiri (夕霧).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Xiaoyan Zhao, 162-163.

¹⁰⁸ Suzuki Hiroko, "Haha no paradaimu genji monogatari Akashi no chūgū wo chūshinnin," *Komazawa nihon bunka*, vol.1 (2007), 1-13.

¹⁰⁹ Suzuki Hiroko, 4.

According to Suzuki, Empress Akashi is described as a child, lady, and wife who lived up to the expectations of the people around her. As Genji planned, she grows into a beautiful and refined lady; she marries the Crown Prince, soon gives a birth to her first son at the age of thirteen, and finally becomes an empress as was foreseen in her grandfather, the Akashi monk's dream. Empress Akashi not only realized the aspirations of the Akashi family that longed for a rise of status and reputation from its humble origins, but also made up for Genji's frustration caused by the alienation from the court by allowing Genji's bloodline to continue. From the standpoint of the imperial family, Empress Akashi contributed to its prosperity and succession by producing three princes and one princess.¹¹⁰

It seems that the life of Empress Akashi existed to prove that she deserves to be an empress, as her maternal grandfather had predicted. She well demonstrates herself as an exemplary role model for other girls who yearned for an upwardly mobile life. Suzuki contends that the mature and virtuous attitude of Empress Akashi as the Empress of the future is clearly and effectively pronounced through the event of the birth of her first son. When her delivery was imminent, she came to sit in the company with her maternal grandmother, the Akashi Nun, and learned the hidden story regarding her birth. Rather than letting the shock have a negative impact on her, she is illustrated as coping with the truth about her biological mother and maternal family with inward calmness and endurance. She did not negate her real origin and, at the same time, felt gratitude toward Lady Murasaki, realizing that she was not disdained among the imperial circle thanks to the presence of her stepmother.¹¹¹

Returning to the main issue of this section, it is clear that the event of childbirth can be used as a persuasive device that effectively demonstrates the virtue of women, especially, soon-

¹¹⁰ Suzuki Hiroko, 5.

¹¹¹ Suzuki Hiroko, 6; Xiaoyan Zhao, 163.

to-be mothers. This is even more evident when we consider the retributive trait of childbirth in the story of *The Tale of Genji*. While the births of Reizei and Kaoru exposed the tragic fates of their mothers, Lady Fujitsubo and the Third Princess, as the result of their unfaithfulness to their husbands, in the case of Empress Akashi, the safe delivery of her first son was the moment in which the character of this modest girl, who always complied with adverse situations as a docile daughter and a devoted wife, finally paid off. The presence of Reizei and Kaoru, which had resulted from infidelity, made Lady Fujitsubo and the Third Princess voluntarily exiled from the patriarchal familial system, which was the only safety net that could support their future welfare. On the contrary, the birth of Empress Akashi's first son solidified her status within the imperial family and guaranteed her a stable future.

Although the previous section does not mention Naka no Kimi's birth in as much detail as the case of Empress Akashi, her childbirth, too, acts in a similar way. As briefly mentioned, Naka no Kimi is a wife of Fragrant Highness (Nio no miya, 匂宮) who is Empress Akashi's third son. In common with Empress Akashi, Naka no Kimi is represented in the story as a devoted wife to her husband. She does not react to her husband's love affair with anger or jealousy and, more importantly, she resists Kaoru's seduction and maintains marital chastity by distracting Kaoru's attention to her illegitimate half sister, Ukifune. Her safe delivery of her first son, which occurs in the chapter of 'Ivy (Yadogiri, 宿木),' is the rewarding moment for her good deeds. The story describes that after the birth of her son she was able to restore her emotional quiet, to strengthen her relationship with Fragrant Highness, and to reinforce her position in the imperial family.¹¹²

¹¹² Nojima Miho, "Tosa Mitsuyoshi hitsu genji monogatari tekagami ni kansuru ichikōsatsu – tosa genjie to no jōkei sentaku no hikaku wo tooshite," in *Keisen Academia*, vol.16 (2011), 31; William J. Puette, *The Tale of Genji: A Reader's Guide* (Rutland: Tuttle Publishing, 1993), 132.

In sum, it seems reasonable to speculate that in the Kubosō Museum's *Genji Album* the episodes of childbirth of Empress Akashi and Naka no Kimi were chosen and drawn because the lives of both women were in accord with ideal images of women and proper womanly conduct, which were highly sought by the newly established Tokugawa society based on Confucianism. Empress Akashi, in particular, was regarded as the perfect model for ideal womanhood. Her life seems to resonate with the ideals of the elites and intellectuals of the new society, who hoped to formulate new standards of ideal womanhood and thereby produce daughters and future mothers with similar desirable qualities. Anecdotes related to the education of Empress Akashi were didactic and instructive, not only for girls, but also for their parents. Genji, Empress Akashi's father, tried everything in his power to provide the best qualifications for his daughter to marry into the imperial family. The Akashi Nun, Empress Akashi's maternal grandmother, urged her daughter, Lady Akashi, to send Empress Akashi to her father and Lady Akashi conformed to her mother's advice. Without a doubt, the audience of the novel and the *Genji Album* would have believed that Empress Akashi inherited the wisdom and attitude of self-sacrifice from her mother and grandmother.

Second, among several important anecdotes about Empress Akashi and Naka no Kimi, the scenes of childbirth were chosen and drawn because they specifically embody the moment in which their virtuous and exemplary lives are rewarded with the safe and successful delivery of sons who will buttress their relationships with their husbands and their position within the husbands' households.

It can be argued, therefore, that birth-related rituals shown in the birth scenes of Empress Akashi and Naka no Kimi were deemed as those that should be followed and emulated by other girls who wished to become wise, virtuous, and reputable women and move up the ladder of the

rank. Considering the fact that access to works such as *the Genji Album* was limited to a small number of people, the printed illustrations were probably good venues to distribute the reproduction of the birth scenes. The publishers of female educational books then actively adopted those ‘birth scenes’ to represent the birth-rituals of upper-class women like Empress Akashi and Naka no Kimi to appeal to their readers, usually from the middle class, and to promote their publication.

What is notable here is that the discourse defining the event of childbirth as the rewarding result of the conduct of pregnant women also continued in later female educational books, and the other side of this discourse implies moral admonition and even threats towards women. That is to say, the birth scenes depicting the moment after Empress Akashi safely gives birth to a son without any unfortunate accidents exhibits the success of Empress Akashi’s life as a desirable woman. At the same time, the scenes of successful delivery connote a strong exhortation that the misconduct of women can give rise to unfavorable outcomes, possibly the infant’s death or the birth of unhealthy child. Along with the scenes illustrating the favorable moment in which the post-partum care for a mother and baby is smoothly performed immediately following the successful delivery, educational books for women provided text that explained the bad influence a pregnant women’s improper behavior could have on a fetus. By borrowing the authority of the ancient classics and Confucian knowledge, the writings in the female educational books were designed to suggest that the woman herself was responsible for the safe birth of her child.

In the previous era, religious practices controlled the entire process of pregnancy and decided the success or failure of the birth. In the Edo period, however, pregnancy and childbirth were finally freed from religion and were considered more practical events. Rather than relying on religious professionals to perform rituals, women were in charge of their own pregnancy. The

discourse over pregnancy and childbirth, however, functioned as a strong and discriminative ideological device that was used to restrain pregnant bodies. By analyzing the visual elements and accompanied written texts in a more detailed manner, the next section of this chapter will discuss how birth imagery in education books for women contributed to the reinforcement the ideal motherhood and womanhood in the new era. Among the many birth scenes that date to the Edo period, this dissertation particularly focuses on the one that appeared in *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (女重宝記, *Onna chōhōki*), because it was one of the earliest and most widely read examples of *jokunsho*.

3.5 BIRTH SCENES OF *JOKUNSHO*

3.5.1 Birth Scene of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (*Onna chōhōki*)

The tenth volume of *Collection of Encyclopedias on the History of Japanese Daily Life* (重宝記資料集成, *Chōhōki shiryō shūsei*, 2006) brings 19 different editions of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* together and gives a brief explanation of them. According to this book, *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* was first published in 1692 by Namura Jōhaku (苗村丈伯, d.1748) under his penname Sōden Tadakishi (艸田寸木子). Later, it went through several editions, which varied from each other in title, format, and print size, but it is said that most of them were based on the 1692 edition.¹¹³

¹¹³ The first revision of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* was completed in 1700, and the second in 1711. Also, various versions that are slightly different in the order of their contents were published in Edo and Kyoto. The

To use historical sociologist Ikegami Eiko's description, a *chōhōki* is a manual that encompasses a variety of useful information concerned with civilized knowledge and polite manners. Its contents range from medical guides to cosmetic advice, and even to the correct way of writing a formal letter.¹¹⁴ Likewise, the five-volume *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* opens with practical and moral advice on proper deportment depending on the reader's social class. It gives guidance on women's etiquette for diverse occasions such as wedding ceremonies. Cosmetic tips, including how to apply powder and tooth-blackening, were also an essential part.

Conception, pregnancy, and childbirth comprise an indispensable section in the third volume. That the beginning of this volume is entirely devoted to reproductive issues underlines how important and serious the event of childbirth was considered for the succession of the household and the perpetuation of the society. It narrates practical knowledge, such as how to diagnose pregnancy, how to secure an easy delivery, and how to improve the production of breast milk.¹¹⁵ A number of illustrations are shown throughout the book to help the readers' understanding. In this respect, the birth scene (fig. 2.2) included in the 1692 edition of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* is particularly notable in that it displays a clear and comprehensive image of birth-related manners and customs that should be observed by pregnant women in Edo society. As readers, expectant mothers tried their best to practice those essential and requisite customs and hopes of having a smooth pregnancy and favorable result in

last version was written by Takai Ranzan (高井欄山, 1762-1839) and printed in 1847 under the title *An Illustrated Compendium of Treasures for Women* (*Eiri nichiyō onna chōhōki*, 絵入日用女重宝記). The next chapter of this dissertation will explain how the numerous editions differ from each other. Nagatomo Chiyoji, ed., "Onna chōhōki shorei kagami – kaisetsu," in *Chōhōki shiryō shūsei dai jūkkān – kyōyō kyōshū 1* (Kyoto: Rinsenhoten, 2006), 591-599.

¹¹⁴ Eiko Ikegami, "Etiquette and Manners," in *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 328.

¹¹⁵ Arima Sumiko and Nishigaki Yoshiko, "Onna chōhōki ni miru edoki no josei no seikatsu – shussan to byōki," in *Onna chōhōki no kenkyū – sakuin kenkyūhen* (Tokyo: Toyoko gakuen joshi tanki daigaku josei bunka kenkyūjo 1995), 112-114.

childbirth. The next part of this section will examine the various types of manners and customs and how they regulated the behaviors of women during their pregnancy.

3.5.1.1 A Birthing Chair As discussed above, the birth scene illustrates a moment after parturition. It represents how postpartum care for the mother and the baby were carried out for the upper classes. The mother recovering from childbirth is portrayed in the left upper corner of the delivery room. Although her body is mostly concealed by voluminous and ruffled garments, we can clearly see that she is leaning against a pile of futon, traditional Japanese bed clothing. A birthing scene published in *A Treatise on Gynecology and Obstetrics* (*Fujin kotobukigusa*, 婦人壽草, 1708) also shows futon stacked behind a mother holding a delivery rope (fig.3.5). Another birthing image (fig.3.6) with the same composition in *A Treatise on Gynecology and Obstetrics* shows a similar type of prop covered with a flower-patterned blanket, while *The Agate Box of the Mean for Women* (*女中庸瑪瑙箱*, *Onna chūyō menō bako*, 1730) presents futon folded in several layers in the left upper corner of the composition (fig.3.7). Other than these, there are many examples of pregnant women seated in wooden chair-like structures in later illustrations, such as *The Illustrated Book of Women's Writing Lessons* (*Onna manyō keiko sōshi*, 女万葉稽古そうし, 1728, fig.3.8) and *Ehon masukagami* (絵本一寸鏡, 1748, fig. 3.9), both by Nishikawa Sukenobu (西川祐信, 1671-1750). The wooden prop represented in *The Brocade of Women's Writing* (*Jokun yōbun miyako nishiki*, 女訓用文都錦, 1755, fig. 3.10) is also similar.

Remaining seated until the seventh day after delivery was deemed important for post-natal recuperation. People believed that sitting upright helped drain the blood that was left inside

the womb and thereby prevented complications from childbirth.¹¹⁶ Thus, supporting devices were employed to help an easy delivery and to facilitate postpartum recovery. *A Treatise on Gynecology and Obstetrics* (*Fujin kotobukigusa*, 1708) refers to this custom as ‘*ijoku* (椅褥), a term used to refer to a device that resembles a chair or a box with three sides and one side is open in which the mother rests immediately after parturition. The treatise explains that silk bed clothing can be stacked in several layers inside the device to enhance the comfort of the new mother. *A Treatise on Gynecology and Obstetrics* also mentions that people sometimes use ‘a wicker clothes box (*tutsura*, 葛籠) instead of an *ijoku*. When using a *tutsura*, however, the mother, is covered with a kimono on her three sides, but not her back.¹¹⁷

An Illustrated Introductory Book for Women’s Daily Life (女用訓蒙図彙, *Joyō kunmō zui*, 1687, fig.3.11) renders more clearly what ‘a birthing chair (*shussan isu*, 出産椅子)’ or ‘a waist prop (*koshikake*, 腰掛,)’ looks like. In the illustration that depicts the necessary items for delivery under the title of *sanjo* (産所, place for childbirth), a waist prop is represented by a small box placed in front of a *byōbu* (屏風, folding screen), and a birthing chair decorated with a pine tree motif can be seen at the bottom of the illustration.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Saitō Junkichi, 445. Depending on the source, there are many different views about how many days after birth a mother has to be seated. *Nihon fuzokushi jiten* published in 1979 explains that the mother had to remain seated up to 21 days. The varying number of days were probably recommended by different *jokunsho*. ed. Nihon fuzokushi gakkai, *Nihon fuzokushi jiten* (Tokyo: Kubundo, 1979), 292.

¹¹⁷ The author of *A Treatise on Gynecology and Obstetrics*, Katsugi Gyūzan (香月 牛山, 1656-1740), clarifies that the custom of ‘*ijoku*’ originated from a Chinese book, *Joka shōchi junjō* (女科証治準繩, 1607) written by Wang Kentang (王肯堂, 1549-1613). The relationship between birth-related customs of Japan and China has attracted little attention from scholars until recently. Research on birth-related customs such as birthing chairs can be a good place to start to examine the interaction and exchange of birth-related knowledge between the two countries in the pre-modern time. Ono Masahiro, rev.ed., *Fujin kotobukigusa: edo zengi no daihyoudeki sanko youjou* (Tokyo: Taniguchi Shoten, 2004), 300-301.

¹¹⁸ Ishikawa Matsutarō, Miyata Noboru, and Sakamoto Kaname, eds., *Vijuaru hyakka edo jijō dai ichikan seikatsuhen* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku Shuppan, 1991), 102.

Among many other post-partum customs, remaining seated in a birthing chair was the most popular and widespread. The way of representing mothers in birth scenes shifted with the times, but one visual element never changed—the custom of using a birthing chair or a waist prop. It can be safely said that in most birth images produced since those in *A Compendium of Treasures for Women*, mothers are always shown seated on a birthing chair or covered with voluminous robes. Because the custom was considered necessary for the mother’s recovery, some illustrations from *Ehon asahiyama* (画本朝日山, 1741, fig.3.12) by Nishikawa Sukenobu and *Onna shorei aya nishiki* (女諸礼綾錦, 1841, fig.3.13) completed much later include the scene in which the birthing chair is prepared at the last moment. In both scenes, the men who are carrying ‘the birthing chair’ are in hurry as if they are trying not to be late.¹¹⁹

3.5.1.2 The First Bath after Birth The bathing of a newborn was another well-known birth custom, illustrated in the 1692 edition of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (fig. 2.2). In the center of the room, three attendants are engaged in *ubuyu* (産湯, first bath after birth). A woman, wearing a short-sleeved kimono, is holding the baby on her knees while she perches on the edge of a round wooden bathtub.¹²⁰ On her right side, another attendant is carrying *ubugi* (産衣, first clothing after birth), which is characteristically white and specially made for the

¹¹⁹ Its popularity and easy adoption by the populace, however, brought about professional criticism later. In *Sanka yashinaigusa* (産家やしない草, 1775-1780), the author, Sasai Moan (佐々井茂庵), a Confucian physician, criticizes the custom of ‘*ijoku*,’ disparaging it as ‘a bad habit’ or ‘an anti-medical folkway.’ The controversy over the use of a birthing chair is introduced in Susan Burn’s research, ‘Kenryoku, chi, saiseisurushintai – kinsei nihon no sankasho wo megutte,’ *Misuzu*, no. 268 (1991), 2-16.

¹²⁰ It is said that the way of resting a baby’s body on the knees and turning his (her) face toward the water was transmitted from China. Tanihara Masae and Sekido Keiko, “Edo genroku jidai no kosodate – Katsugi Gyūzan no arawashita shōnihitsuyousodategusa,” *Shōni kangō*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2012), 259.

newborn child. The attendant in the right lower corner next to three wooden receptacles full of water waits for the proper moment to change the bathing water.

Ubuyu was a major birth ritual that was believed to influence the baby's life. For this reason, all matters, including how to heat and dispose of the bathwater, were carefully planned and prepared in advance.¹²¹ The ritual of *ubuyu* was practiced on the third and seventh days after birth. As the rite progressed, it was believed that the infant moved toward this world and away from the other world from which it originally came. Members of the household and community finally accepted the baby on the third day by clothing him/her with *ubugi* with long sleeves.¹²² In the case of the 1692 edition of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women*, it is not certain whether the scene displays the third or the seventh day after birth. Nonetheless, the inclusion of a baby being bathed suggests that the newborn infant is well cared for and highlights the first bath as an essential ritual that should be observed following the procedures prescribed in female educational books.

3.5.1.3 Folding Screens The architectural setting of childbirth is another special element that needs to be examined. The space for the delivery was surrounded by several folding screens decorated with auspicious motifs, such as bamboo and pine trees, symbols of longevity and permanence.

¹²¹ Aoyagi Machiko, "Kihisareta sei," in *Nihon minzoku bunka taikai hokyūhan dai jūkan – ie to josei =kurashi no bunkashi* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1985), 430.

