

SOCIAL DECORATING: DUTCH SALONS IN EARLY MODERN JAPAN

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Seated Intellect, Performative Intellect

Cultural salons proliferated during the last half of the eighteenth century in Japan, accommodating a growing interest in the *za* arts and literature (*za-bungei* 座文芸). The literal meaning of *za* 座 was “seat,” and the *za* arts (visual and literary) were performed within groups, which were presumably “seated” together. *Za* culture first appeared as early as the thirteenth century when the Emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽 held poetry gatherings in his salon (*zashiki* 座敷). In practice, *za* also referred to the physical space where these individuals gathered, and it is from that that the related term *zashiki*, or “sitting room” was derived.¹ *Zashiki* served a function similar to the salons of Europe in the early modern period—as a semi-private space to entertain guests and enjoy cultural interaction. *Za* arts gatherings met within the homes of participants or patrons, but also in rented *zashiki* at temples and teahouses. During their meetings, professionals and amateurs interacted and cooperated to produce culture. The epitome of this was *renga* 連歌 poetry in which groups created linked-verses. However, other types of cultural groups met in salons to design such items as woodblock prints and playful calendars, to debate flower arranging, or to discuss the latest bestsellers. Within these spaces, the emphasis was on group production and on the rights of all attendees to participate, regardless of social background. The atmosphere of *zashiki* gatherings combined civility, curiosity, playfulness, and camaraderie.

The distinction between artistic and intellectual pursuits had fuzzy boundaries during the Tokugawa period, and scholars largely operated within a social world similar to artists, poets, and fiction writers. In fact, one aspect of the ethos of the Tokugawa *bunjin* 文人 (“people of culture”), who were often actively involved in the scholarly world, was the union of arts and intellect. *Rangaku* 蘭学, the study of Western knowledge through the medium of Dutch, developed within that context. Thus salons became one of the primary sites where Dutch studies scholars (*rangakusha* 蘭学者) exchanged knowledge and created communities. Salons were spaces of sociability and acted as nodes in the *rangaku* social network. Their role as such was not lost on Dutch-

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¹ For an etymological discussion of the term *zashiki* see Yoshida Takako, *Zashiki no hanashi* (Tokyo: Kajima Shuppan-kai, 1998), 2-3.

studies scholars, who arranged the physical spaces of their salons in specific ways to augment their own social and cultural capital, and sometimes that of their guests as well.

The ways in which the *za* arts were conducted communally tended to encourage a performative aspect of gatherings, and salons functioned as stages. In her study of the social significance of aesthetic groups, Eiko Ikegami has labeled the *renga* of the medieval and early modern periods “performative literature.”² Similarly, when *rangaku* scholars and enthusiasts held salon meetings, they engaged in what we might call “performative intellect.” Their performance was not merely concerned with information exchange, but also about position-taking and the establishment of authority within the Dutch studies field. In addition, the props and audience were as important as the words used in this performance. As will be shown, an examination of the physical aspects of salons, referred to as either *Oranda zashiki* 阿蘭陀座鋪 (Dutch salon) or *Oranda beya* 阿蘭陀部屋 (Dutch room) during the Tokugawa period, enables us to see how props in the form of salon decorations and performance among those props played a role in social maneuvering.

One of the characteristics of salon groups of all types from the late eighteenth century onward was a high degree of egalitarianism, as participants from different social and geographical backgrounds mixed freely. Their tendency toward liberated exchanges is especially noteworthy when we remember that the rhetoric of the Tokugawa government pushed an agenda of strict class definition and separation in the name of social order. The reality was that this agenda’s effectiveness was uneven depending on location, time, and activity. Salons were one of the spaces where everyday class distinctions frequently broke down. However, an examination of the décor of salons also suggests that material objects played a role in the establishment of authority and position-taking within the group that met there. In other words, participants disconnected themselves from their everyday social-selves and created new persona within the salon. In addition, in the case of *rangaku*, salon decoration was sometimes an effort to legitimize the study of Western (i.e. foreign) knowledge as an acceptable endeavor within a society that tended towards insularity.

While salon groups showed a great tolerance for the inclusion of members from each of the officially-defined social classes (samurai, farmer, artisan, and merchant), entry was not completely free of social conventions.³ Entrance into a salon circle was predicated on the proper introduction to the host and central members of the group, no matter what one’s social status in Japanese society at large might be. Thus, social capital, or knowing the right people, was important from first contact. By design, information flowed freely within salons, and each member was obligated to respect the rights of other members. Nevertheless, *rangaku* scholars competed for position within their intellectual community. A combination of one’s accumulated cultural/intellectual, social, and economic capitals determined rank within the *rangaku* field. Perhaps more than in any

² Eiko Ikegami, *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and Political Origins of Japanese Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 85.

³ For a brief discussion of the tension between egalitarianism and exclusivity in salons of Enlightenment Europe see Anthony J. La Vopa, “Review: Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe,” *The Journal of Modern History* 64:1 (March 1992)(79-116): 106-115. Also see, Jolanta T. Pekacz, *Conservative Traditions in Pre-Revolutionary France: Parisian Salon Women* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 8 and Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 43.

other cultural spaces, salons were sites where these coalesced capitals became apparent in terms of rank and authority.

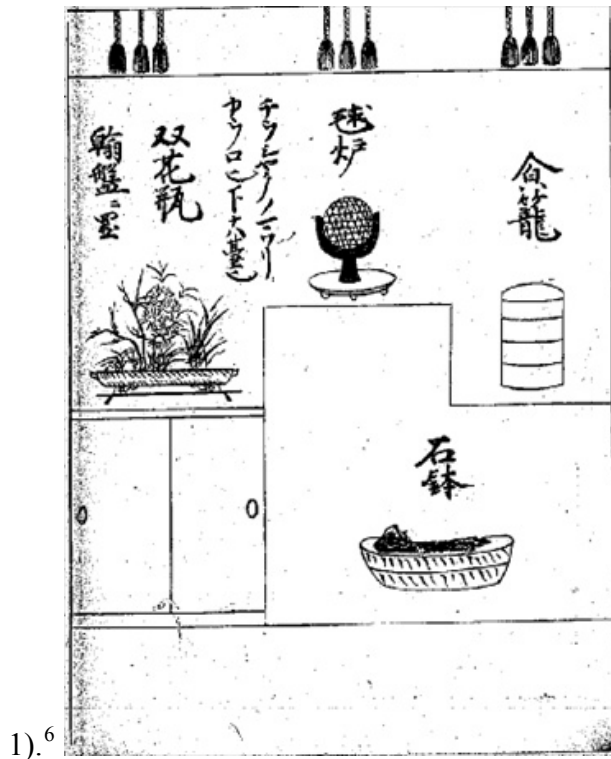
Salon-Decorating and Social Maneuvering

Since salons (*zashiki*) had been in use since the thirteenth century, artists, poets, and writers had long established them as unique spaces for cultural interaction by the mid-Tokugawa period. In the process of establishing the meaning of these spaces, selection and placement of décor came to define more than the personal aesthetic tastes of hosts. Informed by authoritative literature, these hosts arranged their rooms in carefully crafted ways paying attention to their positions within their cultural fields. Therefore, salon decorating was well developed when Dutch studies began to grow significantly in the late eighteenth century.