¹²² Iijima Yoshiharu, "Kodomo no hakken to jidō yūgi no sekai," in *Nihon minzoku bunka taikai hokyūhan dai jūkan – ie to josei =kurashi no bunkashi* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan 1985), 240-241; *Nihon fuzokushi jiten*, ed. 292; Depending on the region, the color and pattern of *ubugi* vary. In some case, a boy is dressed in *ubugi* with a pattern of Japanese hemp leaves and a girl in a bright yellow gown on the third day after birth. Mizukami Kayoko, "kodomo no kimononi tsuite – shūchakuo chūshintosite," *Kodomo no sekai – iwai to asobi* (Kawagoe: Kawagoe shiritsu hakubutsukan, 2007), 9-13. The cultural significance of the first bath will be dealt with more thoroughly in the next chapter.

We are not sure when the custom of setting up a folding screen in the delivery room started. As folding screens were already used as daily objects in the Heian period, it seems possible that this birthing tradition existed at least in the late twelfth century. One of the earliest visual examples can be found in a fourteenth-century handscroll painting, *Narrative Painting of the Life of Honen the Buddhist Saint* (*Hōnen shōnin e-de*, 法然上人絵伝, fig.2.13), which I examined in the first chapter. It presents a set of folding screens in the birth scene of Hōnen (法然, 1133-1212). In the scroll, Hōnen's mother, seen only from behind, gives birth to him with the assistance of two midwives. The women are surrounded by several folding screens, which are the only architectural features in the room. Another fourteenth-century handscroll, *Illustrated Biography of the Buddhist Priest Kakunyo* (*Boki ekotoba*, 慕歸絵詞 fig.2.14), also represents a birth—that of Kakunyo (覚如, 1270-1351), a prestigious monk of the Jōdō sect (浄土真宗, True Pure Land School). His mother, seated in the lower right corner, is almost hidden behind folding screens and portable silk partitions. A nun and a midwife can be seen encouraging delivery on the opposite side of the mother. Beyond them, a folding screen with vegetal patterns is vaguely visible.

The last example (fig.3.14) of the use of a folding screen in childbirth is from *Illustrated Handscrolls of the History of Tōshōgū* (*Tōshōgū engi emaki*, 東照宮縁起絵巻, 1640) produced by Kanō Tan'yū (狩野探幽, 1602-1674). The scene shows Odai no kata (於大の方, 1528-1602) recovering after she gave birth to her son, Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康, 1543-1616), the first shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate. To the left side of Odai no kata is placed a folding screen decorated with bamboo, pine trees, and a pair of white cranes on a white silk surface. Called *shiroe byōbu* (白絵屏風, white-colored folding screen, figs. 3.15, 3.16), this type of folding

screen with auspicious motifs is considered to be one of the essential birth objects for *ubuya* (産所) used by the upper class.¹²³ It is said that *shiroe byōbu* were made of patterned white silk – *shiroaya* (白綾) or *shiroginu* (白絹) – in the Heian period and by the mid-14th century white silk was replaced by white paper because of its high cost.¹²⁴ In her dissertation, *Metamorphosis of Form and Meaning: Ink Bird-Flower Screens in Muromachi Japan* (2011), Xiaojin Wu claims that folding screens, such as *shiroe byōbu*, served as shields for the mother during labor and also functioned as protectors, creating a propitious space for the newborn baby.¹²⁵ It is because of this complex significance that a folding screen was always portrayed in the images of childbirth, even after the Edo period.

3.5.1.4 Birthing Shelves It is also necessary to mention the birthing shelves (*ubutana*, 産棚) that stand near the entrance of the room; an example of which can be seen in the 1692 edition (fig.2.2) of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women*. The shelves are fully furnished with objects used in prayers for a safe delivery and to deal with postpartum issues, such as the disposal of placenta.

According to Yuko Shimano, a detailed description of birthing shelves can be located in *Collection of Old Things (Koji ruien, 古事類苑, 1896-1914)*.¹²⁶ Under the title of ‘birthing shelves and *oshioke* jars (*san no tana name oshioke, 産の棚並おし桶*),’ the documents explain

¹²³ Sakakibara Satoru, “Byōbu=girei no ba no chodo – sōsō to shussan wo reini,” *Koza nihon bijutsushi* 4 (Tokyo, 2005), 198-201.

¹²⁴ Koikawa Aya, “Shiroki tanjō,” *Tokubetsuden Shiroe – inori to kotohogi no katachi*, ed. Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan (Kanagawa, 2013), 11-12.

¹²⁵ Xiaojin Wu, *Metamorphosis of Form and Meaning: Ink Bird-Flower Screens in Muromachi Japan* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2011), 211-213.

¹²⁶ *Collection of Old Things (Koji ruien, 古事類苑)* is an encyclopedic work that consists of 60 volumes. Sponsored by the Meiji government (1868-1912), *Collection of Old Things* deals with various subject matters compiled from historical documents.

that birthing shelves should be divided into three levels, five *oshioke* jars should be placed on the uppermost shelf, and another twelve *oshioke* jars on the middle shelf. Some of the *oshioke* jars are for storing water for the first bath and their surfaces are decorated with auspicious motifs, such as images of pine trees, bamboos, cranes, and turtles.¹²⁷ *Collection of Old Things* includes the illustration (fig.3.17) of birthing shelves and *oshioke* jars to help the understanding of readers.¹²⁸

The image of birthing shelves depicted in the 1692 edition of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* does not perfectly coincide with the records and the illustration of *Collection of Old Things*. On the lowest shelves are stacked straw mats that do not appear in the illustration of *Collection of Old Things*. We can assume that these straw mats helped the mother deliver easily or recover fast by enabling blood or other fluids to be quickly removed. It is possible that these items were stacked on shelves so they could be easily removed and disposed of later. The birthing scenes in *A Treatise on Gynecology and Obstetrics (Fujin kotobukigusa, fig.3.5)* and *Illustrated Explanation of the History of Japanese Customs (Nihon fūzokushi zuroku, fig.3.6)* examined above show that one end of the mat was slipped under the mother's garment.

Oshioke jars take up the middle shelves. Unlike the illustration in *Collection of Old Things*, six jars are placed on the two middle shelves. A number of spatula (*hera*, 篋) and small penknives (*kogatana*, 小刀) can be seen next to the jars. It seems that these were used for cutting, catching, and holding the afterbirth. What is the purpose of all these *oshioke* jars of which the number sometimes reaches up to twelve? One answer, as suggested in *Collection of*

¹²⁷ Yuko Shimano, "Enani miru san to iku he no hairyo – kinsei san'ikusho ni okeru kodomo to haha no kankei (Afterbirth and Maternity Care: History of Relationship between Newborn and Mother in the Edo Period in Japan)," *Kobe daigaku daigakuin ningen hattatsu kankyōgaku kenkyūka kenkyū kiyō (Bulletin of the Graduate School of Human Development and Environment Kobe University)*, vol.4, no.1 (2010), 29-30.

¹²⁸ Jingu Shicho, 'reishiki go,' in vol. 40 of *Koji ruien* (Tokyo: Koji Ruien Kankokai, 1933), 347-350.

Old Things, is that they could also be used as vessels to store water for the bath. *Nihon kokugo daijiten* (日本国語大辞典) records that other than water, *oshioke* jars contained rice that was used for ‘sprinkling (*uchimaki* 打ち撒き or *sanmai* 産米),’ during the birth. These are medieval birth-related customs that we examined in the first chapter. A much older document, ‘*Shōkumonin osanguki* (昭訓門院御産愚記, 1303),’ also explains that six jars were containers for ‘sprinkling rice’ and another six jars were needed to store the earthenware vessels that would be broken for a safe childbirth during the delivery.¹²⁹ The last important use for these *oshioke* jars is as placenta jars (*enaoke*, 胞衣桶), which held the afterbirth and were buried in the ground. The proper way to make *enaoke* and adorn them with felicitous motifs was published in the late eighteenth-century *jokunsho*, *The Brocade of Women’s Manners* (*Onna shorei aya nishiki*, 女諸礼綾錦, 1772, fig. 3.18) and *The Illustrated Collections of Birthing Tools* (*Sanjo shodōgu zukei zenshu*, 産所諸道具図形全集, Edo period, fig.3.19). We learn that they were typically made of wood, brass, or porcelain, and, as in the case of *oshioke* jars, embellished with auspicious pictorial motifs representing long life, such as pine trees, bamboo, cranes, and turtles (fig.3.20).¹³⁰

On top of the altar, seen in the 1692 edition (fig.2.2) of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women*, is a set of wooden trays with two tall candleholders on either side. It is not easy to decide what tiny objects were arranged on the trays because of their simplified representation and the inferior quality of the image. Referring to the illustration of *An Illustrated Introductory Book for Women’s Daily Life* (*Joyō kunmō zui*, 女用訓蒙図彙, 1687, fig.3.11), we can assume

¹²⁹ Yuko Shimano, 29-30.

¹³⁰ Koikawa Aya, “Tokubetsuten shiroe – inori to kotohogi no katachi zenshō,” *Kanagawa kenritsu rekishi hakubutsukan dayori*, vol.20, no.2 (2014), 4.

that they were probably essential birth-related items, such as *omamori* (お守り, amulets), *umiUma* (海馬, sea horses), and *karamushi* (苧麻, hemp string). *UmiUma*, a pair of dried sea horses, were thought to lessen labor pains and hemp string (*karamushi*) was used to bind the umbilical cord.¹³¹ Another similar example (fig.2.1) is found in *The Collection of Women's Etiquette* (*Onna shorei shū*, 女諸礼集, 1660).

The practice of setting up a birthing altar seems to have been rather rare. Only a few visual examples are found in earlier *jokunsho* such as *The Collection of Women's Etiquette* (*Onna shorei shū*, 女諸礼集, 1660, fig.2.1), *A Mirror of Women* (*Onna kagami* 女鑑, early seventeenth century, fig.2.3) and *A Guidepost for Women* (*Jochū michi shirube*, 女中道しるべ, 1712, fig.3.21). It is probable that the arrangement of a birthing altar was common only among the upper classes.

3.5.1.5 Depictions of Ten Months in the Womb The last conspicuous feature of the 1692 publication is the placement of Ten Months in the Womb (*tainai totsuki no zu*, 胎内十月図) in the upper section of each illustration (fig.2.2). *Tainai totsuki no zu* visualizes the in-utero development of the fetus over the ten-month pregnancy. In particular, for each month it juxtaposes the fetus with specific Buddhist divinities. The embryo of the first month, for example, is symbolically depicted as a monk's staff and at the same time is associated with Fudō Myōō (不動明王 Skr. *Acala*). Likewise, Shaka (釈迦 Skr. Shakyamuni) in the second column corresponds with a one-pronged vajra that signifies the embryo of the second month. The fetus of the third month is juxtaposed with Monju (文殊菩薩 Skr. Manjusri). In this way, the fetuses of

¹³¹ Ishikawa Matsutarō, Miyata Noboru, and Sakamoto Kaname, eds., 102.

the first four months are rendered as ritual paraphernalia; they finally take human form from the fifth month under the supervision of Jizō (地藏) Bosatsu. Other deities (Miroku, Yakushi, Kannon, Seishi, and Amida) are also respectively introduced each month. In the tenth month, the fetus linked with Amida is portrayed upside down, ready to come into this world.¹³²

Because they were incorporated into the popular *jokunsho*, these “Depictions of Ten Months in the Womb” affected a woman’s conception of pregnancy.¹³³ The images were an effective visual device that indoctrinated pregnant women with Buddhist beliefs. *Jokunsho* disciplined women’s behavior during pregnancy while relying on the religious authority of Buddhism. The authors of *jokunsho* claimed that babies would be born with bodily or mental defects if their mothers did not worship each monthly deity with a pious mind and a sound body.

Yuko Shimano pays particular attention to the image of placenta that is depicted in the ninth month. In the column identified with Seishi (勢至菩薩, Skr. Mahāsthāmaprāpta), the fetus is covering his head with the placenta depicted as if an umbrella. Even, the umbilical cord curved down into the body of the fetus looks like the crook of an umbrella. According to Shimano, it was actually believed that the placenta (*ena*) played a critical role as a shield that prevents unfavorable energies and poisons produced by the mother during her pregnancy from entering the body of a fetus. The perspective of the umbilical cord, on the other hand, was similar to that

¹³² Many scholars have studied the religious, philosophical, and ideological background of *tainai totsuki no zu*, examining when the concept first emerged and when it began to be circulated among the populace. Although there are many different views and interpretations, most scholars agree that the concept was created by combining religious elements from both Buddhism and Shintōism. For more information, see Nakamura Kazumoto, “*Tainai totsuki no zu no shisōteki tenkai*,” *Iwate daigaku kyōikugakkubu kenkyū nenpo* vol. 50, no. 1 (1990), 23-36; James H. Sanford, “Wind, Waters, Stupas, Mandalas: Fetal Buddhahood in Shingon,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* vol. 24, no 1/2 (1997), 1-38; Yamashita Takumi, “Takai Ranzan hen onna chōhōki shosai tainai totsukinozu kō,” *Tokyo seitoku dangi daigaku kiyō dai sanjū roku go* (2003), 11-23; Imai Hidekazu, “Eiri nichiyō onna chōhōki nit suite,” *Nihon bungaku kenkyū* vol. 44 (2005), 117-125.

¹³³ In fact, *tainai totsuki no zu* is more often treated as an independent iconography rather than as an accompanying illustration. One representative example can be found in *Onna zassho kyōkun kagami* (女雜書教訓鑑), published in 1812.

of modern medical knowledge, where it is considered as a passageway for breast milk needed for the growth of the fetus. Interestingly, people in the Edo period sometimes thought that the secretion of breast milk before delivery happened when this passageway (the umbilical cord) was cut off. A fetus, in this case, was believed to die in the mother's womb and the mother was again considered accountable for this unhappy accident. Female educational books, including *A Compendium of Treasures for Women*, diagnosed that a fetus would abandon its tie (the umbilical cord) to the mother if a pregnant woman disturbed the womb. Using the image of the placenta (*ena*) in "Depictions of Ten Months in the Womb," in this way allowed female educational books to indoctrinate women with the idea that the growth of the fetus depends entirely on the condition of the womb, and therefore, during pregnancy the mother should be always circumspect in her behavior to ensure safe childbirth.¹³⁴

3.5.2 Dissemination of *Jokunsho* - style Birth Imagery as Standard Iconography

Once established as the standard iconography, Edo-period birth imagery that represents the moment after parturition seems to be widely disseminated regardless of genres. But, every birth image did not include the same details, such as in the arrangement of the birthing shelves and the placement of 'Ten Months in the Womb.' In many cases, only mother and baby appear as the basic visual elements and the birth-related practices in which they are engaged are highlighted. For example, *Women's Mirror of Genji Lessons* (*Onna Genji kyōkun kagami*, 女源氏教訓鑑, 1713) presents a birth scene under the title 'safe delivery' (*heisan no tei*, 平産の躰, fig.3.22). As a simplified version of the 17th-century birth images, such as *The Collection of Women's*

¹³⁴ Yuko Shimano, 31-34.

Etiquette (1660), *A Compendium of Treasures of Women* (1692), and *A Mirror of Women* (early 17th), it highlights a small number of people. Major visual elements are again ‘mother sitting on a birthing chair and taking a rest’ and ‘infant receiving a first bath.’¹³⁵ Another similar work is also based on *Tale of Genji*. Published in the second volume of *Red and White Tale of Genji* (*Kōhaku genjimonogatari*, 紅白源氏物語, 1709, fig. 3.23), it displays a scene in which Lady Fujitsubo (藤壺) gives birth to Genji’s son who later becomes Emperor Reizei (冷泉). The much simplified scene omits the elaborate arrangement of birth-related objects. Instead, a close-up view focuses on the mother’s actions in post-partum recovery and the baby’s condition during the first-bath.¹³⁶

This way of emphasizing two essential players—mother and newborn—in birth imagery was widely accepted regardless of the boundary of genre. One interesting example can be found in the seventeenth-century Buddhist painting *Kumano Mind Contemplation Ten Worlds Mandala* (*Kumano kanjin jikkai mandara*, 熊野歡心十界曼荼羅, 17th, hereafter *Kumano Mandala*, fig.

¹³⁵ *Women’s Mirror of Genji Lessons* (*Onna Genji kyōkun kagami*) was published in 1713 by Yamamoto Joshū (山本序周, 1679-1748). As its preface clarifies, the book has two purposes. First of all, it served as a reference book for *the Tale of Genji* by providing women and children with a general outline and rough summary of each chapter. The second purpose of the book is also educational. Not limited to literary knowledge, however, it supplied moral and edifying lessons regarding female conduct, as many other female educational books did. The birth scene cited here is included among eight other scenes illustrating pivotal life events such as marriage and childbirth under the title ‘the life of women (jochū isshōki, 女中一生記).’ It was reprinted around six times from 1713 to 1796. The image that I cited here was published in the 1714 edition, now housed in Waseda University. Nakajima Yoshihiko, *Yamamoto Joshū Onna genji kyōkun kagami – edo no genjimonogatari kougaisho* (Tokyo: Musashinoshoin 武蔵野書院, 2013), 117-121. For more information on *Women’s Mirror of Genji Lessons*; Kyoto bunka hakubutsukan, ed., *Yomu, miru, asobu genjimonogatari no sekai: ukiyoe kara genji ishō made: genjimonogatari sennenki jigyo kaikan nijūshūnen kinen tokubetsuten* (Kyoto: Kyoto bunka hakubutsukan, 2008), 12; Tokunaga Yumi, “Onna Genji Kyōkun kagami kō: shuppan jijō to kōsei o megutte,” *Gakugei koten bungaku*, vol. 2 (2009), 130-146.

¹³⁶ *Red and White Tale of Genji* was written by Baiou (梅翁) in 1709. Consisting of six volumes, *Red and White Tale of Genji* is, in fact, a part of the whole series of publications that happened from 1707 to 1726. The aim of the publications was to distribute *the Tale of Genji* rewritten in popular language (zokugo, 俗語) to the commoner class. The image that I refer to here is printed in the edition of 1709, which is now housed in National Diet Library. Kyoto bunka hakubutsukan, ed., *Yomu, miru, asobu genjimonogatari no sekai: ukiyoe kara genji ishō made: genjimonogatari sennenki jigyo kaikan nijūshūnen kinen tokubetsuten* (Kyoto: Kyoto bunka hakubutsukan, 2008), 10 and 50.

3.24). Visualizing the ten worlds of existence, it was used by Kumano nuns who were itinerant female followers, to explain the Buddhist worldview to the masses. The ten worlds of existence illustrated in *Kumano Mandala* consist of four scared worlds and six realms of heaven, human, animals, demi-gods, hungry ghosts, and hell.¹³⁷ The human realm is placed on top of a tall hill in the upper part of the painting. Called “hill of age” (oi no saka, 老ノ坂), it depicts the stages of human life from right (birth) to left (death). A birthing event (fig.3.25) is shown inside a roofed house in the far right part of the ‘hill of age.’ Only four people appear—a mother sitting on a birthing chair, a birth attendant and a newborn being bathed, and a man watching the scene. Considering that the *Kumano Mandala* functioned as a visual device for picture-based sermons (*etoki*, 絵解) targeting the populace, birth imagery like this, which minimized the number of figures involved, seemed to be easily accepted as indicating ‘the event of childbirth.’

Suzuki Harunobu (鈴木春信, 1725-1770), a famous *ukiyo-e* artist, also produced a multi-colored brocade print (*nishiki-e*, 錦絵) of a birth (fig.3.26, ca.1768). It is a scene from ‘*The Marriage Ceremony*’ (*Harunobu kon'in no zu*, 春信婚姻の図, ca. 1768), which consists of seven sheets that depict the process of wedding preparations in the Edo period.¹³⁸ One of the prints depicts the post-natal care for a mother and a baby against an architectural backdrop divided into two spaces. To the inside area of the sliding door on which ‘*harunobuga* (春信画),’ the signature of the artist, is printed, the mother, covered with a pink colored kimono, is leaning

¹³⁷ *Kumano Mind Contemplation Ten Worlds Mandala* that I cited here is now housed in Rokudōchinnōji Temple (六道珍皇寺) in Kyoto. Other than this work, there are about sixty other Kumano Mandala. Randle Keller Kimbrough, “Preaching the Animal Realms in Late Medieval Japan,” *Asian Folklore Studies*, vol. 65 (2006), 180-181; Ogurisu Kenji, *Jigoku ezu kumano kanshin jikkai mandara etokidaihon* (Kyoto: Hojodo shuppan, 2014), 8-9; Ikumi Kaminishi, *Etoki: The Art and Rhetoric of Pictorial Exegesis* (Ph.D.diss., University of Chicago, 1996): 173-174.

¹³⁸ There are several editions of *the Marriage Ceremony*. Among them, I cited the one house in National Diet Library in Tokyo. Unfortunately, Suzuki Harunobu’s *the Marriage Ceremony* was not much studied both in Japanese and English.

against a birthing chair recuperating from the delivery. An attendant is giving the mother a cup of medicinal tea to help her recovery. In the outer area of the inner birthing chamber, four women are involved in bathing the newborn. Harunobu arranged this birth scene as the last sheet of *'the Marriage Ceremony'* series and by doing so he suggested that the final goal of marriage is to have a healthy baby. It seems that the artist regarded such visual components of the mother and baby as sufficient to demonstrate the successful result of a safe childbirth.

3.6 REINFORCEMENT OF CONFUCIAN DISCOURSE AND REINTERPRETATION OF CHILDBIRTH

Illustrated birth scenes published in late 17th century in female educational books were aimed at enforcing the responsibilities of women for a successful childbirth, not to mention safe pregnancy, during the entire reproductive process. It seems that the birth illustrations presented the soon-to-be mother with a positive, favorable, image of which she becomes part only when following the moral and medical guidelines prescribed in the book. In other words, they are not just supplementary images to educate women about the kinds of birth-related objects that were utilized, in what way they were arranged, and how post-partum care for the mother and baby was carried out. The intent of the illustrations, along with their exhortative text, was to encourage exemplary behavior rather than just be instructive. To set the scene for successful childbirth, according to these female educational books, pregnant women should follow and practice the instructions that regulated their every action, as well as prepare the essential birth-related items, all of which required time and money. The lack of any depictions of religious or spiritual help in

the scenes of successful childbirths suggest that the ideal post-partum condition was wholly up to the mother and how she behaved during pregnancy. In other words, it can be said that the authors and the publishers of female educational books in the early Edo period eliminated ritual motifs, which were essential visual elements in the birth scenes of medieval hand-scroll paintings, to shift responsibility for a successful delivery (or its failure) onto women. Such a stance coincides with social efforts in the second half of the 17th century in which the Tokugawa government and its intellectuals attempted to forge new models of ideal womanhood and invigorated the discourse on female morals and conduct.

Research by Susan L. Burns allows us to understand in a detailed manner how the new society built upon a Neo-Confucian discourse on ideal womanhood. She delves more deeply into the issues surrounding pregnancy and childbirth. By the late seventeenth century, according to her research, the scholars and physicians of the warrior regime constructed and established a Confucian perspective of female reproduction through the dissemination of female-targeted texts.¹³⁹ From the textual analysis of the representative examples, such as *A Treatise on Gynecology and Obstetrics* (*Fujin kotobukigusa*, 1709), *The Grasshopper Manual* (*Inagogusa*, 蝗草, 1690), and *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (*Onna chōhōki*), Burns contends that in the second half of the seventeenth century pregnancy and childbirth were validated by

¹³⁹ Burns points out that before the wide dissemination of female educational books in the late seventeenth century the issues regarding pregnancy and childbirth had been usually found in medieval ritual texts, such as *A Collection of Miscellany on Reproduction* (*Sanseirui shūshō*, 産生類聚抄). Rather than being medical discourses, those texts dealt with female reproduction as ritualistic and spiritual matters. They introduced directional taboos that could harm the fetus and also listed spells, talismans, and prayers that could facilitate easy delivery. From Burns' discussion, it is clear that there is a distinct gap in the ways medieval and early modern textual knowledge approached female reproductive issues. In the medieval period, the event of childbirth was still mysterious and fell within a susceptible sphere that was easily interfered by vicious spirits. People had no choice except to lean on various rituals and superstitious means to avoid bad luck, as we saw in the previous chapter. Such a shift in the perspective of pregnancy and childbirth can be interpreted as a parallel phenomenon to the iconographic change of childbirth imagery that took place from the medieval to early modern period. Susan L. Burns, "The Body as Text: Confucianism, Reproduction, and Gender in Tokugawa Japan," in *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam* (Los Angeles, 2002), 180.

Confucian female edifying books as the divine events in which “the will of heaven” and “the generative power of nature” were exerted. Also, giving birth to a healthy child was described as “an ethical achievement.” The texts provide solid ways of practice to ensure a safe childbirth, using the notions of “health cultivation (*hoyō* 保養 or *yōjō* 養生),” and “fetal education (*taikyō*).”¹⁴⁰

“Health cultivation” refers to cultivating oneself to attain physical healthiness and mental soundness. Confucian scholars such as Manase Gensaku (曲直瀬玄朔, 1549-1632) and Kaibara Ekken (貝原益軒, 1630-1714) asserted that “health cultivation” can be achieved by refraining from sexual desire and controlling excessive emotion. The term was originally gender-neutral. When it comes to female reproduction-related discourse, however, “health cultivation” was regarded as a yardstick to judge whether an expectant woman would have a successful childbirth. If she failed in an easy delivery, it was believed that during her pregnancy the mother’s behavior was inadequate and that she was incorrect in disciplining herself. In other words, women themselves, not other exterior circumstances, were responsible for their difficult childbirth.¹⁴¹

“Fetal education” was another key factor in the production of healthy descendants. While “health cultivation” is relevant only to the well-being of the birthing mother, “fetal education” touches upon the health of the fetus. It deals with not only the physical health of the fetus, but also its temperament and intelligence. As in the case of “health cultivation,” the conditions that can influence the growth of a fetus into a human are not innate, but determined by a mother’s conduct during pregnancy.¹⁴² For example, *The Grasshopper Manual* states that, “the woman

¹⁴⁰ Susan L. Burns, 179-180.

¹⁴¹ Susan L. Burns, ‘Kenryoku, chi, saiseisurushintai – kinsei nihon no sankasho wo megutte,’ *Misuzu*, no. 268 (1991), 4.

¹⁴² Susan L. Burns, 185-186.

who complies with the principles of nature and keeps her mind correct and body self-controlled, away from sexual desire and acts, does not need to be afraid of a difficult childbirth.” As an exemplary reference for pregnant women, *The Grasshopper Manual* relates the ancient Chinese story of Tai Ren, the mother of King Wen of the Zhou dynasty and explains the efforts she made for the growth of her child when she was pregnant.¹⁴³ In *A Treatise on Gynecology and Obstetrics* (*Fujin kotobukigusa*, 1708), the author Katsuki Gyūzan (1656-1740) points out that lust is particularly detrimental to the fetus. Ill temper and envy are other harmful emotions that an expectant mother should avoid. According Katsuki, these feelings can even arouse miscarriages. Another text, *The Cultivation of Ladies* (*Fujin yashinaigusa*, 婦人やしない草, 1689) emphasizes that women should observe sexual abstinence on a special day called *kōshin* (庚申) that occurs every sixty days. The book warns that a child conceived on this *kōshin* night is destined to be an infamous villain.¹⁴⁴ In this way, the female-targeted texts of the late seventeenth century intended to disassociate the female reproductive process with sexual desire and actions and at the same time valorize reproduction as a heavenly affair. In this system, laden with Neo-Confucian ideology, the event of childbirth as the final phase of pregnancy becomes the moment of judgment on a woman’s morals and ethics and could reveal whether she successfully restrained her desires and controlled her conduct.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Susan L. Burns, 183-184.

¹⁴⁴ Ideas of *kōshin* resulted from the union of various religions, such as Taoism, Shintoism, Buddhism, and Japanese local folk beliefs. One of the practices performed by its believers was “waiting for *koshin* (*koshin-machi*, 庚申待ち).” On this *koshin-machi* night that happens every sixty days, people should stay awake to prevent their souls (or spirits believed to reside in their bodies) from escaping their bodies and reporting their deeds to God. William Lindsey, “Religion and the Good Life: Motivation, Myth, and Metaphor in a Tokugawa Female Lifestyle Guide,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 32, no.1 (2005), 40.

¹⁴⁵ Citing from the study by Yokota Fuyuhiko, Susan Burns asserts that the effort of Neo-Confucian medical theory to valorize female reproductive duty was made against a backdrop of the rise of the number of females in the labor market. In the late seventeenth century, a greater portion of the female population began to work, freed from the control of the patriarchal household. Hence, social anxiety about the moral and sexual laxity of those women grew. According to Yokota, the emphasis on female reproductive function as divine generative power was a countermeasure to this emerging issue. Neo-Confucian scholars such as Kaibara Ekken, the author of *The Greater*

It is the 17th century illustrated birth scene that visualized such a moment as a judgement about whether the birthing woman observed all the rules for a safe delivery prescribed in the book.

Learning for Women (女大学), responded to this cultural crisis by separating sexuality from ordinary women and placing it only on prostitutes. For ordinary women, female sexuality was a valid act of nature when it was restricted to its reproductive purpose. Women in this period internalized such Neo-Confucian discourse on sexuality and reproduction, which was circulated through female educational texts. Susan L. Burns, 186-193.

4.0 REMOVING THE BIRTHING BODIES IN IMAGES OF CHILDBIRTH IN EDO PERIOD

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As we examined in the previous chapters, the subject matter of birth imagery was transformed from one emphasizing ‘the danger of the birth moment and the role of religion’ to images focusing on ‘post-natal care and birth-related practices’ during three hundred years between the medieval and Edo periods and remained the standard iconography until the late Edo period. Furthermore, mother and baby remained as the major visual elements in simplified versions of birth images, such as those in *Women’s Mirror of Genji Lessons*, *Kumano Mandala*, and *the Marriage Ceremony*. It seems natural that the images of mother and baby occupy the scene equally because they are the main players of the birthing event. A chronological arrangement of all birth images that I collected, however, unveils an interesting tendency. I discovered a parallel shift from a central to a marginalized position in the status of the mother, while the practice of bathing the infant becomes an independent iconography emblematic of the birthing event and entirely removing a mother. This chapter examines this transformation in birth scenes throughout the Edo period, particularly focusing on the marginalization of the mother figure. Furthermore, this chapter examines what sociopolitical, ideological, and cultural factors brought about such

change. I organized the chapter into three sections respectively, highlighting examples such as *A Compendium of Treasures for Women*, *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study*, and *A Guide to the Prosperity of Descendants*. Each section will serve as a case study that illustrates how government regulation of pregnancy and the dominant ideology of childbirth at the time affected the formation of birth imagery.

4.2 DISAPPEARANCE OF MOTHERS: FROM 1692 TO 1847 EDITIONS OF *A COMPENDIUM OF TREASURES FOR WOMEN*

Since the first publication of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* in 1692, which we examined in the second chapter, it was frequently reprinted and revised by several publishers and authors. The first revision was in 1700, and the second in 1711. According to Nagatomo Chiyoji, later versions were, for the most part, based on the 1692 edition regardless of different publisher, title, and print size.¹⁴⁶ For example, the 1711 edition published by Aburaya Heiemon (油屋平右衛門) under a different title, *A New Illustrated Compendium of Treasures for Women (Shinpan eiri onna chōhōki daisei*, 新版絵入女重宝記大成), has the same birth scene (fig.4.1) as that of the 1692 edition published by Yoshinoya jirōbe (吉野屋次郎兵衛).¹⁴⁷ It was in the last version that a new woodblock was cut for the book. The final edition, *A Illustrated Compendium of*

¹⁴⁶ Nagatomo Chiyoji, ed., “Onna chōhōki shorei kagami – kaisetsu,” in *Chōhōki shiryō shūsei dai jūkan – Kyōyō kyōshū I* (Tokyo: Rinsen shoten, 2006), 591-599.

¹⁴⁷ I referred to the 1692 and 1711 editions now housed in the National Diet Library in Tokyo.

Treasures for Women (*Eiri nichiyō onna chōhōki*, 絵入日用女重宝記), written by Takai Ranzan (高井欄山, 1762-1839) in 1847, presents entirely different images designed and drawn by Katsushika Ōi (葛飾応為, 1800-1866), the third daughter of Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760-1849).¹⁴⁸

4.2.1 Visual Analysis: Comparison of Birth Scenes Between the 1692 and 1847 Editions

At first glance, the 1847 edition of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (fig.4.2) seems to follow previous examples. Except for different artistic styles reflecting the change of the times, the scene maintains the visual elements that are necessary in explaining childbirth.¹⁴⁹ The birthing shelves are positioned on the right side of the composition. Two servants wait to be called to their tasks. The baby's bath is taking place in the center of the room surrounded by folding screens.

Regardless of the overall similarity in visual elements and composition, there is a marked contrast in the representation of the mother and baby figures and their relationship to each other.

In the 1692 edition (fig. 2.2), the mother is watching her baby, who is bathed by attendants.

Although the mother is seated in the innermost part of the space, her presence is still visible; the

¹⁴⁸ Katsushika Ōi seems to be the only female artist among the many artists mentioned in this dissertation. It is interesting to think about the fact that a woman drew illustrations for a female educational book. Unfortunately, the research on her works has not received much scholarly attention until now. One of only a few studies on her is "Katsushika Ōi no shogai," by Hiyashi Yoshikazu. Hiyashi Yoshikazu, "Katsuhika Ōi no shogai," in *Keisei Eisen Katsushika Ōi*, vol.10 of *Edo enpon shūsei* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 2011), 112-135.

¹⁴⁹ In terms of artistic styles, the depiction of the birth scene in the 1692 edition seems to be more stylized compared to the illustrative styles of contemporary artists such as Hishikawa Moronobu (菱川師宣, 1618-1694) and Torii Kiyonobu (鳥居清信, 1664-1729). For example, women's clothing and hair are delineated in rigid lines. Meanwhile, the 1847 version illustrated by Katsushika Ōi faithfully reflects the styles of the time. Women appearing in the scene wear a hairdo called the *shinoji* style (しの字) used by the maids of shogunal and daimyo families in the late Edo period. Their garments also have long sleeves and wide *obi* (belt) that are characteristics of later Tokugawa kimono.

mother and child still occupy the same room, even if the mother is separated from the baby. In the 1847 version, however, the mother is not only isolated from the baby and the attendants by visual devices such as the folding screen, but has been entirely eliminated from the birth scene. We are only able to presume that the mother is sitting behind the folding screen from the gesture of the two women who are leaning their bodies toward the inside of the room. By contrast, the close-up depiction of the bathing of the newborn baby indicates that it is still considered an important event. The baby, held deep against the bosom of the old midwife (*sanba* 産婆 or *toriagebaba* 取り上げ婆) with thin hair, is about to be passed to a young attendant who is spreading out a white blanket specially designed for the newborn.¹⁵⁰

The removal of the mother image and the re-emphasis on the baby in the 1847 edition were neither an isolated case nor the result of a sudden change. A thorough examination of every female educational book included in the one hundred volumes of *Compilation of Women's Literature of the Edo Period* (江戸時代女性文庫, *Edo jidai josei bunko*) confirms this.¹⁵¹ A chronological arrangement of all collected birth images shows that a similar comparison can be made in the case of *The Elementary Learning for Women* (女小学教艸, *Onna shōgaku oshie gusa*). *The Elementary Learning for Women* introduces illustrations of childbirth in the 1763 (fig.4.3) and 1852 (fig.4.4) editions respectively. It is remarkable, despite the long time gap between the two versions, that they use the same textual content as well as the same title, “image

¹⁵⁰ In the first stage of the development of *jokunsho*, clarifying the age of a birth attendant (*sanba*) was not likely to be a critical issue for the authors and publishers. At some point, old midwives (*toriagebaba*) replaced the image of birth attendants in *jokunsho*. The emergence and depiction of old midwives in the birth imagery of the Edo period can be an independent topic that should be separately studied with regard to their historical status and role in Edo-period childbirth.

¹⁵¹ *Hoi: Nyohitsu tehonrui*. Aikawa Yoneshige, *Edo jidai josei bunko*, 100 vols. (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1994-1998); Koizumi Yoshinaga, *Edo jidai josei bunko. Hoi: Nyohitsu tehonrui*. 12 vols. (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1999-2000).

of an easy delivery (*heisan no zu*, 平産之図).” Even the scripts are similar, allowing us to suspect that they may have been produced using the same printing block. Unlike the textual part, however, the representation of childbirth is treated very differently. The 1763 version (fig. 4.3) shows the mother directing her gaze toward her baby being bathed by attendants as in the 1692 *Onna chōhōki*, while the whole focus of the 1852 version (fig.4.4) is given to the bathing of the baby who occupies the center of the composition. The mother’s presence is only suggested by the hem of the bedclothes seen through an open sliding door.¹⁵²

This compelling transition from earlier versions to later versions of birth scenes did not take place suddenly. With few exceptions, there was a gradual tendency toward the exclusion of mothers and a renewed emphasis on babies. In the first stage, the entire bodies of the mothers are shown, as seen in *The Illustrated Book of Women’s Writing Lessons* (*Onna manyo keiko sōshi*, 女万葉稽古そうし, 1728, fig. 3.8), *The Mirror of Wisdoms for Female Use* (*Joyō chie kagami nishikiori*, 女用知恵鑑錦織, 1729, fig. 4.5), and *The Brocade of Women’s Writing* (*Jokun yōbun miyako nishiki*, 女訓用文都錦, 1755, fig. 3.10). Not purely categorized as *jokunsho*, picture books (*ehon*) intended for young girls also produced many similar examples, such as *A Children’s Story about Momotaro* (*Momotarō mukashi gatar*, 桃太郎昔語, early eighteenth century, fig. 4.6) and *The Origin of Fishing Pole* (*Tsurikibo no yurai*, 釣竿の由来, 1764, fig. 4.7), that followed the type of the first stage. In busy and cheerful moods celebrating their safe deliveries, these mothers, placed in stately poses, are delineated as childbirth’s main agents who achieved the most important goal—giving birth to healthy babies.