Originally, the term *zashiki* was loosely employed by elites to refer to spaces used for cultural entertainment, banquets, receptions, and interviews.⁴ In the fifteenth century the term was more specifically used for “tea serving rooms,” in which a high degree of civility based on proper aesthetic appreciation and manners was demanded. It was also during this century that their popularity began to spread among the elite. Rules for the tasteful display of tea utensils, paintings, and Chinese items (*karamono* 唐物) within *zashiki* were codified when a connoisseurs’ manual entitled *Kundaikan sōchōki* 君台觀左右帳記 was composed. Although not published, the manual circulated widely over the next century in manuscript form. The original is no longer extant, but roughly twenty versions are known today. *Kundaikan* included detailed instructions on “salon decorating” (*zashiki kazari* 座敷飾り), accompanied by illustrations (see Figure 1).⁵

⁴ Yoshida, 12-15.

⁵ Murai, Yasuhiko, ed. *Kundaikan sōchōki* (Tokyo: Sekai Bunka-sha, 1983). Sōami, *Kundaikan sōchōki* (Tokyo: Yūrindō, 1884), 22.



1).⁶

Figure 1. Salon décor in 15th century text *Kundaikan sōchōki*. (Soami, *Kundaikan sōchōki* Meiji reprint (Tokyo: Yūrintō, 1884). Courtesy of the Japanese National Diet.)

The appearance of such a manual and its wide popularity signaled a change in the use of domestic space in Japan, introducing the element of display into what was earlier considered private space.⁷ For a variety of motives, the display of objects in both private and public spaces would become increasingly important. A proper *zashiki* truly became a symbol of status by the end of the fifteenth century.⁸ This was especially true in the late eighteenth century when an economy developed around the play of display with so-called *misemono* 見世物 and exhibitions.

Codes for interior decorating became so important during the fifteenth century that they significantly affected art forms under what one scholar has called a “policy of decoration.”⁹ The second and third sections of *Kundaikan* describe the proper construction of *zashiki*, the selection of items such as paintings and vases for the room, and the display of those objects. For example, it describes the appropriate designs and utilizations of pressing boards (*oshiita* 押板), staggered shelves (*chigaidana* 違い棚), and built-in studies (*shoin* 書院). While first written as a “secret text” (*hiden-sho* 秘伝書)

⁶ Murai, Yasuhiko, ed. *Kundaikan sōchōki* (Tokyo: Sekai Bunka-sha, 1983). Sōami, *Kundaikan sōchōki* (Tokyo: Yūrintō, 1884), 22.

⁷ Kanō Hiroyuki, “Seikatsu no naka no kazari—hyōgen-ningen-kankyō” in *Dentō geinō no tenkai* ed. by Kumakura Isao (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1993), 299.

⁸ Yoshida, 15.

⁹ Gail Capitol Weigl, “The Reception of Chinese Painting Models in Muromachi Japan,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 35:3 (Autumn 1980), 259-260.

for the eyes of artistic experts known as *dōbōshū* 同朋衆¹⁰, it circulated widely and inspired a decorative style that focused on display-alcoves (*toko* 床), shelves (*dana* 棚), study-areas (*tsuke shoin* 付書院), and ornamental doorways (*chōdai gamae* 帳台構).

The authors of *Kundaikan* conceived of the *zashiki* as a private home's most public space, one that should be used for a performance that would impress guests with the host's refined taste.¹¹ Similar books followed, especially two hundred years later when the publishing industry began to boom. By the late eighteenth century, *hinagatabon* 雛型本 books on proper architectural construction sold well. These guides addressed such issues as the arrangement of tatami mats, ornamental shelves, door designs, and ceilings.¹² The concerns expressed in these manuals ranged from the practical to the artistic to the religious, indicating that the Japanese expected *zashiki* to be versatile rooms for comfort, tasteful aesthetics, good omen, and the display of prized objects. Yet, above all, *zashiki* were for entertaining. During the medieval period, there was typically a formality to the space with very specific areas assigned for the host, the guest of honor, and the other guests.¹³ Similar attitudes of formality continued into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however these formalities were often relaxed during the regular meetings of salon circles.

While books such as *Kundaikan* had offered connoisseurs guidance on Chinese items since the fifteenth century, the acquisition of Western goods in the Tokugawa period was a new activity, and thus there were not yet any well-established means available to collectors. Only a handful of *Oranda zashiki* were decorated with items from the West existed in the Tokugawa era. Some of the more notable belonged to the shogunal physician (*oku'i* 奥医) Katsuragawa Hoshū 桂川甫周, the head-interpreter (*daitsuuji* 大通詞) Yoshio Kōzaemon 吉雄幸左衛門, and the domainal physician (*han'i* 藩医) Ōtsuki Gentaku 大槻玄沢. They and a few others set up rooms with Western scientific instruments, books, and painting. A contemporary, the famous doctor Sugita Genpaku 杉田玄白 remarked on a general “fad for Dutch things” that had developed, marveling, “from around [the late eighteenth century], people somehow came to regard things carried over from [Holland] with curiosity. They were enamored with all the kinds of rare imported instruments. Those who were considered even slight dilettantes collected both big and small items and never failed to admire [their collections].”¹⁴ Thermometers, clockworks, telescopes, and glassworks were among the treasured acquisitions. This zeal for Dutch paraphernalia touched regular commoners as well. They crowded around the Nagasakiya 崎屋 Inn, which housed the Dutch mission when it came to Edo, and were lured into the shops of import merchants in other cities that advertised their goods with the phrases “From Europe,” “Direct from Holland,” or “Just bought at Nagasaki 長崎”

¹⁰ *Dōbōshū* were aesthetic advisor who served the Ashikaga shogun.

¹¹ Kanō, 299. It is likely that the connoisseur and artist Naomi 能阿弥 is responsible for earlier versions, and his grandson Soami 相阿弥 for much of the later versions which broke from tight circulation with the shogunal household to become standard texts. See Weigl, 270. Later, in the sixteenth century, Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi would use their *zashiki* as an expression of their political prowess. See Section 2 in Takemoto Chizu, *Shokuhō-ki no chaikai to seiji* (Kyoto: Shibunkan Shuppan, 2006).

¹² Okamoto Mariko, *Zashiki hinagata no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Tairyūdō Shoten, 1985), 584.

¹³ Robin Noel Walker, *Shoko-ken: A Late Medieval Daimyō Sukiya Style Japanese Tea-house* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 138-149.

¹⁴ Sugita Genpaku, *Rangaku kotohajime*, ed. Ogata Tomio (Tokyo: Iwanami Shōten, 1998), 23-24.

(see Figure 2).¹⁵ However, the items that found their way into the homes of *rangaku* scholars and collectors were beyond the means of the average commoner.



Figure 2. Foreign goods shop in Osaka. (Akisato Ritō, *Settsu meisho zue* (1798). Courtesy of Waseda University).

Economic resources and social connections were essential to obtaining the prized books and instruments from Holland. Rich merchants, so-called “Dutch-addicted domainal lords” (*ranpeki daimyo* 蘭癖大名), and elite *rangaku* scholars were those best situated to obtain Western items. The most well known merchant collectors of Dutch items, such as Kimura Kenkadō 木村兼葭堂, Hazama Shigetomi 間重富, and Yamagata Shigeyoshi 山片重芳, were from the Osaka 大阪 area. Kenkadō is purported to have remarked, “I like to collect old books on special products, science and art, also writings and drawings, etc. Besides I have collected epitaphs, maps of various places, curios of our country and foreign countries, minerals, precious stones, and plants of China and Europe.”¹⁶ At the time of his death, Kenkadō had one of the largest private collections of books and other cultural, scientific, and natural objects in Japan. Hazama Shigetomi, a pawnshop owner, displayed Dutch anatomical texts in his salon and also collected Western-style astronomical instruments such as telescopes and celestial globes that he had commissioned from local artisans. Yamagata Shigeyoshi was an affluent rice dealer who owned a worthy collection of Dutch books and translations of European books, as well as Dutch furniture, dining utensils, globes, astrolabes, telescopes, clocks, and even a device for administering enemas.¹⁷ All three men were part of the *rangaku* social

¹⁵ Ōtsuki Nyoden, *The Infiltration of Western Civilization in Japan during the 18th Century*, trans. C.L. Krieger (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1940), 60.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁷ Suenaka Tetsuo, “18·19 seki ni okeru Ōsaka shōnin to rangaku,” in *Rangaku to Nihon bunka*, ed. Ogata Tomio (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan-kai, 1971), 378-379.

network and loaned books and other belongings to colleagues frequently. When the items were not on loan they were often displayed prominently in rooms for guests to view.

Like merchants, some daimyo used their considerable wealth and connections to collect Dutch exotica for their homes. Kutsuki Masatsuna 朽木昌綱, daimyo of Fukuchiyama 福知山, was especially interested in numismatics, and displayed foreign coins and specie in a curio cabinet within the *zashiki* of his Edo mansion. Another daimyo, Shimazu Shigehide 島津重豪 of Satsuma 薩摩, went so far as to build a Dutch-style mansion for his stays in Edo. There he kept Dutch glassware and hourglasses on his desk and bookshelves.¹⁸ Although their abilities in scholarship were not always advanced, these daimyo actively maintained social ties within the *rangaku* network, and invited colleagues to their homes regularly for conversations about their collections.

One of the functions of the display of these cultural items was to transform *zashiki* into “conversable spaces.”¹⁹ Salons were not hurried places, but rooms in which to have lingering discussions, and décor was intended to inspire conversation. This characteristic of salons reflected an interest in display increasingly found in urban public spaces during the eighteenth century. For example, a growing popular interest in natural history (*hakubutsugaku* 博物学) and the economic success of “display events,” such as *misemono* and art exhibitions, set the scene for the appearance of herbal and product shows (*yakuhin-kai* 薬品会 and *bussan-e* 物産会) (see Figure 3).²⁰ While salon displays did not have the same clear financial motivations, they did reflect other impulses similar to these product shows by using the display of items as a forum for conversation, social networking, and intellectual exchange.²¹ Various members of *rangaku* salons, such as Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内, participated in those shows as well.

¹⁸ Oka Yasumasa, “Exotic ‘Holland’ in Japanese Art,” in *Bridging the Divide: 400 Years the Netherlands-Japan*, eds. Leonard Blussé, Willem Rimmelinck, and Ivo Smits (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2000) 143.

¹⁹ This term was borrowed from Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994), 100.

²⁰ Exhibitions of contemporary art (*shogakai* 書画会) and of religious art (*kaichō* 開帳) became regular occurrences in urban areas in the late eighteenth century; see Taturō Akai, “The Common People and Painting” in *Tokugawa Japan: The Social and Economic Antecedents of Modern Japan* eds. Chie Nakane and Shinzaburō Ōishi (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1990), 175-177. *Misemono* were carnivalesque displays of unusual “items, individuals, or skills” which became extremely popular in cities from 1800; see Andrew L. Markus, “The Carnival of Edo: Misemono Spectacles from Contemporary Accounts” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45:2 (Dec. 1985): 499-541. Also see P.F. Kornicki “Public Display and Changing Values: Early Meiji Exhibitions and their Precursors” *Monumenta Nipponica* 49:2 (Summer 1994), 172-180.

²¹ Nishimura Saburō argues that these exhibitions were welcomed by amateur naturalists, because they put them in contact with others who could truly appreciate the time and expense it took to build their collections, and that these events were used as opportunities to build networks that stretched across Japan. Nishimura, *Bunmei no naka no hakubutsugaku—jō* (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shōten, 1999), 133-140.