¹⁵² For the birth images of *The Elementary Learning for Women*, I cited the ones published in the seventh volume of *Edo jidai josei seikatsu ezu daijiten*. Emori Ichirō, ed., *Edo jidai josei seikatsu ezu daijiten*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1994), 254-356.

Later, however, mother figures begin to be only partially shown, obscured partially by a folding screen or a sliding door. This shift becomes more obvious around the end of the eighteenth century, as seen in the illustrations of *Life Story of Momotaro* (*Momotarō ichidaiki*, 桃太郎一代記, 1781, fig. 4.8), *The Story of Yuchōrō* (*Yuchōrō nagaiki banashi*, 雄長老寿話, 1790, fig. 4.9), *Dōge One hundred People One Poem* (*Dōge hyakkunin isshu*, どうげ百人一首, 1793, fig. 4.10), and *The Story of New Year's Old Event* (*Shōgatsu kojidan*, 正月故事談, 1797, fig. 4.11). At the final stage, the image of the mother almost disappears from the scene, as in *Yakan* (やかん, 1806, fig. 4.12). By contrast, the baby's bathing scene continues to be represented as the most important visual element.

4.2.2 Demographic Crisis and Population Policy in the Late 18th Century

Where do these differences in the representations of mothers originate? What made the image of the mother gradually disappear from the birth scene while the tendency to accentuate the image of the baby grew? The next section of this paper will attempt to answer these questions by examining sociopolitical, ideological, and cultural factors that brought about a change of perspective on childbirth and, thereby, a change in the representations of births.

To find the cause of the mother's removal in birth scenes, we need first to look into social changes, such as the demographic crisis that took place in the decade of the 1780s. It seems that the elimination of the mother image was related to government policies that were stimulated by the population decline in the late eighteenth century.

In his book, *Early Modern Japan*, Conrad Totman characterizes the second half of the Edo period as 'the period of stasis.' He explains that Edo Japan fell into a recession in every

aspect of society after a century of growth. The population doubled by 1700, but began to stagnate soon after and then declined to a level critical enough to demand social attention. The demographic crisis was accelerated by a devastating famine caused by a series of composite natural factors. In 1783, Mount Asama (浅間山), which stands on the border of present-day Gunma (群馬県) and Nagano (長野県) prefectures, erupted several times. Ash, lava, and rocks covered the entire north Kantō area. This local disaster was exacerbated by larger-scale volcanic eruptions in Iceland. The skies of the northern hemisphere blackened, temperatures fell below average yearly levels, and subsequently agricultural systems failed. Japan was no exception to the unseasonal and merciless weather. Floods, as well as gusts of hail, frost, and cold rain blew across the Kantō plain leading to the failure of almost the entire harvest, which led to a rise in rice prices.¹⁵³

This famine, during the Tenmei era (天明, 1781-1789), caused hundreds of thousands of people in central and northern Honshū to starve to death. Near the end of the 1780s, many regions of eastern Japan lost one third of their peak 1700 populations. Some villages were reduced to half of their former size and countless family lines became extinct. A decline in productive population not only laid substantial economic burdens on people who had to pay the taxes for the dead villagers, but it also seriously impacted the taxation rate of the domain and thus, ultimately, the shogunate. In order to stimulate population growth and fertility rates, each local government launched strong population policies that included encouraging marriage, prohibiting infanticide, offering child-rearing subsidies, and pregnancy surveillance, thereby

¹⁵³ Conrad Totman, "Ecological Trends," in *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 235-240.

relocating reproductive issues from the private to the public sphere.¹⁵⁴ Domains that were already running systems of child-rearing subsidies and childbirth registration strengthened and elaborated their related laws. Fabian Drixler points out that within a few years after the great famine of the 1780s, the number of local domains with laws of subsidies and surveillance doubled.¹⁵⁵

4.2.3 Introduction of Conception Report: Intervention of Official System Over Pregnancy

In the field of the historical demography of Edo Japan, Sawayama Mikako's pioneering research first brought the issues of population policies to the discourse of gender studies by claiming that the policies encouraged official control over childbirth and direct intervention in women's birthing bodies.¹⁵⁶ Sawayama analyzed the case of the Tsuyama domain (津山) in Mimasaka province (美作国), and demonstrated how pregnancy surveillance put female birthing bodies and their reproductive process under multiple layers of supervision and how it gradually removed women's right over their pregnancy, especially regarding the important decision of whether to give birth or not.¹⁵⁷

According to Sawayama, local governments made it obligatory for each village to report the information regarding conception and birth on a monthly basis as the first step to putting pregnant bodies under official observation. The conception report was generally written by the

¹⁵⁴ Fabian Drixler, "Subsidies and Surveillance," in *Mabiki: Infanticide and Population Growth in Eastern Japan, 1660-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 158.

¹⁵⁵ Fabian Drixler, 160.

¹⁵⁶ Sawayama Mikako, *Shussan to shintai no kinsei* (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1998), 1-37.

¹⁵⁷ Although Sawayama Mikako concentrates only on the case of Tsuyama domain, she mentions that the conception and childbirth regulations that were first attempted in the latter half of the eighteenth century spread nationwide by the end of the nineteenth century. Sawayama Mikako, "The "Birthing Body" and the Regulation of Conception and Childbirth in the Edo Period," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, no. 24 (2003), 1-34.

husband of the pregnant woman with the help of village elites. Following strict regulations on contents, the report included the name and age of the pregnant woman and the expected date of her delivery. The birth report also had to be officially submitted, and it was required to explain the birthdate and the condition of the baby. If the pregnancy ended in a miscarriage or stillbirth, the husband had to give a full and specific account of it. The most important requirement was to prove that the death of the baby was purely natural and accidental and not related to any intentional actions, such as abortion or infanticide. Even after detailed descriptions of an ill-fated death, most miscarriages and stillbirths were still inspected by local village heads and medical professionals. At the final stage, community leaders combined each individual conception and birth report into an official document and submitted it to the authorities. In this way, the process of pregnancy, from conception to childbirth, was thoroughly monitored by the local governments.¹⁵⁸

Another similar case study by Sawayama Mikako analyzed the population policy called ‘*akago yōiku shiho* (赤子養育仕法)’ that was practiced in the Sendai (仙台) area in the early nineteenth century. ‘*Akago yōiku shiho*’ was managed and operated under the supervision of ‘*akago seidōyaku* (赤子制道役)’ who was selected among local elites of the village. ‘*Akago yōiku shiho*’ is basically similar to the population policies carried out in the Tsuyama domain. ‘*Akago seidōyaku*’ led the gathering with the heads of village community and five-person groups called *goningumi* (五人組), which took place every four months, in February, May, August, and

¹⁵⁸ The collected reports were again written and compiled in official documents, such as *City magistrate diary* (*Machibugyō nikki*, 町奉行日記), *Monthly diary of the chief elder* (*Ōtoshiyori tsukiban nikki*, お年寄り月番日記), and *Comprehensive prohibitions of the city office* (*Machikata shoji igodome*). Sawayama Mikako, 11-12.

November. They drafted a pregnancy report called ‘*kaininbu shojōchō* (懷妊婦書上帳)’ and wrote down who was pregnant and when the baby was due.¹⁵⁹

Notably, in both cases the conception report had to be submitted in the fourth month of pregnancy. Pregnancy in pre-modern society was usually self-diagnosed by women, depending on the cessation of menstruation in the fourth month. Women who had irregular cycles, however, could be sure about their pregnancy only by feeling fetal movement, which does not usually happen until the fifth month. Most abortions, therefore, took place in the fifth month after women became aware of their conception. Sawayama asserts that the rule of ‘the report in the fourth month’ played an effective role in preventing any attempt to have a secret abortion, and in that sense, this coercive measure deprived women of their power to decide on the continuation or discontinuation of their pregnancy.¹⁶⁰

The intervention of the official system over women’s pregnancy did not cease there. From the late 1780s to the early 1800s, doctors stepped in more frequently to confirm conception when women were not able to determine whether they were pregnant or not at the stage of the fourth month. It was announced, at last, that every conception must be verified by a doctor in the fourth month regardless of a women’s self-awareness. Thus, in the process of the development and elaboration of pregnancy surveillance, women’s independent judgment about their conception was again surrendered to the professional opinion of doctors as government agents.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Sawayama Mikako, “Onnadachi no koe wo kiku—kinsei nihon no ninshin, shussan wo meguru shiryō tokkai no kokoromi,” *Rekishigaku kenkyū*, vol. 912 (Tokyo, 2013), 27-38.

¹⁶⁰ Sawayama Mikako, “The “Birthing Body” and the Regulation of Conception and Childbirth in the Edo Period,” 18-20 and 23. Susan L. Burns, “The Body as Text: Confucianism, Reproduction, and Gender in Tokugawa Japan, in *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam* (Los Angeles, 2002), 207-208.

¹⁶¹ Sawayama Mikako, “The “Birthing Body” and the Regulation of Conception and Childbirth in the Edo Period,” 24.

Another third party assigned with overseeing women's birthing bodies was the community to which the pregnant woman belonged. With a system called "friendly scrutiny (友吟味, *yū ginmi*)" or mutual surveillance, villagers were organized into five-person groups (*goningumi*) to monitor and micromanage the reproductive process of the mothers-to-be in the neighborhood. When delivery was close, they were summoned to bear witness to the event. If the childbirth did not progress favorably, they needed to prove that it was unintentional. They were also charged with the responsibility of coping with emergencies regarding pregnancy. Requesting a doctor was one of their duties. If either a mother or a baby died in delivery without medical help, the neighbors were severely punished by a financial penalty or confinement.¹⁶² The practice of returning to one's natal home for delivery (*satogaeri*) was, in some cases, prohibited because it was too distant for the communal inspection to be effective.¹⁶³

Pregnancies, once registered in the surveillance system in this way, could not escape the several-layered vigilance of village officials, neighbors, and professionals whose roles and obligations with regard to childbirth were carefully prescribed by relevant laws. The local government frequently revised the birth-related edicts by reinforcing punishment for violators in order to preclude the possibility of a cover-up for abortion and infanticide by the entire village. Penalties ranged from heavy fines, to confinement, to the suspension of professional activities, and even to the lowering of social status.¹⁶⁴

As seen above, childbirth under official supervision was no longer a private event in which only a woman and her family were involved. The perspective of considering childbirth a public matter did not allow for women to intervene in their own reproductive process.

¹⁶² Sawayama Mikako, 15.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 25-28.

Furthermore, a woman's will was not reflected or acknowledged even after giving birth. The decision of whether to perform infanticide, for example, depended on the mother-in-law or the household's male head. As Lindsey William points out, a scene of infanticide scene (fig. 4.13) published in *Songs to Admonish against Abandoning of Children* (*Sutego kyōkai no uta*, 捨子教誡の謡, 1861) confirms that the mother was sometimes isolated from the decision regarding whether to save her infant or not. This scene shows an old midwife suffocating the baby on a straw mat while the mother is recuperating behind the folding screen. Considering that the mother is smiling in this scene, it is certain that she is unaware of her baby's death.¹⁶⁵

In sum, the gradual disappearance of mother images from the late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century birth scenes clearly mirrors the historical context in which the voices of women as decision-makers were excluded from all matters regarding pregnancy and childbirth. Sawayama mentions in her article that *Onna chōhōki taisei* instructs the woman to follow the practice of submitting pregnancy reports to the government in the fourth month.¹⁶⁶ The fact that *Onna chōhōki taisei*, one of the various editions of the 1692 *Onna Chōhōki*, records the government's population policy seems to be convincing evidence of a direct connection between the contents of *jokunsho* and political policy.

¹⁶⁵ Lindsey William, "Placement," *Fertility and Pleasure: Ritual and Sexual Values in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 100.

¹⁶⁶ *Onna chōhōki taisei* (女重宝記大成) is one of later versions of the 1692 editions. Sawayama Mikako cited this from the first volume of *Ko sodate no sho* (Tokyo: Heidansha, 1976) edited by Yamazumi Masami and Nakae Kazue in 1976. Sawayama Mikako, 17.

4.3 REMOVAL OF MOTHER AS A SOURCE OF POLLUTION: FROM 1790 TO 1796 EDITIONS OF *FAST-DYEING MIND STUDY*

4.3.1 Visual Analysis of the 1790 Edition

The case of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* (*Shingaku hayasomegusa*, 心学早染草), a three-volume comic book, is another good example that clearly demonstrates how the regulation of the government affected the alienation of mothers in the scene of childbirth. The late eighteenth century work is one of the few Edo-period comic books (*kibyōshi*, 黄表紙) that delineate a scene of childbirth. First written in 1790 by Santō Kyōden (山東京伝, 1761-1816), a well-known novelist, *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* gained enough continuing popularity to go through several editions over the years. The three-volume story highlights the *Shingaku* school (心学, Mind Study) whose ideology preaches the importance of healthy and sound lifestyles.¹⁶⁷

Founded by Ishida Baigan (石田梅岩, 1685-1744) in the mid-eighteenth century, it is said that the syncretic ideology of *Shingaku* developed by integrating disparate ideas derived from established religions such as Neo-Confucianism, Shintō, and Buddhism. First arising in Kyoto and Osaka, *Shingaku* pervaded Edo by the late eighteenth century. Its tenets were directed specifically at the merchants who acquired enormous fortunes at this time. The merchant class,

¹⁶⁷ In English studies, *Shingaku hayasomegusa* can be diversely translated into ‘*Learning of the Heart in Fast Dyes*,’ ‘*Quick-Staining Dye*,’ and ‘*Fast-Dyeing Mind Study*.’ Among them, I cited the translation of the title from *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900* by Haruo Shirane and James Brandon. According to them, *Shingaku hayasomegusa* falls under the genre of *kibyōshi* (yellow-booklets) of which name originated from the cover of its color. The genre thrived between 1775 and 1806. While presenting a well-balanced combination of text and image, the books presented short stories consisting of two or three volumes using satire, irony, and humor as its key characteristic. Every segment of Edo society became the subject matter of *kibyōshi*. Not only detailed information on *kibyōshi* but also the entire translation of the texts of *Shingaku hayasomegusa* are included in ‘*Kibyōshi: Satiric and Didactic Picture Books*,’ in *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An anthology, 1600-1900* edited by Haruo Shirane and James Brandon (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 672-729.

although ranked lowest in the system of the four classes, was the leader of the Edo's urban economy, living extravagant lives, and playing an essential role in fostering the entertainment culture of the Edo period. They were key patrons, as well as the main customers, of images of erotic and vulgar scenes rendered in luxurious printed materials, usually based on the pleasure quarters of the Yoshiwara (吉原). For this reason, the lifestyles of the merchant class were oftentimes denounced as licentious and considered harmful to public decorum. The principles of the *Shingaku* school encouraged the merchant class to cultivate fundamental virtues, including diligence, integrity, frugality, and filial piety. By doing this, its preachers believed the merchants would abandon their dissipated living and attain the same level of morals and self-discipline seen in samurai.¹⁶⁸

Fast-Dyeing Mind Study embodies its exhortative and didactic teachings through the life of Ritarō, the son of the merchant Rihei. Santō Kyōden adds dramatic effect to the story by featuring a constant rivalry between “good souls” and “bad souls” over the body of Ritarō. When bad souls lure him into wrong ways, Ritarō always overcomes temptation with the help of Master Dōri who is described as a propagator of *Shingaku* ideas.¹⁶⁹

The birth scene (fig. 4.14), relevant to our discussion, appears at the beginning of the first volume with the accompanying text recounting the moment when Ritarō is born. The text in the upper part of the composition is translated as:

¹⁶⁸ Haruo Shirane and James Brandon, 711-712. For more information on the *Shingaku* school, see Janine Anderson Sawada, *Confucian Values and Popular Zen: Sekimon Shingaku in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1993)

¹⁶⁹ According to Haruo and James, Master Dōri who appears in the novel reminds of Nakazawa Dōni (中沢道二, 1725-1803) who contributed the dissemination of *Shingaku* in the area of Edo. He established *Shingaku* college and delivered numerous lectures explaining Baigan's teachings. Haruo Shirane and James Brandon., 711.

Near Nihonbashi in downtown Edo lived a merchant named Rihei. He was the owner of the Quick and Easy Shop and dedicated himself to turning a fast profit. Rihei's wife became pregnant, and nine months later she gave birth to a gem of a baby boy. Everyone in the house offered their congratulations and made quite a commotion. An infant is truly a white thread waiting to be dyed life's various colors. As soon as Rihei's son was born, a distorted bad soul attempted to enter the child by slipping under its skin. The Heavenly Emperor appeared, however, and firmly twisted the bad soul's arm. He sent in a completely round good soul instead. The deity showed Rihei special mercy because he always kept his mind in good order. Unfortunately, ordinary people were unable to see this at all.¹⁷⁰

As many other contemporary birth images do, the illustration designed by Kitao Masayoshi (北尾政美, 1764-1824) catches the moment after delivery.¹⁷¹ In the foreground of the left page, the midwife and the maid are just finishing the newborn baby Ritarō's bath. The midwife, who dips her feet in a wooden bathtub, is lifting Ritarō from the water and smiling at him.¹⁷² Next to her, the maid is about to offer her something that could be a fresh towel to dry the water or possibly *ubugi* (the first clothing). The man wearing a top-knot hair style (chonmage, 丁髷) slightly leans over the two women and the baby. He must be Rihei, Ritarō's father. Holding out his right hand toward the two women, his gesture seems to express his concern as to whether Ritarō is being well cared for. In the innermost corner of the composition, Rihei's wife sits on a covered futon. Her figure is partially hidden by a sliding door, but her gaze is directed at

¹⁷⁰ I cited the translation of the text from Haruo Shirane and James Brandon (2002), 714.

¹⁷¹ I referred to the illustration from Owada edition stored in National Diet Library and Keio University.