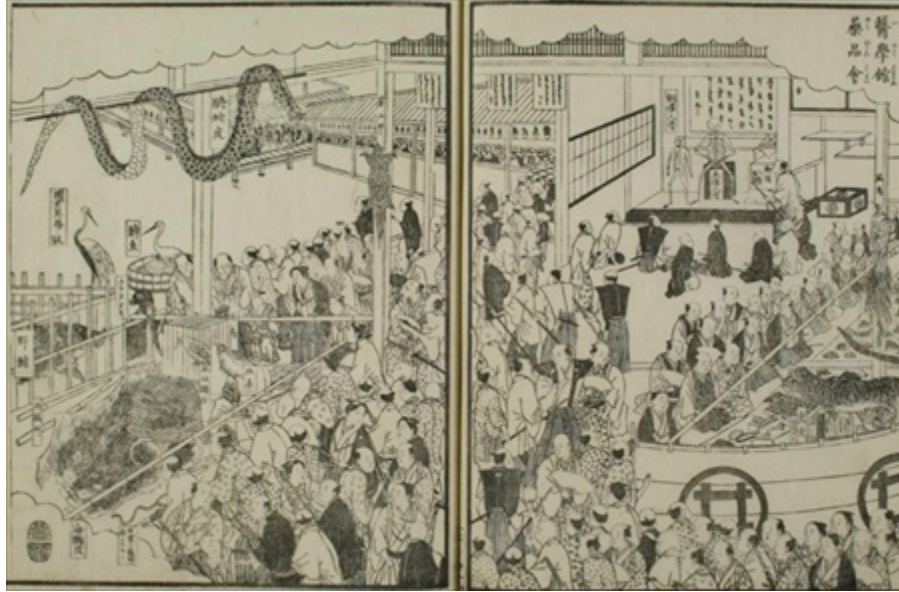


Figure 3. Crowd at a materia medica exhibition (*yakuhin-kai*) at the Iggakan medical academy. Okada Kei, *Owari meisho zue* (1844). (Courtesy of Waseda University.)

The conversable aspect of salons was particularly important to the serious scholars within the Dutch studies community. While Western items often served merchants and daimyo more as a conspicuous display of wealth (and potential patronage) and of powerful connections, for scholars, these displays were an opportunity to remind others of their learning. Describing the origins and uses of the items was, of course, a performative way to show off one's knowledge. Yet these items, from books to furniture, also created a symbolic display of knowledge that did not depend on speech. This is what Pierre Bourdieu calls "cultural capital in the objectified state." Bourdieu argues that *objectified* cultural capital such as "pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc. . . are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories."²² In other words, they are embodiments of the intellectual or creative mind. Such items can be "appropriated both materially, which presupposes economic capital, and symbolically, which presupposes cultural capital."²³ For many wealthy collectors, Dutch goods were merely material possessions, but for *rangaku* scholars, such as the shogunal physician Katsuragawa Hoshū, who could show off such prized possessions as a microscope, an electricity-generating machine (*erekiteru* エレキテル), or Dutch clothes, they were symbolic appropriations as well (see Figure 4).

²² Pierre Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital" in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport, Connecticut, 1986), 243.

²³ *Ibid.*, 247.

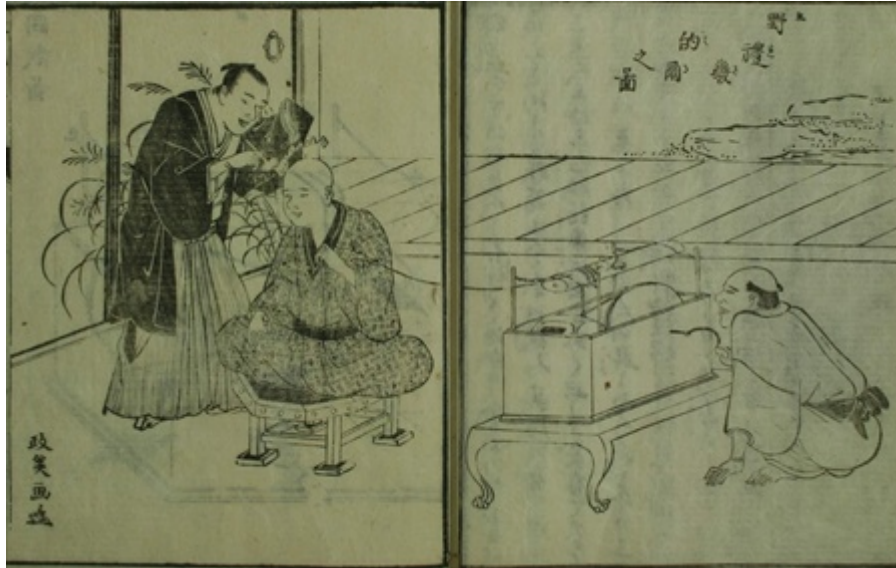


Figure 4. Demonstration of an electric generating machine (*erekiteru*) in the Katsuragawa salon. Source: Morishima Chūryō, *Kōmō zatsuwa* (1787). (Courtesy of University of Michigan.)

For an object such as a book or a telescope to become *objectified* cultural capital, the owner had to know how to use it, read it, or explain it. In order to accomplish this, the owner must have internalized cultural capital through studying the appropriate knowledge. This would have been the case for Katsuragawa Hoshū, Ōtsuki Gentaku, and Yoshio Kōzaemon, who had all studied the Dutch language and other forms of medical and scientific knowledge for years. People who were limited in cultural capital, such as Osaka merchant Yamagata Shigeyoshi or domainal lord Kutsuki Masatsuna, who could not read Dutch, could obtain embodied cultural capital by proxy if they utilized other forms of capital--social or economic--to “hire” it. For example, Masatsuna owned a great number of Dutch books which he was unable to fully access because he had not invested enough time or labor to acquire the embodied cultural capital of Dutch literacy. Nevertheless, he was able to turn these books into objectified cultural capital by having “experts” such as Ōtsuki Gentaku help him translate them in exchange for patronage. Once materials were accessed as objectified cultural capital, they became a symbolic extension of a person and added to his total accumulation of capital, thus allowing their display to become more meaningful. Through processes similar to this, all types of cultural salons became important sites for developing relationships of patronage through which men of wealth commissioned cultural experts.²⁴

²⁴ Tanaka Yūko, “Edo bunka no patoroneeji,” in *Dentō geinō no tenkai*, 151-153.

Crafting Authority and Legitimacy on New Year's

While common sense says that cultivating authority would certainly be a matter of attaining a high level of scholarly production and educational influence, there were other particularly amazed at the Western books that filled the shelves of the salon.²⁵ Upon entering Kōzaemon's house a few years after this, the famous traveling scholar Tachibana Nankei 橋南谿 wrote:

Influenced by the Dutch, the home of the senior interpreter Yoshio Kōzaemon had one *zashiki* with a tiled floor, a second-story room with a wooden floor, and a staircase with a blue-lacquered banister. When I visited Yoshio's home it was like entering a Dutch house. But as there were no *tatami* mats, guests and hosts all sat in chairs, which made it difficult to drink and eat comfortably.²⁶

A well-known artist named Haruki Nanko 春木南湖 had a similar reaction, so impressed that he exclaimed, “Yoshio's *Oranda zashiki* is better than Deshima 出島!” Apparently in his eyes, it was more authentic than the homes of the Dutch which he had seen several days earlier on a visit to the small island of Deshima in the Nagasaki harbor.²⁷ Ōtsuki Gentaku a central figure in the *rangaku* field, wrote in his journal that Kōzaemon's *Oranda zashiki* “dazzled” him.²⁸

Kōzaemon's salon, typically used for small parties, group readings (*kaidoku* 解読), or discussions with his numerous students and colleagues, was in fullest use on Dutch New Year's day. The room had wood floors, not *tatami*, and in the center sat a large Dutch-style table surrounded by chairs. During Kōzaemon's New Year's celebrations, there were also Western eating utensils and music.²⁹ The display of Western curios was more than an expression of zeal for Dutch studies. Having written around forty *rangaku* works and trained scores of students, Kōzaemon was regarded by scholars across Japan as the “godfather” of Dutch studies.³⁰ Kōzaemon's salon functioned as a very tangible symbol of his position. It displayed objects that only someone with his extensive contact with the Dutch could acquire. Kōzaemon's claim that Isaac Titsingh, Overseer of the Dutch East India Company in Japan, advised him on the furnishings added an air of authenticity.³¹ Kōzaemon's act of entertaining in the midst of his Dutch collection was a performance that spotlighted his unique accumulation of cultural, social,

²⁵ Katagiri Kazuo, *Edo no ranpō igaku kotohajime: Oranda tsūji-Yoshio Kōzaemon Kōsaku* (Tokyo: Maruzen, 2000), 148.

²⁶ Tachibana Nankei, *Tozai/Hokusō sadan* (Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1927), 155; and Ōtsuki Nyoden.

²⁷ Haruki Nanko, *Saiyū nichibo* (Tokyo: Komeyamadō, 1926), entry for Tenmei 8/10/24 (unpaginated). Haruki's journal entry for five days earlier (Tenmei 8/10/19) indicates that he was able to go to Deshima and enter one of the Dutch houses there.

²⁸ Ōtsuki Gentaku, “Teiho kikō” in *Bansui sensei zuihitsu*, MS [photocopy], Rare Books Collection, Waseda University Library, entry for Tenmei 5/11/25 (unpaginated).

²⁹ Ōtsuki Gentaku, “Teiho kikō”, entry for Tenmei 5/12/2 (unpaginated).

³⁰ Sugita, 24.

³¹ Ōtsuki Nyoden, *The Infiltration of...*, 94.

and economic capital. In addition, as a sociable and clever host, this performative act helped legitimize his position in the field by augmenting his *charismatic authority*.³²

The physician Ōtsuki Gentaku attended Kōzaemon's New Year's banquet in 1785, and ten years later introduced the celebration to Edo, making it an annual event in the salon of this private academy, the Shirandō 芝蘭堂. His reasons for throwing the banquet were several. The most explicit is found in a commemorative statement for the party, in which he wrote, "[M]any wise scholars gathered at [my] Shirandō Academy and forged an alliance for translating Western books. From now on, if we are diligent and unflinching, we will achieve flowers and fruits [in our endeavor]".³³ Gentaku saw the party as a monumental moment in Japan's intellectual history. He argued that a group, such as the one represented at his gathering, was necessary in order to overcome the deficiencies of Chinese medical books and bring new, useful knowledge to Japan.³⁴ As another gesture to encourage commitment within the community, Gentaku's party celebrated the ongoing work of his students who, at his urging, were compiling the first significant Dutch-Japanese dictionary, the *Haruma wage* 波留麻和解.

He also wanted to commemorate the return to Japan of one of his guests, Daikokuya Kōdayū 大黒屋光太夫, a sailor who had been shipwrecked on the Siberian coast in 1787 and had lived in St. Petersburg. Gentaku and his fellow scholars saw Kōdayū as an invaluable source of information. In addition, the bakufu had charged Katsuragawa Hoshū, who was present at the banquet, with the task of conducting an official interview with Kōdayū. By having the most established scholars and promising students at this event, Gentaku was not only providing encouragement to the field, but also attempting to reinforce his own image as a unique authority and the most significant networker within the field.³⁵ Therefore, it is not surprising that he commissioned an artist and former student named Ichikawa Gakuzan 市川岳山 to paint a portrait of the party (see Figure 6). Entitled the *Shirandō shingene kaizu* 芝蘭堂新元会図 [New Year's at the

³² Max Weber defined three basic forms of authority, which he believed became successively dominant in European history. *Charismatic authority* is emotionally based upon the charisma of an individual. *Traditional authority* rests in established traditions and routines, and is more stable in the long term. *Legal/rational authority*, the most developed according to Weber, is grounded in rational convictions, rules, and laws. See Max Weber, "The Types of Legitimate Domination" in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1978), 212-262.

³³ Ōtsuki Gentaku, "Bansui mansō" in *Bansui sonkyō*, ed. Ōtsuki Shigeo (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shigeo, 1912), 53-54.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

³⁵ For an analysis of probable guests see Reinier H. Hesselink, "A Dutch New Year at the Shirandō Academy: 1 January 1795," *Monumenta Nipponica* 50:2 (Summer 1995), 189-223.

Shirandō Academy], it hung at his school, and served as a reminder of his status within



Dutch studies.

Figure 6. *Shirandō shingen kaizu* (New Year's at the Shirandō Academy, 1795). (Courtesy of Waseda University.)

In addition to authority, Kōzaemon and Gentaku were concerned with the related issue of legitimacy for their field of study. They wanted *rangaku* to be acknowledged as an acceptable, admirable, and beneficial activity. This meant that those excluded from salons meetings might play a role as audience. Yoshio Kōzaemon's New Year's celebrations in Nagasaki were notable affairs, and drew street bystanders who watched the procession of guests. As audience they were involved in the process of legitimizing Dutch studies as a valid part of Tokugawa culture. On the occasion of his New Year's party in 1785, Kōzaemon invited not only interpreters and other miscellaneous member of the Dutch learning community, but also two city elders (*machidoshiyori* 町年寄). The office of city elder was a hereditary position occupied by merchants who assisted the city magistrate (*machi bugyō* 町奉行). Since city elders were powerful officials, whose office called on them to communicate between the magistrate and the merchants of the city, their presence at the banquet carried symbolic significance. Given this position, they can be regarded as providing both a bakufu and townsperson (*chōnin* 町人) presence. As elders of a large city, they had a reputation to uphold and likely proceeded conspicuously to Kōzaemon's home via palanquin. Onlookers were, therefore, inspired to imagine a salon party that included city officials. This would have encouraged the public to view *rangaku* as a valid cultural endeavor—sanctioned by local authorities, thus giving it legitimacy. This was more important than it may seem, since Dutch studies were based on *foreign* knowledge, and much of the population, while curious, were suspicious of the West. Further investigation of *Shirandō shigen kaizu*, the painting that commemorates Ōtsuki