¹⁷² The reason why the midwife dips her feet in a wooden bathtub is unclear. From the fact that similar cases can be found in other birth images, we can presume that it was a typical position for an infant bathing. The midwife seems to choose the easiest pose for bathing an infant.

the event of bathing Ritarō. Next to the huddled people centered around the newborn, the heavenly emperor (*tentei*, 天帝) makes his appearance accompanied by the “good soul” and the “bad soul,” personified as figures with globe-shaped heads respectively bearing Chinese characters for “good (善; zen)” and “bad (悪; aku).” As described in the text, the heavenly emperor impedes the approach of the bad soul toward Ritarō. The good soul moves forward to enter Ritarō’s body, while the emperor twists the bad soul’s arm with a resolute gesture.

First published by Owada Yasubei (大和田安兵衛) in 1790 (Owada edition, fig. 4.14), *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* was reprinted several times by many other publishing companies. In the same year the Owada edition came out, Enomotoya Kichibei (榎本屋吉兵衛) also printed the story (Enomotoya edition, fig. 4.15) using the same block designed by Kitao Masayoshi. Aside from the Owada and Enomotoya editions, remaining examples include the Omiya edition (fig. 4.16, dates unknown) printed by Ōmiya Gonkurō (近江屋権九郎) and the Tsutaya edition (fig. 4.17, 1796) brought out by Tsutaya Jūzaburō (蔦屋重三郎) later than the other versions. The undated *Kyōden sakusho* (京伝作書, fig. 4.18) also included *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* with three other comic books written by Santō Kyōden.¹⁷³ *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* experienced five reprints over a relatively short time span from the first edition of 1790 to the last edition of 1796, supporting the *Shingaku* school and spreading its core ideology among the Edo populace.

¹⁷³ The Enomotoya edition that I analyze here is now in Keio university. Ōmiya edition and *Kyōden sakusho* are housed in Waseda university library. Both works are undated. Given that the block design of the two works are same as those of the original edition of 1790, it is highly possible that they predate Tsutaya edition, or the last edition (1796). The last edition that I use in this article is a part of a collection of Tokyo Metropolitan Library.

4.3.2 Comparison of Birth Scenes Between the 1790 and 1796 Editions

What is noteworthy about the multiple publications of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* for this dissertation is that a stark difference surfaces in the way the imagery of the mother is represented when comparing the first four editions with the last. The early four examples (figs. 4.14, 4.15, 4.16, and 4.18) probably printed from the same woodblock retain the image of the mother recovering from delivery, whereas the last version (fig. 4.17), published in 1796, totally removes the mother from the postnatal event.

A detailed visual analysis of the architectural settings in each image makes the distinction more evident. The first four editions do not clarify spatial arrangements. Although the sliding door indicates an interior setting for childbirth, possibly Rihei's house, the space on the whole seems to be rather ambiguous. Except for sliding doors (襖, *fusuma*) and a low folding screen with two panels, other visual devices to mark architectural structure were omitted. Without the rendition of the wooden floor pattern or tatami mats, the figures seem to be float against the blank space, blurring any explicit boundary between the interior and the exterior of the birthing room. This ambiguity prevails in the birthing spaces of the four editions and even interferes with our identification of where the heavenly emperor and the two souls come from, as well as whether they are about to actually enter the room or are just hovering around.

The original purpose of partitions, such as sliding doors and folding screens, was to demarcate the domestic space of the house, but here they function as effective visual elements to make connections between figures engaged in the postpartum care of the newborn. This is evident in the deliberate arrangement of the two-paneled folding screen. One edge of the screen, the outside of which was graced with simplified *shippō* (七宝) patterns, is adjacent to Rihei's

back.¹⁷⁴ The opposite edge of the folding screen, displaying its inside surface painted with vegetal motifs, folds in and points in the direction of the tip of the blanket-covered prop (or birthing chair) that the mother leans against. The folding screen encloses the mother and the father together. Likewise, they are closely connected to the other two figures—the mother with the attendant and the father with the midwife—by a diagonal line. Finally, the bodies of the four figures: the mother, the father, the midwife, and the attendant, overlap one another forming a closed circular composition. In other words, the composition of the four figures against an ambiguous spatial backdrop enables Ritarō's mother to be an important player in the first bath, a pivotal milestone for a newborn to be accepted as a member of the village community.

Whereas Ritarō's mother shares her space with the rest of the figures in the early four editions, the last version (fig. 4.17, 1796) of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* shrouds her presence through attentively designed architectural settings. In comparison with the empty background and the sparse furnishings in the first four examples (figs. 4.14, 4.15, 4.16, and 4.18), the last edition published by Tsutaya Jūzaburō represents housing built for commoners in the Edo period. Shown in the right corner of the right page is the bottom part of *shōji* (障子) with a classic lattice pattern used in a traditional Japanese residence. It divides the living areas into an interior space and the wooden floored area (*rōka*, 廊下), or exterior space. While the wooden floor passageway extends to the outside of the house, the living area is compartmentalized into a living room (*ima*, 居間) and a bedroom (birthing chamber) by *fusuma* (襖), seen on the left page.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ *Shippō*, or to be more precise, *shippō-tsunagi* (七宝繋) is a series of the patterns of interlinked circles. Typical *shippō* pattern consists of four interlocked circles and the simplest unit, as depicted here, is made of only one circle of which circumference split into four arcs. Originated in the Nara period, the pattern symbolized good fortune. In the Edo period, it was frequently used for textile design. *Waei taishō nihon bijutsu yōgo jiten hokyūhen (Bilingual [Japanese and English] A Dictionary of Japanese Art Terms)*, edited by committee for *A Dictionary of Japanese Art Terms* (Tokyo: Tokyo bijutsu, 1990), 277.

¹⁷⁵ *Shōji* and *fusuma* are translated into the same English word 'sliding door.' In terms of function and production, however, they differ from each other. Because *shōji* are placed between interior and exterior areas, they are

The birth scene of the last version (fig. 4.17) illustrates three different events taking place in such an architectural setting that is divided into three sections: bedroom (birthing chamber), living room, and area of a wooden floored corridor. The living area is allocated for the first bath of Ritarō. The surrounding area, where three adults cluster together, is further demarcated by two thresholds installed on the floor for each sliding door. The wooden corridor serves as an entryway for the god and the two souls. The clearly depicted long wooden planks of the passageway allow readers to easily discern the direction from which the heavenly emperor and the two souls come. The haloed god descends on a white cloud at a diagonal angle towards baby Ritarō. The good soul, who has just crossed the doorsill, is about to jump into the body of Ritarō, who stretches out his arms and legs. The bad soul, restrained by the god, is driven into the right upper corner of the composition. The bedroom (or birthing chamber) in the far left of the scene is arranged for the mother's recovery. Unlike the earlier examples, architectural elements such as *fusuma*, threshold, and a low folding screen here play a given role—to confine the mother in an isolated space. Incongruous with her essential role in childbirth, the mother here is completely estranged from all these bustling events, and her presence is only intimated by a floral-foliage-patterned cover exposed through a small gap in the far left corner of the composition.

This interesting discontinuity of mother images between the earlier and later versions of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* compels us to ask certain questions: What engendered the transformation in the depiction of the mother figure in such a short period of time, a span of only six years from 1790 to 1796? Why did the author, Santō Kyōden, decide to eliminate the mother

constructed by attaching thin translucent paper, through that sunlight can pass into the inside of house, to a wooden frame. *Fusuma* (襖), on the other hand, are used to compartmentalize interior space into smaller sections, such as bedrooms, dining, living, and study areas. To guarantee a clear separation of each space, *fusuma* are made of a wooden understructure onto which thick, nontransparent paper is affixed and finished with black lacquer on its border.

figure, the main player of childbirth, from the scene? The next section attempts to answer these questions by situating the production of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* within sociopolitical contexts, such as the launch of the Kansei reforms (寛政改革, 1789-1801). An investigation on its conservative cultural policy, in particular, will enable us to contemplate Ritarō's birth scene from various angles, juxtaposed against Kyōden's career as a professional writer and the unfavorable attitude of Edo society toward childbirth.

4.3.3 The Launch of the Kansei Reforms and Its Historical Background

An examination of how the Kansei reforms affected Edo society can serve as a linchpin in our understanding of why mother figures were relegated to the periphery in the birth scenes in the later version of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study*. The increased pressure of censorship, the personal traumatic experience of the author, who was punished for violating publishing restrictions, and the reform's conservative cultural policy that revalidated the new birth-related ideology and practices of *kegare* (穢れ; defilement caused by female blood) and *ubuya* (産屋; birthing hut), all impacted the visual expression of the birth scene.

The Kansei reforms arose to cope with political and economic crisis facing the Tokugawa shogunate. For about twenty years under the leadership of Tanuma Okitsugu (田沼意次, 1719-1788), a Senior Counselor (rōjū 老中), the shogunate's policies had been failing in almost every aspect of society. The economy was beset by government deficit spending, inflationary prices, and a deepening gap between rich and poor. Rural areas, in particular, were devastated by the Great Tenmei famine that lasted from 1782 to 1788. Seeking relief, many ruined peasant families surged into the cities of Edo and Osaka, and the sudden influx of population disturbed previous

urban systems because the majority of these peasants remained as vagrants without being absorbed into the established economic structure. The disorder and chaos of Edo society reached its height when a throng of hungry people assaulted the homes of the wealthy in 1787; this destructive action would recur sporadically in big cities across the country. The ruling class, or samurai, though responsible for this predicament, had their own issues to grapple with, such as moral corruption and the loss of people's trust. In short, late 18th-century Tokugawa society was in crisis and in great need of urgent changes in government policies.

When the tenth shogun Tokugawa Ieharu (徳川家治, 1737-1786) died in 1786, the political rivals of Tanuma Okitsugu seized their opportunity, toppling the Tanuma clique and inducting Matsudaira Sadanobu (松平定信, 1759-1829) into the office of Chief Senior Councilor (*rōjū shuza*, 老中首座). Soon after his appointment in 1787, Sadanobu announced the commencement of the Kansei reforms as immediate measures to stabilize the economy based on agriculture, to restore the morality of the samurai and the merchant class, and to revive the social order of the early Tokugawa period in which the authority of the shogunate was unquestioned and placed at the top of society.

Numerous edicts that touched almost every aspect of life soon followed under Sadanobu's conservative rule. In the economic sphere, the tax revenue system was strengthened, expanding the shogunate's ability to finance other reforms. Sadanobu also enacted a series of development programs intended to normalize impoverished rural areas. Agricultural subsidies were given to new settlers in the countryside. Childbearing subsidies, too, were provided for new parents. Sadanobu's administration believed that these policies would increase local birth rates

that would solve the shogunate's fiscal problems by securing a stable population capable of paying taxes.¹⁷⁶

In the ideological and political realms, this reform-minded government promoted Neo-Confucianism based on the philosophy of Zhu Xi (J: Shushi 朱子, 1130-1200), prohibiting other forms of Confucianism that they labeled as heterodoxies. Neo-Confucianism provided the theoretical foundations for the reform leaders who advocated a strong hierarchical system that put a strong emphasis on the superiority of the shogun, samurai, and men over vassals, merchants, and women. Following the ideas of Neo-Confucianism, the values of 'the scholarly and the military' (*bunbu*, 文武) were stressed as essential virtues to sustain a moral and ethical life. Sadanobu encouraged every individual to practice the way of 'the scholarly and the military.' He believed that, by doing this, people would develop the morality to act out their given roles within the strict class system of Edo society. This young leader even took practical measures to reinstate social morality in the political sphere. As the head of the administration, he not only expelled incompetent and morally corrupt bureaucrats, but also attempted to assign qualified and reputable gentleman scholars to his new office.¹⁷⁷

4.3.3.1 Influence of the Kansei Reforms on the Censorship Legislation It is no wonder that the publishing industry was a target for reform. This included censorship-related legislation that exercised direct control over the printing business, with a pronounced impact on art and

¹⁷⁶ Takeuchi Makoto, "Kansei no kaikaku," *Tokubetsuten nihyakunenga omoshiroi Kansei no shuppankai to Santō Kyōden* (Tokyo: Tabako to shio no hakubutsukan, 1995), 116-120. For more information on the political, social, and economic background of the appointment of Matsudaira Sadanobu as chief senior councilor and the launch of the Kansei reforms, also see Takeuchi Makoto, "Kansei kaikaku no jentei," *Kansei kaikaku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2009), 55-124; Conrad Totman, "Domestic Issues," *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 468-480.

¹⁷⁷ Robert L. Backus, "The Relationship of Confucianism to the Tokugawa Bakufu as Revealed in the Kansei Educational Reform," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 34 (1974), 98-99.

culture.¹⁷⁸ The first edict on commercial book publications was issued in the fifth month of the second year (1790) of the reforms. As mentioned in the edict itself, it mainly recapitulated previous limitations that were established in the course of the Kyōhō reforms (享保改革) of the 1720s. The renewal of regulations continued frequently even after Sadanobu's resignation from his post, further elaborating restrictions over the content and format of printed materials as well as strengthening the system of self-censorship and the provisions of the penalties for any breach.

The censorship-related provisions compiled in *Tenpo Compilation of Proclamations* (*Ofuregaki tenpō shūsei*, 御触書天保集成) can be roughly summarized as follows: 1) New books will not be published except for special occasions; 2) Publication of all books must be internally inspected by *gyōji* (行事), the delegation of guilds run by publishers and booksellers, and their decisions would be officially approved by local magistrates (*machi-bugyō* 町奉行). Every published work was required to have an imprint of a round seal known as 'kiwame (極)' or 'approved'; 3) Both publishers and writers must include their real names in the book. Distribution of anonymous works will be strictly prohibited; 4) Contemporary events concerning politics and political figures must not be depicted or discussed in commercial publications. To allude to political issues of the present time by depending on the past will also be prohibited; 5) Writing and circulating indecent stories would be banned and the distribution of the explicitly

¹⁷⁸ There have been many studies on the censorship enacted during the Kansei reforms and its impact on the printing industry. Representative examples are as follows: Nakano Mitsutoshi, "Bunka men ni okeru Kansei kaikaku," *Nihon no kinsei 12 - Bungaku to bijutsu no seijuku* (Tōkyō: Chūōkōronsha, 1993), 57-76; Sarah E. Thompson, "The Politics of Japanese Prints," in *Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints*, ed. Dawn Lawson (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1991): 29-91; Ōkunbo Junichi, "Shuppan tōseirei to ukiyoe – kanseiki no nishikie o chūshini," *Kansei no shuppankai to Santō kyōden* (Tokyo: Tabako to shio no hakubutsukan, 1995), 138-145. Ellis Tinios, "Censorship of Popular Prints," *Japanese Prints: Ukiyo-e in Edo, 1700-1900* (Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2010), 38-45; Julie Nelson Davis, *Utamaro and the Spectacle of Beauty* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

erotic will not be allowed. 6) The production of expensive and sumptuous books will also be forbidden.¹⁷⁹

In a micromanaging effort, the government even forbade insertion of the names of prostitutes in *ukiyo-e* prints. In the later phase of the reforms, that a sitter was a prostitute did not matter. The production of bust portraits of women (*ōkubi-e* 大首絵) itself was banned. Not only were female bust portraits considered too explicit to blend in with the direction of the conservative reform policy, but also the circulation of *ōkubi-e* embellished by fine mica powder was not consonant with sumptuary laws enacted to curb the luxurious lifestyle of the merchant class.¹⁸⁰

4.3.3.2 Prosecution of Santo Kyōden and Removal of Mother Figures from *Fast-Dyeing*

Mind Study Despite the frequent renewal of the edicts in the early stages of the campaign, writers, publishers, and booksellers in *ukiyo-e* circles did not take the new Kansei laws seriously and continued to violate the relevant clauses as they had in the previous era. For example, they implicitly dealt with current political issues, such as the downfall of Tanuma Okitsugu and the outbreak of *uchikowashi* (打ち壊し; urban smashing). They also lampooned and ridiculed the ‘*bunbu*’ policy through the publications of comic books (*kibyōshi*), such as *The Winnower of the Two Roads of Bun and Bu* (*Bunbu Nidō Mangoku Dōshi*, 文武二道万足通 1788) by Hōseidō Kisanji (朋誠堂喜三二, 1735-1813) and *The Two Roads of Bun and Bu Repeated by the Parrot*

¹⁷⁹ Some studies provide detailed information on what types of censorship-related laws were enacted. Among them, I refer to the following articles: Yuasa Yoshiko, “kansei no shuppan horei (miteiko),” *Kansei no shuppankai to Santō Kyōden* (Tokyo: Tabako to shio no hakubutsukan, 1995), 121-136; Peter F. Kornicki, “Nishiki no Ura. An Instance of Censorship and the Structure of a Sharebon,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 32, no. 2 (1977), 153-188. Julie Nelson Davis, “‘Pictures of Beauties’ and Other Social Physiognomies,” *Utamaro and the Spectacle of Beauty* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 62-114.

¹⁸⁰ Ellis Tinios, 42.

(*Ōmugaeshi bunbu no futamichi*, 鸚鵡返文武二道, 1789) by Koikawa Harumachi (恋川春町, 1744-1789).¹⁸¹ As a leading *kibyōshi* writer, Santō Kyōden also joined his colleagues by writing *Crisscrossed Confucianism: Deep Blue Pattern of the Day* (*Kōshijima toki ni aizome*, 孔子縞干時藍染, 1789), a work satirizing the irrationalities of the Kansei reforms and its core ideology, Neo-Confucianism. In the fictitious story created by Kyōden, people take a Neo-Confucian worldview to an extreme degree and therefore enjoy giving away money to avoid personal gains. They even attempt to put their money secretly into others' pockets instead of pickpocketing. Merchants attempt to sell their best goods at cheaper prices, while their customers try to buy inferior products at more expensive prices. Santo Kyōden, in other words, represents a world where Neo-Confucianism is fully materialized in a derisive manner, mocking the idea of the Kansei reforms.¹⁸²

After the publication of *Crisscrossed Confucianism: Deep Blue Pattern of the Day*, Kyōden wrote three more *sharebon* (洒落本)—*A Library of Contrivances* (*Shikakake Bunko*, 仕懸文庫), *The Other Side of Brocade* (*Nishiki no Ura*, 錦之裏,) and *The Silk Sleeve of A Courtesan* (*Shōgi Kinuburui*, 娼妓絹籠)—in 1791, and it was these somewhat controversial works of fiction that caused Santō Kyōden and his publisher Tsutaya Jūzaburō to be punished. As the genre of *sharebon* usually did, these three works employed as their subject matter a dramatic incident that happened at the pleasure quarters. The second and third works, more specifically, featured love affairs between famous courtesans and merchants in contemporary settings. The publication of these three *sharebon*, which violated the law, eventually gave the

¹⁸¹ Julie Nelson Davis, 64; Sarah E. Thompson, 57-58.