Gentaku's first Dutch New Year's celebration, sheds light on the ways in which interior decoration was related to both the crafting of legitimacy for *rangaku* and shaping the authority of the host. Although it clearly does not conform to strict codes, Gentaku's salon is similar in design to those represented in the fifteenth century manual *Kundaikan sōchōki* and more contemporary guides to salon arrangement (see Figures 1 and 2). There are wall hangings and staggered shelves which display flower vases and books, all elements of design discussed in the early connoisseurial guide.

In order to accommodate the large party, Gentaku placed three tables together at the center of the room. Unlike the banquet tables in Yoshio Kōzaemon's salon, Gentaku's tables were low in Japanese fashion and guests sat on the floor. The food was likely somewhat different, since "Dutch-style" ingredients, such as pork, could not be obtained in Edo as easily as in Nagasaki. For the same reasons Gentaku had more difficulty obtaining Western furnishings for his banquet. Yet Gentaku was clearly concerned with fashioning his room as an *Oranda zashiki* (Dutch salon). Although the painting reveals only a few forks, knives, spoons, and Western-style wine glasses, their placement was a gesture of authenticity, which, as we saw with Kōzaemon's salon, could reinforce authority within the field.

If we shift our focus from the dining set-up to the rest of the room, a number of objects are worth notice. One shelf displays Japanese and Western books, the latter a precious commodity to which few had access. Architectural historian Kawakami Mitsugu writes that during the Ashikaga period when *shoin* studies were increasingly attached to *zashiki*, books became decorative elements, and that when placed on shelves, their appearance was more important than their content.³⁶ This was only partially true for Gentaku. By 1795, Gentaku had one of the most desirable collections of Dutch books in Japan. While they performed the role of decorations, they also reminded others of his ability to obtain such works, and that he indeed had the cultural capital required to read them.

Two pictures also adorn the walls. One hanging scroll is of a narwhal. For years the Dutch had imported animal horns to Japan, which were often presented as those of unicorns.³⁷ These horns were believed to have medicinal qualities and Japanese physicians ground them for use. The origins of the horns had sparked debate within the *rangaku* and medical communities. Gentaku ended the debate when, in his first published book *Rikubutsu shinshi* 六物新誌 [New record of six things, 1787], he established that the horns came from narwhals off the coast of Greenland.³⁸ The wall hanging closely resembles the illustration of the narwhal found in this book (see Figure 7). In his salon it was a symbol of his accomplishments in the field. This was, of course, a reminder of his *intellectual authority*.

³⁶ Kawakami Mitsugu, *Nihon chūsei jutaku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2002), 431.

³⁷ Narwhals were commonly referred to as "unicorn" whales due to the long, spiral tooth, or tusk, that protrudes from their lip. During the seventeenth century, these teeth were sold as unicorn horns and a growing trade developed under the belief that they had miraculous healing qualities.

³⁸ Hesselink, "A Dutch New Year at the Shirandō Academy," 203.

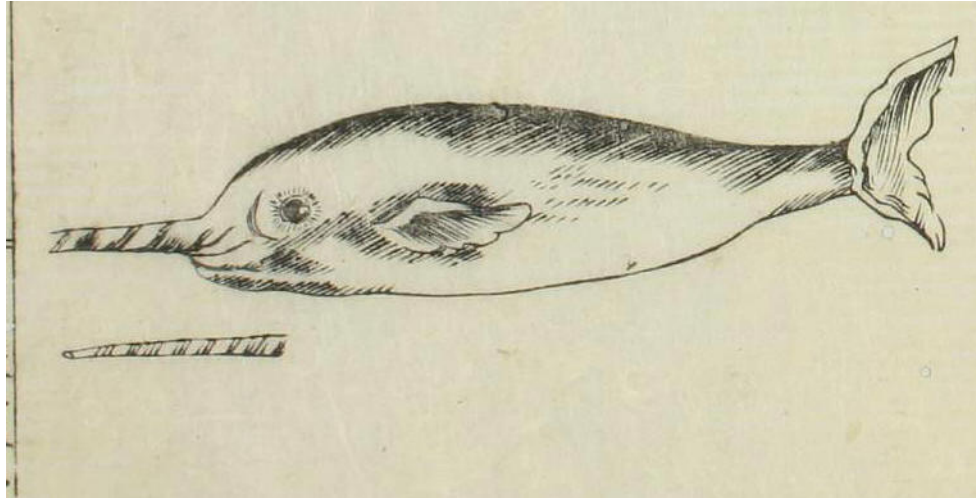


Figure 7. Narwhal. Source: Ōtsuki Gentaku, *Rikubutsu shinshi* (1786). (Courtesy of Waseda University.)

The other hanging scroll has been difficult for scholars to identify and has inspired active debate. The point of contention is whether it is a portrait of Hippocrates or Lorenz Heister. Those who argue that it is Hippocrates point to Gentaku’s strong interest in the “father of Western medicine,” which helped inspire an almost worshipful interest in Hippocrates among Dutch-style physicians of the time.³⁹ Heister, on the other hand, was the author of *Hellkundige Onderwijzingen* (Instructions in Surgery, 1741), a textbook on anatomy which Gentaku used for his first major translation, *Yōi shinsho* 瘍医新書 [New thesis on treatment of wounds]. Those who argue that it is Heister counter that Gentaku states in his diary that he had never seen a portrait of Hippocrates until 1799, 4 years after the original New Year’s banquet.⁴⁰

In either case, whether Hippocrates or Heister, the portrait would have acted as a symbol of legitimacy in the field. Gentaku had developed an interest in Hippocrates in the 1790s while revising the *Kaitai shinsho* 解体新書 [New treatise on anatomy] and translating the Heister book for his former teacher, Sugita Genpaku. When he interviewed members of the Dutch East India Company in 1794 on their obligatory trip to Edo, he questioned them, asking whether Hippocrates was the Western equivalent of the physician Shinnō 神農 who was revered by Japanese practitioners as the father of Chinese medicine. If we believe that the portrait in the New Year’s painting is of Hippocrates, we can read the hanging as an effort to show that *rangaku*, like traditional Chinese medicine, was supported by an ancient sage who had passed on his wisdom. *Rangaku* scholars, thus, legitimized a new form of medicine (“Dutch medicine”, *ranpō*) by drawing comparisons between it and a traditionally-accepted form of medicine, (Chinese medicine”, *kanpō* 漢方). Gentaku’s great-grandson Ōtsuki Nyoden 大槻玄幹 suggests that at the same time that Gentaku was trying to import new knowledge; he was consciously shaping the pursuit of that knowledge into a familiar form: The gathering [in 1795] was called an

³⁹ See Ogata Tomio, *Nihon ni okeru Hipokuratesu sanbi* (Tokyo: Nihon Iji Shinpōsha, 1971), 106-125.

⁴⁰ Nakano Misao, “Shingenkai-zuchū no seitetsuzō ni tuite,” *Rangaku shiryō kenkyū* 17 (1957), 157-164; and Hesselink, A Dutch New Year at the Shirandō Academy, 201-202.

Oranda shōgatsu (Dutch New Year). Thereafter, a banquet was held and colleagues gathered every year on the eleventh day [sic] after the winter solstice . . . *In lieu of the midwinter Shinnō celebration, they celebrated Dutch New Year's, and hung an image of Hippocrates, who was revered as the founder of Western medicine.*⁴¹

During midwinter, doctors and pharmacists in Tokugawa Japan traditionally placed decorations upon the image of Shinnō (either portrait or statue) and celebrated throughout the day. Gentaku was thus fitting his Dutch-style banquet into an existing tradition. Whether this painting received any explicit reverence by the guests is not recorded. However, we might consider that during the *haikai* (俳諧) poetry salon-meetings of the time, participants were required to pay homage to a portrait of Tenjin (天神), the Shinto god of literary studies.⁴² With this element, salon members turned everyday space into sacred space, and thus heightened the performative aspects of their meetings.⁴³ As a visitor from the world of the dead [*marebito* 客人), Tenjin was a symbolic, honored guest.⁴⁴ Perhaps Gentaku considered Hippocrates an appropriate “patron saint” (i.e., *marebito*) to look after the gatherings of Dutch-style physicians. This form of etiquette would have added a sense of civility shared by many *za* arts of Tokugawa Japan. It is clear from later paintings that Western-style Japanese doctors came to equate Hippocrates with both Shinnō and Onanunshi no Mikoto, a Shinto god of healing.

Whether the portrait was Heister or Hippocrates, the strategy involved presentation of a Western authority who literally watches over the party and sanctions the host's salon décor and arrangements. However, whereas a portrait of Hippocrates would have helped create legitimacy through traditional ritual, the use of Heister would have been a symbol to help *authenticate* the pursuit of Western knowledge. The portrait would also have reminded guests that Gentaku had made an important translation in 1790 of a surgical text by Heister. This point was meaningful, because the book solidified Gentaku's position at the top of the *rangaku* field. Thus, we can view a portrait of Heister as both a move toward legitimization of the whole *rangaku* enterprise and an individual legitimization of Gentaku's status.

Beyond the details of *Shirandō shingen kaizu*, the painting itself served as a marker that such a stupendous and defining occasion in *rangaku* took place at Gentaku's room. In commissioning the painting, Gentaku boosted his own *symbolic capital* (or *charismatic authority*) by ensuring that those who viewed it from then on would be reminded of his role in the growth of Dutch studies. In addition, Gentaku's annual New Year's parties in Edo became a medium for reproducing his social capital, as his son Genkan kanji inherited the event, continuing it for ten years after the elder's death. By holding the parties after Gentaku's death, Genkan reminded the Dutch studies community of his familial link. The annual New Year's celebrations augmented Gentaku's

⁴¹ Ōtsuki Nyoden 1912, 66; my italics.

⁴² Tenjin was the posthumous *kami* name for the poet and politician Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903). Although Tenjin's image was the most common, there were other legendary poets or writers whose portraits might appear instead, such as the Manyōshū poet from the seventh century Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麿 (662-710). See Ikegami, 173 & 408.

⁴³ Hama Moritarō, “‘Wagiogi’ no seishin,” *Nihon bungaku* 36:8 (October 1987), 2-3.

⁴⁴ Tanaka Yūko, “Ren: The Mechanism of Linking in Japanese Culture.” Paper presented at the Nizzan Insitute, Oxford University, 1993.

charismatic authority, but Genkan's continuation of them held the possibility of converting his father's *charismatic authority* into a *traditional authority* held by the Ōtsuki family.

Another *rangaku* family, the Katsuragawa, clearly used their salon gatherings to do just that. Katsuragawa Hoshū, Gentaku's contemporary, put together a wonderful collection of Western items which were displayed and used in his salon. However, long after he died, his progeny continued to use the *zashiki*, hosting various intellectuals and scholars until the end of the nineteenth century. In his autobiography, Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉, a frequent visitor of the Katsuragawa salon during the early Meiji period, indicates that the family had crafted a *traditional authority* for itself within Dutch studies when he remarks, "[In the 1850s] there were none in the *rangaku* field throughout Japan who did not know the Katsuragawa name."⁴⁵ Just as Katsuragawa Hoshū's salon played a role in reproducing his family's position within the Dutch studies field into the Meiji period, the painting of Gentaku's New Year's banquet served as a marker to perpetuate the authority of the Ōtsuki family and its students.

From Playbills to Position-taking

Earlier, I stated that a spirit of egalitarian intellectual participation and unencumbered information flow existed in salons. If this is true, why should we read salon decorating as an effort to establish social position within the *rangaku* field? Is there any indication that Dutch studies scholars were cognizant of or even cared about social position within their field? A sign of the concern that Dutch studies scholars had with field status can be drawn from the *Rangakusha shibai midate banzuke* 蘭学者芝居見立番付 [Playbill for Dutch studies theater, 1797] and the *Rangakusha sumō midate banzuke* 蘭学者相撲見立番付 [Playbill for Dutch studies sumo, 1799], documents designed to mark the occasion of two New Year's banquets held by Ōtsuki Gentaku. (see Figure 8). Modeled on posters that were hung at intersections and other places around cities to publicize *kabuki* 歌舞伎 performances or *sumo* 相撲 matches, the creation of mock playbills became a trend among cultural and hobby circles, and professional groups in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴⁶ Kabuki and sumo playbills included the role of each actor or the rank of each wrestler, respectively, indicating who were the most and least significant participants. The parodies, such as that for Dutch studies, were products of Tokugawa Japan's ludic age, during which play came to permeate many aspects of life. The designer of the two *rangaku* playbills, Morishima Chūryō 森島中良, was widely known for the wit of his *gesaku* 戯作, and certainly had no serious objectives to using these playbills for the promotion of Dutch studies or individual scholars.⁴⁷ They, nevertheless, express a consciousness of rank and reputation within the community.