¹⁸² Kristin H. Williams, "Crisscrossed Confucianism: Images of Edo as a Virtuous Dystopia," *International Journal of Comic Art*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2007), 119-134.

shogunate an opportunity to display its authority as well as to demonstrate the force and effectiveness of censorship law.

Immediately after the three *sharebon* were brought out on the market, all relevant parties including Kyōden, his father Denzaemon (伝佐衛門), Tsutaya Jūzaburō, and the two *gyōji* (行司) who were in charge of inspection were summoned to the office of the City Commissioner and questioned regarding the publication of the three *sharebon*. According to the inquiry report (*kinmisho*, 吟味書) contained in *A Biography of Kyōden (Santō Kyōden ichidaiki, 山東京伝一代記)*, Kyōden admitted that he made a mistake by producing the books filled with depraved and vulgar contents and violating the provisions prohibited by the censorship edict. The inquiry report also records how Kyōden and his accomplices were punished. Kyōden was shackled for fifty days, Tsutaya Jūzaburō was made to forfeit half of his entire assets, and the two *gyōji* were sent into exile in the provinces. Even Kyōden's father, Denzaemon, was severely reprimanded.

It seems that the prosecution of 1791 was unprecedented and exceptional compared to cases of other similar violations. Kyōden's *sharebon* were about the romantic stories of courtesans, which might be improper under a strict application of the law, but their offense to the existing edict was not considered serious, for they did not contain any obscene scenes or address any political issues. As some scholars have pointed out, it is highly possible that the real intention of the case of 1791 was to make an example of Kyōden, who was the most prominent author of *sharebon*, and thereby to eradicate the mild violations occasionally committed by other writers and publishers. Whatever the intentions, this exemplary prosecution greatly influenced the art scene in Edo, as well as the rest of Kyōden's career.¹⁸³ Thereafter, Kyōden no longer composed *sharebon*, significantly curtailing his production. Although he resumed writing

¹⁸³ Sarah E. Thompson, 62-64; Peter F. Kornicki, 157-159; Julie Nelson Davis, 67.

kibyōshi in 1793, his subjects remained distanced from social and political issues. Indeed, many of them focused on educational features with a strong didactic tone acceptable to the authority. At this time, he even wrote several *akahon* (red books, 赤本) which are grounded in Chinese classics and usually targeted at children. In the late fall of 1793, Kyōden began to run a retail store selling tobacco and paper goods with his father. He spent most of his time designing advertisements and introducing new products to the market.¹⁸⁴ He began writing novels in 1796, but did not provoke the authorities. It seems that Kyōden did not wish to repeat his persecution and so laid low as much as possible.

The publication of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* and the change in the mother images over the course of its revision should be reconsidered against the backdrop of the enforcement of censorship law during the Kansei reforms. As we have already examined above, the last edition of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study*, which effaces the mother figure by means of a folding screen and sliding door, was reissued in 1796, five years after the persecution of 1791. According to Tanahashi Masahiro, a distinguished scholar of Japanese literature, Tsutaya Jūzaburō who was in a precarious financial position, having had half of his wealth confiscated, proposed to Kyōden that *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* should be republished. Given the lasting popularity of the *Shingaku* school among the public, the republication of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* could provide a stable, lucrative source of income to Tsutaya for some time. Because the surface of the original block was so worn out that the texts were no longer legible, Tsutaya asked Kyōden to create new blocks for *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study*.¹⁸⁵ The mother image that occupied a central place in the

¹⁸⁴ Jane Devitt, "Santō Kyōden and the Yomihon," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2 (1979), 258; Yamamoto Harufumi, "Hikka igo no Santō Kyōden – Kansei yonenkara kansei rokunenmade," *Meikai daigaku gaikokugo gakubu ronshu*, vol. 14 (2002), 18.

¹⁸⁵ Tanahashi Masahiro, "Kansei kaiku to Santō Kyōden," *Kansei no shuppankai to Santō Kyōden* (Tokyo: Tabako to shio no hakubutsukan, 1995), 167.

birth scene of the original block was moved to the margins during this redesigning process. It is reasonable to assume that the marginalization of the mother figure in the birth scene of the new edition was the result of a conscious decision by the author Kyōden and the block designer Kitao Shigemasa (北尾重政, 1739-1820). At the time, Kyōden's career as an author was at an impasse after the case of 1791, and he tried to carry out his work in a restrained manner. The rigid and uncompromising tenets of the Kansei reforms still prevailed over all sections of Edo society. Kyōden would not take the slightest risk of upsetting the authorities. Therefore, it is likely that he endeavored to eliminate potential risk factors that could have disturbed both any moral social code or the censorship-related edicts in advance.

If we suppose that Kyōden consciously intended to remove the mother figure from the newly revised *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study*, did he consider the mother in the birth scene as problematic enough to worry about having conflicts with the edicts and the authorities? Does this mean that the image of the birthing mother was not appropriate to represent in his book or to show to his audience? To answer these questions, we need to pay attention to the notion of *ubuya* (産屋) and *kegare* (穢れ). *Ubuya*, which, simply put, refers to a custom that confines the birthing mother to a specially devised hut for a certain period of time. *Kegare* is not a concept associated exclusively with childbirth. It means a polluted and unclean condition generated by female blood. In a sense, childbirth was looked upon as a major cause of *kegare* in the community because bleeding was inevitable during the process of parturition. Both *ubuya* and *kegare* were rooted in Japan's ancient period, but they were still effective notions in some segments of Edo society. Thus, the next section will examine how these old concepts were observed and reconceived in the Edo period and thereby demonstrate how the reception of *ubuya*

and *kegare* in Edo society affected Kyōden's creation of a new birth scene in which the mother is excluded.

4.3.4 Revalidation of *Ubuya* and *Kegare* in the Edo Period

4.3.4.1 *Ubuya* Practice According to the definition introduced in encyclopedias on Japanese folk culture, *ubuya* simply refers to a separate place prepared for a birthing mother to avoid contamination.¹⁸⁶ It was believed that blood from parturition could bring pollution (*kegare* or *fujō*) to the whole village community as well as to the family.¹⁸⁷ Pollution could be transmitted not only through contact with a birthing mother, but also by sharing water with her. Fire, too, was considered a major medium for spreading contamination, so that even using the same fire for cooking was strictly forbidden. In other words, *ubuya* were built to prevent the proliferation of contamination by isolating a birthing mother and limiting the event of childbirth to a certain designated area.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ As a part of distinctive Japanese culture and tradition, *ubuya* has been studied by numerous scholars from a very early stage of Japanese modern history. The pioneers who excavated the custom of *ubuya* from the remote past and elevated its status to a subject of research were Japanese folk ethnologists of the early twentieth century. In the mid 1930s, Segawa Kiyoko, one of the representative disciples of Yanagita Kunio, known as the father of Japanese ethnology, conducted an extensive survey on women who experienced the *ubuya* tradition in their early lives. She collected oral records that provided valuable information on the actual conditions of *ubuya*. This and other research done by scholars in the first half of the twentieth century formed the foundation for compilations of Japanese folk culture related to childbirth. Beginning with *Dictionary of Ethnology*, (*Minzokugaku jiten*, 民俗学辞典) in 1951, a wide variety of compendiums, such as *The Atlas of Japanese Folk Culture* (*Nihon minzoku chizu*, 日本民俗地図, 1969), *Encyclopedia of Japanese Folk Culture* (*Nihon minzoku jiten*, 日本民俗事典, 1972), and *Japanese Folk Customs on Birth: A Sourcebook* (*Nihon san'iku shūzoku shiryō shūsei*, 日本産育習俗資料集成, 1975), were completed based on a nationwide investigation of folk cultural materials including birth related customs. Segawa Kiyoko, *Onna no minzokushi: sono kegare to shinpi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1980), 13-14.

¹⁸⁷ It is believed that there were three types of defilements generated respectively by menstruation, childbirth, and death. *Kegare*, associated with childbirth, was called as 'white pollution (*shiro fujō*, 白不浄),' menstruation 'red pollution (*aka fujō*, 赤不浄),' and death 'black pollution (*kuro fujō*, 黒不浄).' Itabashi Haruo, "Ubuya shūzoku ni miru kegare kyōjo kyūyō," *Shussan no minzokugaku bunkajinruigaku*, ed. Yasui Manami (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2014), 29.

¹⁸⁸ Other than the commonly accepted perspective of *ubuya* as an instrument to confine a birthing mother, there are also alternative views, which take a more positive attitude toward the custom of *ubuya*. Anne Bouchy asserts that

A tangible, specific case of *ubuya* (fig. 4. 19) is found in Miwa (三和), a small town located in the city of Fukuchiyama (福知山) in the northern part of Kyoto. It is called Ōbara (大原) *ubuya*, named after the shrine (大原神社) to which it belongs. Although the current Ōbara *ubuya* is a reconstruction of the original hut that was used until the 1910s (early Taishō period, 大正, 1912-1926), it presents the architectural structure and form of a real *ubuya*. Standing alone at the very bottom of the stairs connected to the entrance of a shrine, the structure resembles a triangular-shaped tent, its steep sides covered with a layer of rough thatch. The overall size of the hut is modest, measuring 5.2 feet high and 7.9 feet wide, with the inner space only having room for three tatami mats. The Ōbara *ubuya* also reproduces a birthing rope (力綱, *chikara tsuna*.) which hangs from the rafter of the roof, as well as the white paper slip (七五三縄, *shimenawa*, fig. 4.20) that is placed in a pile of sand. These two objects were used to help create a safe and easy parturition practically and spiritually. By holding a birthing rope, the mother was effectively able to harness her force during labor pains. The white paper, on the other hand, comforted the mother psychologically by reassuring her of the presence of the god.¹⁸⁹

Although Ōbara *ubuya* has been frequently mentioned as a representative case that exemplifies the pre-modern prototype of *ubuya*, not every village community shared the same type of *ubuya*. Some communities established a permanent structure that every village woman

ubuya were built to set the boundary between the worlds of gods and humans. In her discourse, *ubuya* is the sacred place in which gods reside to help safe delivery. Anna-Marie Bouchy, “Haha no chikara – ubuya no minzoku to kinki,” *Bosei wo tou – rekishideki henshen (jō)*, ed. Wakita Haruko (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1985), 254-255.

¹⁸⁹ Ōbara *ubuya* has been mentioned in many ethnological studies as the representative example of actual *ubuya*. For more information on Ōbara *ubuya*, see “The Case of Ōbara Jinja’s Parturition Hut: Intersection at the Crossroads of This World and the Other World,” the 4th chapter of Lisa Kuly’s dissertation. Lisa Kuly, *Religion, Commerce, and Commodity in Japan’s Maternity Industry* (Ph. D. diss., Cornell University, 2009), 173-228; Iijima Yoshiharu, “Kodomo no hakken to jidō yūgi no sekai,” in *Nihon minzoku bunka taikai hokyūhan dai jūkan – ie to josei =kurashi no bunkashi* (Tokyo: Shōgakkān, 1985), 251-252; Hitomi Tonomura, “Birth-giving and Avoidance Taboo: Women’s Body versus the Historiography of Ubuya,” *Japan Review*, vol. 19 (2007), 4-5; Anne Marie Bouchy, “Haha no chikara – ubuya no minzoku to kinki,” 237.

was able to share, as in the case of Ōbara *ubuya*, but others erected a temporary structure for each woman. Once the body of a pregnant woman showed signs of impending birth, her husband built a disposable birthing hut for his wife and this single-use *ubuya* was demolished later. A location distanced from residential areas was generally preferred for the site of *ubuya*. Oftentimes, however, *ubuya* were set up at home. Rather than constructing a new structure similar to Ōbara *ubuya*, in this case, a separate, secluded space, such as a storeroom or a barn, was selected and temporarily reserved for the event of childbirth. The actual manner of observing the *ubuya* custom varied, too, from area to area. A mother usually had her baby in the *ubuya* and remained there to recover, waiting for the end of the abstention period of *kegare*. In some cases, the mother gave birth at home and then was moved to the *ubuya* with the infant to spend the postpartum period. Depending on the region, the period of stay ranged from seven days to up to three months.¹⁹⁰

To sum up, as many scholars after the first-generation ethnologists have attempted to demonstrate, *ubuya* was not a monolithic and uniform concept. There were multifarious aspects and local variations in its physical form and actual practice. In spite of the diversity of the *ubuya* custom, it not only permeated the lives of Edo-period society based on the fear of *kegare* or taboos against blood, but also depended upon human effort to evade punishment for the transgression of the taboo. The discourse on *ubuya*, for this reason, is inseparable from the discussion of *kegare*.

¹⁹⁰ The diversity found in the practices of *ubuya* is also reflected in its various names: *taya* (他屋), *betsuya* (別屋), *koya* (小屋), *sanya* (産屋), *koyado* (小屋戸), etc. Anna Marie Bouchy, 236-238.

4.3.4.2 *Kegare* Concept In contrast to trying to study *ubuya* from scarce written evidence, *kegare* has been studied through the examination of official and legal documents produced by the imperial institution and the military government. According to religious and historical research on *kegare*, the 8th century *Kojiki* (古事記) and *Nihonshoki* (日本書紀) are the earliest documents that illustrate the ideas of spiritual cleanness and pollution. The polluted condition mentioned in these two oldest chronicles, however, are derived only from death, not from blood. It is in the early 9th century that female blood began to be deemed a major source of pollution, along with death. The physiological female body condition, which includes menstruation and childbirth and discharging blood, was defined as a defiled state and regulated by legal codes.¹⁹¹ The *Kōninshiki* (弘仁式), a compilation of legal commentaries on ritual procedures completed around 820, stipulates that someone who has contact with childbirth requires seven days of abstinence to be able to participate in rituals at the imperial court and major shrines.¹⁹² Another supplementary legal code, the *Engishiki* (延喜式), written between 905 and 927, includes more refined regulations on death and birth-related taboos. In the third book, entitled “Provisional Festivals,” it is recorded that the expected period of avoidance for childbirth is seven days.¹⁹³

Since being first codified in the *Kōninshiki* and the *Engishiki*, the fear of *kegare* as a potential source of containment intensified throughout the medieval period, when members of the imperial family started to abstain for thirty days instead of seven to purify the contamination

¹⁹¹ Emiko Namihira, “Pollution in the Folk Belief System,” *Current Anthropology (Supplement: An Anthropological Profile of Japan)*, vol. 24, no. 4 (1987), S65; Hitomi Tonomura, 14.

¹⁹² Hitomi Tonomura, p. 15; Kunimoto Keikichi, “Ubuya no shuzoku – san no kegare,” *San’ikushi – Osan to kosodate no rekishi* (Iwate: Moriokataimuzu, 1996), 178.

¹⁹³ Along with the seven-day avoidance for birth, the codes also stipulate avoidance periods for exposure to human death (thirty days for purification), to the death of a domestic animal (five days), and to the birth of a domestic animal (three days). 凡觸穢惡應忌者 人死限日 自葬日始計 産七日 六畜死五日 鷄非忌限 其喫肉三日 此官尋常忌之 但當祭余司皆忌. I cited original texts from Kunimoto’s book, *San’ikushi – Osan to kosodate no rekishi* (Iwate: Moriokataimuzu, 1996), 178. For the translation, I also referred to Tonomura’s above-mentioned article.

resulting from contact with childbirth. In the late 12th century, for example, the retired emperor Goshirakawa (後白河, 1127-1192) practiced thirty days of abstinence when he had to take part in a Buddhist ceremony at Hosshōji (法勝寺). As the direct descendant of *kami*, the emperor was believed to be the manifestation of purity itself and so had to remain untainted. It was therefore crucial that the imperial space surrounding the emperor and the imperial family was maintained and protected in a pure condition devoid of any *kegare* elements. As a precaution, therefore, Goshirakawa refused to visit the temple where the priests had attended a birthing event to avoid possible defilement, even if the recommended avoidance period of seven days had already passed.¹⁹⁴

4.3.4.3 Reinforcement of Birth-related *Kegare* in *Ofuregaki* Returning to our discussion regarding how the concept of *kegare* was received in the Edo period, it seems that the Tokugawa shogunate was the first military authority to introduce *kegare*-related taboos into the governing system.¹⁹⁵ The first shogun who expressed his concern about the issue of *kegare* was Tokugawa

¹⁹⁴ The retired emperor's serious and careful stance on the issue of *kegare* created arguments among courtiers and aristocrats about whether the court law regarding the prescribed abstinence length for birth pollution should be modified or not. The controversies, however, were soon concluded by Goshirakawa's grandson, the emperor Gotoba (後鳥羽, 1180-1239), who followed in his grandfather's footsteps and reconfirmed the thirty-day abstinence rule. Because of the growing apprehension for birth-related *kegare* within the imperial family and their observance of the thirty-day rule as a cautious precaution, major shrines, including Ise Shrine, also began to require thirty days for the purification of birth-related *kegare*. According to *Shosha kinki* (諸社禁忌), a collection of Kamakura-period records regarding various kinds of taboos, the most highly ranked twenty-one shrines located in the area of the Kinai recommended at least thirty days for the avoidance period. Only the Kamo Shrine followed the previous practice, the seven-day rule, as prescribed in the *Engishiki*. There were, however, even cases where people who participated in a birth had to abstain for up to eighty days and the expectant mother for one hundred days, according to documents of the Hie (日吉社) and Hirota Shrines (広田社). It is significant that, by the end of the medieval period, defilement caused by childbirth was treated to the same as death defilement. Hitomi Tonomura, 21-22; Narikiyo Hirokazu, *Josei to kegare no rekishi* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 2003), 119, 134-139.

¹⁹⁵ Unlike the case of the imperial institution that attempted to manage every instance of *kegare*, as a fledgling polity, the military governments in the early stage took a loose and lenient position on the issue of spiritual defilement. The birthing practices of the warrior class in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods have been addressed by historians through an examination of contemporary accounts, such as *Eastern Mirror* (*Azuma kagami*, 吾妻鏡, 1180-1266) and *Journal of Honorable Birthing Places* (*Gosanjo nikki*, 御産所日記, mid 14th c). According to these

Tsunayoshi (徳川綱吉, 1646-1709), the fifth shogun, popularly known as ‘the dog shogun,’ the nickname earned from animal protection laws that he issued during his reign. *Kegare*-related laws enacted during the government of Tsunayoshi were comprehensive and detailed enough to become the legal ground for all later decrees issued under the Tokugawa. We can find the specific contents of the *kegare*-related laws in *The Kanpō Compilation of Proclamations* (*Ofuregaki kanpō shūsei*, 御触書寛保集成), which gathers miscellaneous laws proclaimed between 1615 and 1743.¹⁹⁶ These laws are categorized under the title of ‘Provisions regarding Mourning and Avoiding Pollution (*kibukue nado no bu*, 忌服穢等之部)’ along with avoidance rules for death-related *kegare*. The very first *kegare*-related decrees in the Edo period date to 1685. They stipulate that a seven-day avoidance period is required for the father of a new child and thirty-five days for the mother. In the case of an encounter with a miscarriage, the father should observe seven-days of avoidance and the mother needs ten days to be freed from birth-

records, pregnant women, especially from the shogunal family, were expected to deliver their babies at a separate place called “a birthing place” (*sanjo* (産所). If the upcoming babies were the shogun’s, the *sanjo* was arranged usually at the house of a vassal who had a close alliance with the shogunal family. For example, Hōjō Masako (北条政子, 1156-1225) gave birth to her first son, Minamoto Yoriie (源頼家, 1182-1204), the future second shogun of the Kamakura shogunate, at the residence of Hiki Yoshikazu (比企能員, d.1203). Not only did Yoshikazu’s wife serve as the wet nurse of Yoriie, but his daughter, Wakasa no Tsubone (若狭の局, d.1203), was later married to Yoriie. There is no doubt that Yoshikazu was able to strengthen his personal ties with the shogun by providing his house as a birthing place. Judging from the example of the birth of Yoriie, medieval warriors did not feel as uneasy about birth pollution as aristocrats did. Rather, regardless of the possibility of *kegare*, they attempted to gain political benefit and to ensure future success from the birthing event of the shogunal family. It is also true that the Kamakura and Muromachi shogunates never enacted their own ordinances to manage *kegare* issues within the political system. Hitomi Tonomura, 19-21. For more information on the birthing practices of the shogunal family in the Muromachi period, see Suzuki Rika, “Muromachi shōgunke no osanjo,” *Tochigi shigaku*, vol. 7 (1993), 121-174.

¹⁹⁶ The compilation of *Ofuregaki*, the legal documents decreed by the shogunate, first began in 1742 by the order of the then-senior counselor, Matsudaira Norisato (松平乗邑, 1686-1746). It is said that the proclamations, amounting to 3550 from a wide range of areas were gathered and categorized in this first compilation. The second compilation happened in 1760, collecting 2060 documents released from 1744 to 1760. The third one was in 1787, compiling 3020 documents from 1761 to 1786. The last compilation occurred in 1841. It collected 6607 documents proclaimed between 1788 and 1837. Later, these four compilations were respectively entitled *Ofuregaki Kanpō Shūsei*, *Ofuregaki Hōreki Shūsei*, *Ofuregaki Tenmei Shūsei*, and *Ofuregaki Tempō Shūsei* by Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke who edited and published all *ofuregaki* documents in the 1930s. For information on the history and character of *ofuregaki* compilation, see Dan Fenno Henderson, “The Evolution of Tokugawa Law,” in *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan*, eds. John W. Hall and Marius B. Jansen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 203-229.

related pollution.¹⁹⁷ *Kegare*-related laws reappeared in 1688. Building on the general avoidance rules issued in 1685, the regulations titled ‘When Making Pilgrimages to *Zōjōji*, *Momijiyama*, and *Ueno* (上野, 紅葉山, 増上寺御参詣之時)’ appended new stipulations regarding worship at *Zōjōji* (増上寺). *Zōjōji*, founded in 1393, is located at the site once called *Momiji* mountain (紅葉山) which refers to the area around present-day Tokyo tower in the district of Minato (港町). After Tokugawa Ieyasu was appointed shogun, worship at *Zōjōji* was considered to be one of the important annual events in Edo. To ward off any potential elements that might defile the ceremony, the Tokugawa government specified in the first provision that any person affected with birth-related *kegare* from sharing a fire would be allowed to attend the worship only after ablutions. It also directed that the person should still stay away from the inner sanctuary of the temple even after purification unless the exposure to birth-related *kegare* occurred before six on the previous afternoon. Other than this first provision, the regulation released in 1688 included at least four more instructions regarding contact with birth-related *kegare*.¹⁹⁸ In January of the following year (1689), the government announced supplementary laws again regarding how to regulate and remove *kegare*, including birth-related pollution in the case of shrine visits, in addition to those related to worship at *Zōjōji*.¹⁹⁹

These *kegare*-related laws issued in the early years of the Tokugawa government were revalidated in 1693 and 1736. The laws of 1693 and 1736 shared almost the same provisions in regulating birth-related *kegare* with those of 1685, except for the avoidance rules for a father

¹⁹⁷ 穢之事 一産穢 父七日 母三十五日 (...) 一血荒 父七日 母十日 一流産 父七日 母十日, *Ofuregaki Kanpō shūsei*, doc. no. 949, eds. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1934), 499.

¹⁹⁸ 元禄元辰十二月 一上野 紅葉山 増上寺 御参詣之時 一産穢之者と相火い、行水次第ニて供奉不苦候 担御内陣之は遠慮可仕候 但前日暮六時より同座同火ニて無之候得は 供奉 御内陣迄も不苦候 (...). *Ofuregaki Kanpō shūsei*, doc. nos. 953, eds. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1934), 502-503.

¹⁹⁹ *Ofuregaki Kanpō shūsei*, doc. nos. 953, eds. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1934), 504.

who came across a miscarriage. In these later renewed regulations, the father's avoidance period lessened from seven days to five days.²⁰⁰

The next record that addresses 'birth-related kegare (*san'e*, 産穢)' can be found in *The Hōreki Compilation of Proclamation (Ofuregaki Hōreki shūsei*, 御触書宝曆集成), a compilation of legislation decreed from 1744 to 1760. In 1750, the third year of the Kan'en era (寛延 3), the Tokugawa government issued instructions on receiving and processing administrative letters written by those who happened to come in contact with birth-related *kegare* and who still maintained an avoidance period for purification. The directive for the chief inspector of the western enceinte of Edo castle (*nishimaru omotsuke*, 西丸御目付) states that letters submitted by those enduring an avoidance period should be dealt with after the end of the abstinence of its sender. Following a precedent, however, it allows an exception with regard to reports to a higher authority (*chūshinjō*, 注進状).²⁰¹

Ofuregaki Hōreki shūsei is followed by *The Tenmei Compilation of Proclamations (Ofuregaki Tenmei shūsei*, 御触書天明集成) that gathered together legislation from 1761 to 1787. In comparison to the previous two compilations, *The Tenmei Compilation of Proclamations* never mentions 'birth-related *kegare*.' Rather, the document provides instructions

²⁰⁰ 穢之事一産穢父七日婦三十五日(...)一血荒父七日婦十日一流産父五日婦十日一(十日一日
Ofuregaki Kanpō shūsei, doc. nos. 958, eds. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1934), 511; 穢之事一産穢夫七日婦三十五日一血荒夫七日婦十日一流産夫五日婦十日一形体有之は
可為流産形体無之は可為血荒; Affairs regarding kegare: when being exposed to birth-related *kegare*, a man should abstain for himself for five days and a woman should purify herself for thirty-five days. When being exposed to miscarriage of the early stages of pregnancy, a man should abstain for five days and a woman for ten days. If a stillbirth happens at the late stages of pregnancy, a man should purify himself for seven days and a woman for ten days. *Ofuregaki Kanpō shūsei*, doc. nos. 968, eds. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1934), 517-520.

²⁰¹ *Ofuregaki Hōreki shūsei*, doc. no. 792, eds. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1935), 263.

to *ōmetsuke* (御目付) on how to cope with an official situation where a person is hampered by death-related *kegare* (*kibuku*, 忌服).²⁰²

The term ‘birth-related *kegare*’ reemerged in Tokugawa legislation in 1791, almost half a century after the regulations of 1750. The directive included in *The Tenpo Compilation of Proclamations* (*Ofuregaki Tenpo shūsei*, 御触書天保集成), which reemphasized to the *ōmotsuke* the importance of steering clear of various factors, such as death, childbirth, and menstruation, that cause *kegare*. It also states that officials affected by *kegare* would be able to attend temple and shrine ceremonies only after purification and should not share fire or food with any person who makes contact with *kegare*. The directive of 1794, *The Tenpo Compilation of Proclamations*, stipulates that officials who take part in ceremonies as part of their duties should be sure to notify the person in charge whether they are in a state of *kegare* or not. If an official comes in contact with *kegare*, he should look for instructions from his superiors regarding how many days are needed for purification.²⁰³

In short, the notion of *kegare* was first introduced into the governing system of the Tokugawa shogunate during the reign of the fifth shogun Tsunayoshi (1680-1709). Once incorporated, birth-related *kegare*, along with death-related pollution, functioned as an unchallengeable ideology, permeating all aspects of Tokugawa governance. It affected the way in which religious events for the shogunal family were arranged and performed. Shogunal officials had to be always sensitive to *kegare* issues when they attended shrine ceremonies or visited temples. *Kegare* also dictated the way in which all parties concerned carried out their

²⁰² *Ofuregaki Tenmei shūsei*, doc. no. 1823, eds. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1936), 479.

²⁰³ *Ofuregaki Tenpo shūsi*, doc. nos. 5444, 5445, eds. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1941), 406-407.

usual administrative duties, ranging from participating in government meetings to being on watch. Whether the person concerned made contact with birth-related *kegare* was scrutinized even at the mundane level of tasks, such as receiving official reports and petitions. Regardless of the extensive and comprehensive effect of the ideology of *kegare* on the Tokugawa administration, however, what needs to be emphasized here is whether the legislation of *kegare*-related laws was constant and unchanging throughout the Tokugawa period. The records contained in *Ofuregaki shūsei* show that the enactment of *kegare*-related laws occurred relatively often from the late-17th through the mid-18th century. During the latter half of the 18th century, however, *kegare* issues seems to have been avoided by the policymakers of the Tokugawa institutions, and additional *kegare*-related laws were not proclaimed until 1791, the third year of the Kansei era, when new laws finally reemerge.

Thus when the image of the mother in the birthing scene of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* disappeared in the 1796 printing, the author's decision to marginalize her was likely tied to the changing social and political conditions that renewed and revalidated the concept of *kegare* under the sway of the proponents of the Kansei reforms. It is uncertain from where Santō Kyōden adopted the birthing scene iconography for his first edition of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study*. He simply could have borrowed it from other printed materials that were widely read among the populace, or he could have represented the actual birthing practices observed by commoners in their daily lives. Considering that there was a high degree of diversity and flexibility in observing the actual practice of *ubuya*, Kyōden's imagery of the birth mother's presence as a main player in the first edition could have been received or tolerated without any conflicts with reality.

When Kyōden was determined to republish *Shingaku hayasomegusa* in 1796, not only his career as a professional writer, but also the cultural and political atmosphere surrounding Kyōden

had drastically changed. The government revived the *kegare* issue after almost half a century and attempted to valorize it again within the administrative system. *Ofuregaki* was not just a legal document circulated only among government officials. It was originally meant to act as an announcement to the public. Along with the reaffirmation of the concept of *kegare* in *ofuregaki*, therefore, on a popular level the *ubuya* custom based on the fear of *kegare* was likely revitalized. Hitomi Tonomura, a historian of gender history, contends that the experience of *ubuya* was not distressful and discriminatory against women. As examples, she presents the home birth scenes published in popular illustrated texts of the Edo period, which do not show any vestige of the isolation of the birthing mother.²⁰⁴ Her argument is partly valid if we limit the scope of research to the illustrations produced from the late- 17th through the mid-18th century. As shown in the previous sections of this chapter, however, the birthing mother begins to fade away from the late 18th century on, reflecting her confinement to an isolated place or *ubuya*. During that period, and counter to Tonomura's argument, there was a gradual tendency for the mother figure to be transformed from the main visual element of the childbirth scene to a peripheral figure.

In the sphere of art and culture, the government was well aware of the harmful effect of printed materials, and its intention to eradicate any improper elements from popular culture was already manifested after several examples of real punishment, including Kyōden's own case. In general, the assertive and rigorous policies of the Kansei Reforms that curbed any attempts to disrupt fixed social structures and to deface dominant values were clearly pronounced in every aspect of Edo society. This circumstance forced Kyōden to practice self-censorship in order to evade negative reactions from the authorities and to be overly cautious with his later publications.

²⁰⁴ Hitomi Tonomura, "Birth-giving and Avoidance Taboo: Women's Body versus the Historiography of *Ubuya*," *Japan Review*, vol. 19 (2007), pp. 24-26.

Kyōden was probably reluctant to visualize the mother figure recovering after childbirth. The image of the actual birth, in most cases, was represented as bathing the infant, perhaps because the actual labor might be seen as too ‘graphic.’ Taking into consideration that the first bath usually happens on the third day after birth, it is reasonable to suppose that a mother sitting right next to an infant and watching the first bath was still within the avoidance period (seven to thirty-five days) as practiced in *ubuya* and prescribed in *Ofuregaki shusei*. In other words, the inclusion of the birthing mother in the scene signifies that the source of defilement (the mother) is exposed not only to the other main figures, such as the midwife and the father, but also to the audience of the book. Seen from the standpoint of the author, Kyōden, the depiction of the birthing mother would go against the government’s circumspect position toward *kegare* and so could be problematic for his career. As briefly mentioned above, *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* was written to encourage the merchant class to embrace the virtues of the warrior class. When Santō Kyōden planned to publish the edited version of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* in 1796, it was certain that violation of *kegare* was not encouraged among the warrior class. Rather, transgressing a designated abstinence period could be understood as an offense against good custom and the public morals that the warrior government tried to preserve and encourage throughout the campaign of the Kansei reforms. Therefore, it can be said that the removal of the mother figure in the later edition of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* resulted from the author’s conscious decision to conform to the regulatory stance and ideology of the conservative government.

4.4 SURVIVAL OF INFANT IMAGES AND RITUAL OF THE FIRST BATH

4.4.1 Countermeasure to Infanticide: Publication of Child Rearing Manuals and Emphasis on Children as Social Assets

If the disappearance of the mother figure in the 1847 edition of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* and the 1796 edition of *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* originates from the population policy and conservative ideology of the Tokugawa regime, how was the iconography of the ‘first bath’ able to survive? I suggest that the scene of the first bath could be viewed as a positive, alternative image that served to counteract infanticide and to encourage the importance of children as social assets.

The idea of children as social assets began to spread in the late eighteenth century through the publication of child-rearing manuals such as *A Guide to the Prosperity of Descendants* (*Shison hanjō tebigigusa*, 子孫繁盛手引き草, ca. 1790s) and *A Manual to Promote the Rearing of Infants* (*Akago yōiku kanjin no hiki*, 赤子養育閑人の引, 1794). These manuals promoted the bearing and rearing of children as dictated by “heavenly will.”²⁰⁵ The emergence and circulation of child-rearing manuals are associated with social efforts to change people’s conceptions of children and were meant to counteract infanticide, or ‘postpartum birth control,’ that was emerging as a serious cause of late-eighteenth-century depopulation. There have been extensive studies published on Edo-period infanticide in both English and Japanese.²⁰⁶ The most

²⁰⁵ Susan L. Burns, 209-210.

²⁰⁶ Eiko Saeki, “Abortion, Infanticide, and a Return to the Gods: Politics of Pregnancy in Early Modern Japan,” *Transcending Borders: Abortion in the Past and Present*, eds., Shannon Stettner, Katrina Ackerman, Kristin Burnett, and Travis Hay (Springer International Publishing AG: 2017), 19-33; Marco Gottardo, “Pregnancy and Infanticide in Early-modern Japan: The Role of the Midwife as a Medium,” *Tamagawa daigaku bungakubu kiyō*, vol. 54 (2013) 213-239; Ochiai Emiko, “Kinsei matsu ni okeru mabiki to shussan: ningen no seisan wo meguru

recent and distinguished work is *Mabiki: Infanticide and Population Growth in Eastern Japan, 1660-1950* written by the demographic-historian Fabian Drixler.²⁰⁷ Focusing on the eastern areas of Japan, he meticulously analyzes the history of infanticide as a cultural practice that was instrumental in defining reproduction and fertility. Although regional diversity existed, it seems that the custom of infanticide was deeply rooted and frequently committed for several reasons, including impoverishment and family planning.²⁰⁸

Infanticide was able to take place easily without any remorse because newborns and infants were not treated as full human beings before they turned seven. In Buddhist concept, newborn children before the age of seven were believed to reside ontologically in the spirit world. Drixler states that this ‘liminality’ made the act of killing infants free from guilt. According to him, *kogaeshi* (子返し; “child return”), one of the oldest and the most common Japanese terms for infanticide, proves that people in the Edo period did not recognize the brutality of infant homicide. Unlike the modern conception of infanticide, Edo-period people thought of its execution as literally returning liminal beings to their original origin, not as murdering children.²⁰⁹

It was in the late-eighteenth century that this routinely committed practice aroused social attention and came to the surface as an urgent policy issue. As mentioned above, the low fertility rate that had continued for about half a century gave rise to a critical demographic problem when

taisei hendo,” *Gender no nihonshi: Gender and Japanese History*, vol.1 (Osaka: Osaka University Press, 1999), 429-459; William R. LaFleur, *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Laurel L. Cornell, “Infanticide in Early Modern Japan? Demography, Culture, and Population Growth,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 55, no.1 (1996), 22-55. Osamu Saitō, “Infanticide, fertility and ‘population stagnation’: The State of Tokugawa Historical Demography,” *Japan Forum*, vol.4, no.2 (1992), 369-381.

²⁰⁷ Fabian Drixler, *Mabiki: Infanticide and Population Growth in Eastern Japan, 1660-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013)

²⁰⁸ Fabian Drixler, 69; Kikuchi Isao, “shussan girei to mabiki,” *Shiraberu edojidai: jiten* (Tokyo: Kashiwashobo, 2001), 391-395.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 50-51; Kikuchi Isao, 391.

conjoined with the famine of 1783 and 1784.²¹⁰ To increase population growth, local governments introduced population policies such as financial rewards for newlyweds, child-rearing subsidies for new parents, and a pregnancy surveillance system for the village community. The attempt to change people's perception of children was also part of the authorities' effort to eradicate infanticide, and for this it was a crucial task to reestablish the bounds of humanity.²¹¹

Two projects relevant to dead infant souls that were undertaken by Matsudaira Sadanobu (松平定信, 1759-1829), chief senior councilor of the Tokugawa shogunate during the Kansei reforms, were symbolic and demonstrative gestures to convince the public of the human status of children. The first project was to console the spirits of infants who died from infanticide or abortion in the Shirakawa domain (白河範), where he was appointed daimyo. Around 1790, female shamans in Shirakawa domain summoned up revengeful infant souls at Sadanobu's order and comforted them, asking them not to harm the people who had killed them.²¹² The second project was to erect a memorial for aborted fetuses (*mizuko* 水子) and stillborn babies in Ekōin (回向院) temple located in Tokyo. Ekōin was originally dedicated to the victims of the Great *Meireki* Fire (明暦の大火) that occurred in 1657. Over half of the entire city of Edo was burned and almost a hundred thousand people were killed in that terrible conflagration. Tokugawa Ietsuna (徳川家綱, 1641-1680), the fourth shogun, built a monument for the nameless victims (*muenbotoke*; 無縁仏) who died without relatives and held memorial services for them. In 1793, Sadanobu ordered the creation of another memorial mound there solely for fetuses and newborns

²¹⁰ Ibid., 160.