⁴⁵ Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Fukuo jiden" in *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū*, ed. Koizumi Shinzō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957), 86.

⁴⁶ See Hayashi Hideo and Aoki Michio, *Banzuke de yomu Edo jidai* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shōbo, 2003), 8-40.

⁴⁷ Chūryō was also the brother of Katsuragawa Hoshū mentioned earlier, and a *rangaku* enthusiast.

<p>分四 杉田 盛</p>	<p>分三 前野 休明</p>	<p>分二 青木 盛興</p>	<p>分一 新井 善利</p>	<p>八 松 隆天</p>	<p>上 香積</p>
<p>香積</p>					<p>香積</p>
<p>香積</p>					<p>香積</p>
<p>香積</p>					<p>香積</p>

8-a



8-b

Figure 8 a-b. “Rangakusha shibai midate banzuke” (left, 1797) and “Rangakusha sumō midate banzuke” (right, 1799) by Morishima Chūryō. (Courtesy of Waseda University.)

The earlier of the two playbills was based on ones used for the plays of Sakurada Jisuke II 桜田治, a well-known playwright in Edo during the 1790s. The name of the imaginary theater owner, Miyako Ninnai 都仁内, was adapted from an actual one, Miyako Dennai 都伝内 of the Nakamura-za 中村座 playhouse. However, the remaining seventy-three individuals listed as actors, authors, or troupe leaders were all Dutch studies scholars with slightly altered names. For example, the doctor Sugita Genpaku was called “Sugita Genpachi” 杉田玄八 and the Dutch enthusiast Kutsuki Masatsuna 朽木昌綱, who was daimyo of Fukuchiyama 福知山 domain, was given as “Fukuchiyama-zaemon” 福知山左衛門. The scholars who were regarded as being of higher position within the Dutch studies field were given more central roles in the play’s production. The pioneers of Dutch studies, Sugita Genpaku, Maeno Ryōtaku 前野良沢, and Ishikawa Genjō 石川玄常 were all honored in the document as “playwrights.” Their standing alludes to the importance of their translation *Kaitai shinsho* which initiated *rangaku* with its publication in 1774. Ōtsuki Gentaku, the host of the New Year’s parties being commemorated, and Katsuragawa Hoshū were troupe leaders. With Gentaku as the

founder of the first Dutch studies academy and Hoshū as the host of the oldest and most active *rangaku* salon meetings, these two were arguably the most important networkers within Dutch studies and were mentors to the younger generation. The remaining scholars are similarly placed in acting roles that matched their position within the field.

The second mock playbill, which marked a later New Year's banquet at Gentaku's home, provides an indication of the status of eighty scholars by applying sumo rankings. As expected, the pioneers Sugita Genpaku and Maeno were represented as "retired elders" (*toshiyori* 年寄), Gentaku as a promoter (*kanjinmoto* 勸人元), and Katsuragawa Hoshū as an attendant (*sashizoi* 差添). Others were placed among the ranks of champion (*ozeki* 小関), second rank (*sekiwake* 関脇), third rank (*komusubi* 小结), and common rank (*maegashira* 前頭). The arrangement of the scholars suggests that key factors determining position were their roles in patronage (economic capital), facilitating network interaction (social capital), scholarly production (cultural capital), and seniority (symbolic capital). Gentaku's significance as a major educator in Edo is suggested by the inclusion of six of his students in the upper wrestling ranks.

This concern with ranking should not be considered remarkable. Pierre Bourdieu's research shows that participants in cultural fields are always in competition with each other to gain more capital, even when there is no outward animosity or hostility. While *rangakusha* seemed to be extremely collegial, higher status within the *rangaku* community meant greater access to students, patronage, social connections, and, for physicians medical patients, allowing the holder to convert social capital into economic capital more easily than someone of lower position. In addition, high status could lead to the establishment of a "great name," inheritable by sons and protective of one's legacy, thus reproducing status.⁴⁸ For *rangaku* scholars, status was not just a matter of who held the most knowledge, although that was probably of primary importance. It was more generally a matter of who had a significant accumulation and greater proportion of all forms of capital (social, cultural, and economic).⁴⁹ The "performances" put on in salons were, in part, acts to persuade guests of the value of the hosts' accumulated capital.⁵⁰ They aided his position within the field.

Conclusion: Salons and Network Navigation

Salons were sites of serious cultural and intellectual conversations; they were sites of playful interactions; and they were even sacred sites where rules of decorum and ritual were often followed. However, in the midst of that, salons were significant for the role they played in community formation. The Dutch studies community functioned as a social network, and salons were social nodes. They were crucial sites for maintaining and expanding the network; setting social positions; and reinforcing authority. Eiko Ikegami has effectively argued that cultural circles formed *enclave publics* or escapes from the

⁴⁸ Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital," 250.

⁴⁹ Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), 128-129.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the importance of persuasion in the process of attaching relative values to various accumulated capitals see Nan Lin, *Social Capital: Theory of Social Structure and Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30.

social demands of the Tokugawa state.⁵¹ Salons were key spaces where individuals of varying backgrounds forged new types of social relationships within those *enclave publics*. The efforts that scholars made in the decoration of their rooms, as well as the procedures of their meetings and banquets, played a role in that process. As unique versions of salons, *Oranda zashiki* combined both established cultural paradigms with novel material items. Hundreds of years earlier, *zashiki-kazari*, or salon-decorating, was codified in an effort to define the aesthetic appreciation of foreign items sought by the elites of Japan. In the Tokugawa period, there was an interest in new types of foreign goods. While a primary goal of the decorative rules of fifteenth-century salons was an attempt to control aesthetic values, the *rangaku* versions showed an interest in legitimizing the new foreign study. By focusing on the display of personal belonging, cognoscente of the medieval period effectively turned salons into spaces that could fluctuate between private and public. This made them powerful sites. Later Dutch studies scholars took advantage of that tradition and used their private possessions to secure their position within the larger intellectual network. While the display of curious items harnessed the economic potential of the public in the late eighteenth century through *misemono* exhibitions, for *rangaku* scholars, it wedded entertainment with information exchange and the serious business of social maneuvering.

⁵¹ Ikegami, *Bonds of Civility*.