²¹¹ Ibid., 139.

²¹² Ibid., 151-152.

who did not survive. It was a deliberate policy-based decision to enlighten the populace about the status of babies as human beings who needed to be well taken care of and cherished.²¹³

In addition to the efforts of policymakers, an increasing number of Edo intellectuals began to disseminate anti-infanticide discourse. They described infanticide as an uncivilized and savage custom. Postulating raising children as “heavenly will” and emphasizing their value as the property with which to build a strong nation, they even contended that killing a newborn baby was going against Heaven, neglecting their duties as subjects of the state, and thereby a betrayal of their rulers.²¹⁴ As Drixler writes, in a tense situation when foreign affairs with Russia and England were understood as a threat to national security, this disapproving attitude toward infanticide evolved into a rather drastic assertion that the existence of infanticide practice signified social failure and even posed an obstacle to Japan’s potential development into an internationally competitive country.²¹⁵

The deep worry and anxiety of late-seventeenth-century thinkers regarding the correlation between infanticide and national security reoccurred in the Nativist school in the early nineteenth century with a more patriotic nuance. Some ardent Nativists, such as Miyaoi Sadao (宮負定雄, 1797-1858), who had a keen interest in procreation and reproduction, even insisted strenuously that a prohibition on infanticide should be the top priority of wise rulers to make a powerful and prosperous country.²¹⁶

²¹³ Ibid., 59; Hisatake Kato, “Population Growth Issues: Cultural Contexts of Abortion in Japan,” in *Institutional Issues Involving Ethics and Justice*, vol.3 ed., Robert Charles Elliot, (Oxford: Eolss Publishers, 2009), 173.

²¹⁴ Fabian Drixler, 185-186.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 186-191.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 192-193.

4.4.2 Transfiguration of Mothers into Monsters

As mentioned above, a great deal of discourse on the issue of infanticide was followed by the publication of many child-rearing manuals that played a crucial role in propagating the anti-infanticide statements of Edo intellectuals to the populace. They tried to enlighten people about the preciousness of children as special beings to be protected, but the real objective of most manuals was an emphasis on the evil and immoral nature of infanticide.²¹⁷ Along with admonitory texts describing the karmic retribution and punishment that infanticide would bring to those people who committed it, illustrations depicting realistic scenes of mothers or midwives suffocating newborn babies function as effective visual propaganda.²¹⁸

The most representative child-rearing manual is *A Guide to the Prosperity of Descendants* (*Shison hanjō tebikigusa*, 子孫繁盛手引き草), published between 1793 and 1873. Its six different editions were compiled in *Materials for Child Protection in the Tokugawa Period* (*Tokugawa jidai jidō hogo shiryō*, 徳川時代児童保護資料, 1998).²¹⁹ An infanticide scene (fig. 4.21) in the earliest version of 1793 displays an older woman, assumed to be a midwife, pressing the newborn's face to suffocate the child. On the right, the mother recovering after delivery turns her face away so as not to see that her baby is being killed. The infanticide scene continues onto the next page, where the two women shown in the previous scene change into monstrous ghosts, highlighting the barbarous and inhumane aspect of infanticide. Another discernible difference between the two scenes is that the beast-faced mother does not avert her

²¹⁷ Iijima Yoshiharu, "Kodomo no hakken to jidō yūgi no sekai," in *Nihon minzoku bunka taikai hukyūhan dai jūkan – ie to josei =kurashi no bunkashi* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1985), 227-229.

²¹⁸ Fabian Drixler, p.132. Susan L. Burns, p. 208.

²¹⁹ *Tokugawa jidai jidō hogo shiryō/nihon dataishi – Nihon kodomo no rekishi soshō* vol. 23, edited by Tokuda Hikoyasu, (Tokyo: Kyūzansha, 1998).

eyes. By picturing the mother's direct gaze toward her dying baby, the 1793 edition of *A Guide to the Prosperity of Descendants* seems to convey a visual message that the mother as an accomplice in infanticide is no better than a midwife who actually commits the crime—both violated the moral laws of family relationships.

Five other versions collected in *Materials for Child Protection in the Tokugawa Period* also contain infanticide scenes. The later images (figs. 4.22 and 4.23), published in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, adopted the same visual strategy as the original edition of 1793; transfiguring a woman engaged in the event of childbirth into a monstrous beast and thereby accusing her of being an evil character in the infanticide practice. A notable distinction between the earlier and later versions is that the later images feature only the mother. She is no longer a silent sympathizer of with midwife, but rather depicted as a self-assertive character. Wearing a towel around her head, the mother seems to be recuperating from childbirth. Without any mercy and hesitation, she then crushes her own baby to whom she just gave birth against a straw mat. The curved lines growing from her head guide readers to her true identity: a beast with horns and disheveled hair. In the transition from the first edition to later versions, the midwife disappears from the reader's sight leaving only the mother figure as a target of criticism. The evil character of infanticide is shifted completely onto the mother figure. The accompanied text more explicitly contributes to labeling the mother as a monster who can kill her own baby. Citing from Susan Burns, the translation of that part of its text is as follows:

*This woman has a gentle face but since she can kill her own child, she will think nothing of killing the children of others. Would it be hard for her to kill her father-in-law or her husband? She is a cruel woman, whose face does not suit her.*²²⁰

4.4.3 Birth Imagery as Pictorial Propaganda

This scathing representation of the mother as a figure vicious enough to kill her own child is comparable to her complete disappearance in mid-nineteenth-century female educational books and *Fast-Dyeing Mind Study* that were discussed earlier. In both cases, the negative, unfavorable way of portraying the mother figure—erasing her presence or defaming her maternal affection—highlights the existence of the child as the cherished one to be protected. In terms of the representation of the newborn, childbirth and infanticide scenes tell entirely different stories that put a baby's destiny on opposite sides: life and death. One will survive and grow up as a family and community member, while the other will die by a merciless mother and return to the heavenly realm. Despite drastically differing futures, however, the connotative meanings behind the two scenes coincide with each other. Children should not be sacrificed by uncivilized and barbaric acts such as infanticide. Instead, children as valuable state assets should be protected and cared for.

In my opinion, the emphasis on the first bath of a newborn in mid-nineteenth-century female educational books needs to be examined within this sociocultural context of the anti-infanticide campaign. If infanticide scenes in child rearing manuals, such as *A Guide to the Prosperity of Descendants*, admonished the evil deed that should not be done, the local

²²⁰ Susan L. Burns, 215.

governments and the authorities may have realized the necessity of an alternative image as guidance to the right path. It is possible that, in this circumstance, female educational books for women promoted that function by strengthening the exhortative contents regarding childcare.

For example, the illustration that followed the birth scene in the 1847 edition of *A Compendium of Treasures for Women* (fig. 4.24) does not simply show the growth process of a child. Rather, it reminds viewers of the important, representative rites that signify a baby's acceptance to the family and community. In Edo Japan, there were strictly prescribed rites of passage for newborns in Edo Japan. The first birth ritual that marks the start of a baby's long journey to the human realm is *ubutatemeshi* (産立飯). In this ritual, which occurred right after parturition, the family of the newborn prepares special food to offer to the gods and prays for the protection of the baby. The second birth ritual is 'the third-day celebration' (*mikkaiwai*, 三日祝い). In this celebration, newborns experience their first bath, '*ubuyu* (産湯),' and put on their first clothes '*ubugi* (産衣)' with long sleeves. The third birth ritual is held on the seventh day after the newborn's birth. In the ceremony called 'the night of the seventh day' (*oshichiya*, お七夜), the baby is given his (her) name. '*Oshichiya*' is followed by 'the first shrine visit' (*hatsumiyamairi*, 初宮参り), depicted in an illustration (fig. 4.24) of the 1847 version. For *hatsumiyamairi* parents take their babies to a Shinto shrine in the community to give thanks to the local deities who protect their village. It occurs on the thirty-first day for boys and on the thirty-second day for girls. The ritual of *hatsumiyamairi* symbolizes that the newborns are finally accepted as members of their community. 'The baby's first meal' (*okuizome*, お食初め) is the last important birth ritual before an infant's first birthday. As depicted in an illustration (fig. 4.24) of the 1847 version, families hold a congratulatory banquet on the 100th day after birth and invite relatives to celebrate the health of the baby. Wearing their first kimono, infants eat their

first meal consisting of specially made foods, such as rice with red beans (*sekihan*, 赤飯) and boiled vegetables (*nimono*, 煮物).²²¹

Returning to my main argument, we need to reconsider why the mother figure gradually disappeared while a baby's first bath remained an essential element. In the context of anti-infanticide campaign, the scene of the first bath played a positive role as a counteractive visual message against the practice of infanticide. As mentioned earlier, the first bath (*ubuyu*) signals the beginning of the process in which newborns who belong to the other world come across to this world by using water as the medium.²²² Without practicing the ritual of the first bath, in other words, the newborn is placed in a precarious situation closer to the heavenly realm, which connotes the state of death or the danger of infanticide. Against the backdrop of the anti-infanticide campaign, the first bath was not just one of the mandatory rites of passage for the baby. It rather marks 'life' itself for the newborn baby who stood at the crossroads of life and death waiting for his (her) destiny. This symbolic meaning of water as 'life' enabled the first bath scene to be gradually emphasized as an indicator of the baby's survival. Within the historical context of population decreases, birth imagery was employed to serve as effective pictorial propaganda against infanticide. It was redesigned to encourage population growth by removing the mother figure as a potential killer who might commit infanticide against her baby, and instead turned to highlighting the first bath scene. In this process, the images of mothers in educational literature for women suffered effacement or malicious distortion. Emphasized in their stead were representations of babies as valuable social assets to be protected and cared for.

²²¹ "Jinsei girei," in *Nihon minzoku shiryō jiten*, eds., Miyashizu Hōri, Keigo Seki, and Keitarō Miyamaoto (Tokyo: Daiichi Hōki, 1972), 303-304; Iijima Yoshiharu, 240-241.

²²² Aoyagi Machiko, "Kihisareta sei," in *Nihon minzoku bunka daikei hokyūhan dai jūkan – ie to jōsei =kurashi no bunkashi* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1985), 430.

5. EPILOGUE

A Story about the Birth of Child (*Kono dekiru hanashi*, 子の出来るはなし, fig. 5.1) produced by Utagawa Hiroshige III (三代目 歌川広重, 1842-1894) in 1880 (Meiji 明治 13) comprises three scenes encapsulating a series of process from marriage to childbirth. On the right, the bride wearing a *tsunokakushi* (角隠し), a white headgear used in Shinto wedding ceremonies, is about to drink her sake. The groom, seated on the opposite side of the bride, and two other figures look at the bride as if they are witnesses of this ceremony. The middle part depicts the custom of tying pregnancy sash (*iwata obi*) around the belly of the bride, who is now in the fifth month of pregnancy. As can be expected from the title of this print, the last scene shows that the newlyweds reached their goal of giving birth to a baby—it captures the first bath of an infant. The midwife has just taken the infant out of water, and two birth attendants stand by holding “boiled birth rice (*ubumeshi*)” and “first infant clothing (*ubugi*).” As in many late Edo birth scenes, the mother is not represented, and we can only guess that she is in recovery lying down behind the tall folding screen on the far left. This print epitomizes the shift in the perceived importance of the mother before and after childbirth. She was the focal point of the matrimonial events but was marginalized after her baby was born.

Two other similar cases of the Meiji period can be found in *Hygiene Sugoroku Board Game* (*Eisei Sugoroku*, 衛生壽護禄, fig.5.2) and *New Design Meiji Women Sugoroku Board Game* (*Shinan Meiji Fujin Sugoroku*, 新案明治婦人双六, fig.5.3), which are color printed

sheets used in a popular board game, *e-sugoroku* (絵双六, pictorial *sugoroku*).²²³ *Eisei sugoroku* was published by the Japan Association of Hygiene (大日本私立衛生会) founded in 1883 (Meiji 16) to promote the modern concept of hygiene and health among the general public.²²⁴ The print covers twenty-six scenes representing various conditions, ranging from feeble health (*kyōjaku*, 虚弱) and fitness (*kenkō*, 健康) to filthiness and cleanliness, associated with public and private sanitation. In the lower right corner of the *sugoroku* sheet appears the birth scene highlighting the presence of a healthy infant who just finished the first bath and is wrapped in a red *ubugi*. In the background, a group of people celebrates the arrival of a new family member. The mother of the baby is not depicted. *Shinan Meiji Fujin Sugoroku* from the late Meiji period (1910, Meiji 43) represents childbirth in a similar fashion. It was published as a form of a supplement to *Fujin sekai* (婦人世界), women's magazine first founded in 1906.²²⁵ *Shinan Meiji Fujin Sugoroku* is notable in that it visualizes the modern concept of women's professions by representing a factory worker, a teacher, a doctor, a painter, and a telephone operator. The board game's final goal, marked 'agari (上),' is to form a happy family, however. Childbirth is placed just below the finishing point (*agari*), but again, the mother does not appear in the scene. In contrast to the scenes that present women as protagonists of professional activities, the birth scene eliminates the mother and instead emphasizes the infant as the result of her labor. We can see that even in the Meiji period, which acknowledged and advocated

²²³ There are two different types of *sugoroku*: *Bansugoroku* and *E-sugoroku*. *Bansugoroku*, usually translated as a backgammon, had been played in Japan since the Heian period. It uses a wooden box-shaped board and two dices. *E-sugoroku* (picture *sugoroku*) originated in the late 13th century is played on a sheet of paper printed with various types of pictures. Each player uses one dice and a piece that moves around the board sheet. It is said that *e-sugoroku* resembles European snakes and ladders. Rebecca Salter, *Japanese Popular Prints: From Votive Slips to Playing Cards* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 164.

²²⁴ For more information on Japan Association of Hygiene, see Takizawa Toshiyuki, "Dainippon shiritsu eiseikai no minzoku eiseikan," *Minzoku eisei*, vol. 57, no. 5 (1991), 202-212.

²²⁵ For more information on *Fujin sekai* magazine, see Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

women's professional career, visual indicator for birthing events was still the first bath of an infant, following late Edo tradition.

As examined in the previous chapters of this dissertation, depictions of birthing events change over time as social perspective on pregnancy and childbirth shifts. In the medieval period, religious rituals were believed to be the most dominant factor that influenced the result of pregnancy. For this reason, medieval depictions of childbirth show various religious practices performed right before the pre-natal birthing moment when the efficacy of rituals mattered most. Post-natal care for a parturient mother and an infant were regarded as secondary visual elements to religious rituals in birth images.

In the early Edo period, the mother emerged as the focal point in birth imagery. The printed illustrations in books like *jokunsho* helped girls and young women prepare for pregnancy and childbirth. In the birth scenes in *jokunsho*, the mother in the post-partum phase occupies one half of the composition, and the other half features the infant as the proud and successful outcome of the mother's disciplined behavior during pregnancy. On the other hand, the emergence of the mother as a protagonist in birthing events meant that the mother was held culpable for any unsuccessful pregnancy. Along with the prescriptive texts, visual illustrations of birthing events imposed a rigid model for the pregnant woman's mind and behavior. The birth imagery in *jokunsho* is situated in the social context of the early Edo period in which the newly established Tokugawa government attempted to reset every rule from the Confucian standpoint. Promoting exemplary womanhood and cultivating future mothers were among its key projects.

The prominent status of the mother as seen in early Edo birth imagery becomes reversed when Edo society continued to suffer from a series of natural disasters and, as a result, faced serious depopulation around the mid-eighteenth century. The social awareness on the importance

of children arose, and the different approach toward population policy changed the depiction of childbirth. The mother, once placed in the center, is relegated to the edge of the composition, and the scene of bathing the newborn takes center stage. Devaluing the mother's role and treating her as a marginal player continue in the birth imagery of the Meiji period. It seems that for some time the makers of *sugoroku* sheets followed the visual conventions used in the Edo period.

An accurate understanding of birth imagery in the Meiji period would benefit from a detailed study of the social perspective on childbirth and motherhood of the period. For example, *ryōsai kenbo* (良妻賢母, Good Wife and Wise Mother), a term coined in the period, would be a key to understanding the expected role of women and the goal for female education.

The representation of other major players in childbirth, including the midwife and the father, is another subject that merits further research. Late Edo period images feature the midwife as an elderly woman, which is a shift from the earlier tradition of depicting the figure as a youthful woman. I suspect that this change occurred in the process of the argument over the knowledge of obstetrics between male physicians and midwives. Many *jokunsho* were written by male physicians who criticized midwifery as dangerous and, in my opinion, it is possible that the images of the midwife in later *jokunsho* were purposely depicted as old and less professional.

The sudden appearance of the father in birth scenes requires further study as well. The maternity room was the space reserved only for the mother, the baby, and the midwife. The father is never shown in *jokunsho* because most birth scenes take place in the maternity room. Unlike *jokunsho*, however, *ehon* presents the father as an important visual element. In most works, he helps the midwife bathe the baby or celebrates the safe birth of his child. The question as to why the father emerges as an important player can be answered by a close examination of

various social and cultural contexts such as the readership of *ehon*, the family system in the Edo period, and the role of the father in childbirth.

As the first comprehensive study of Edo birth imagery, my dissertation demonstrates that birth imagery is not just an objective record of birth-related rituals but a complex visual representation that requires an interdisciplinary approach. Birth rituals in different religious traditions, Confucian approach to pregnancy and childbirth, government's population policy, and cultural reformation contributed to the creation, circulation, and reception of birth imagery. This dissertation makes a contribution, in particular, to the studies of gender and women's history in that its major arguments on the changes in the status of women in the event of childbirth as evidenced in birth scenes. As a beginning of a long-term study on this subject, this dissertation still has many unresolved questions. It is my hope that further research would fill any gaps in this work.

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