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Ningyō Sashichi and *Hanshichi*:

Differing Views on Ancient Edo

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Introduction

Torimonochō have enjoyed immense popularity in Japan since their inception: through highs and lows, these stories have managed to survive for a hundred years with little to no interruption, even during the bleak days of the Pacific War. Even now, when this literary genre has fallen under the radar, and many among the younger generations are unfamiliar with it, it still enjoys a moderate degree of success in its niche market: to this day, authors such as Iijima Kazutsugu 飯島一次 keep *torimonochō* alive by writing new stories, and a publishing house entirely dedicated to the genre has been founded as recently as 2018. Torimono shuppan 捕物出版 is an extremely small publisher – a veritable home-made operation, as the staff is solely composed of a married couple, the husband taking care of the production side while the wife handles proofreading and accounting – which exclusively releases print-on-demand books to counteract the inevitable losses they would incur otherwise. While this unfortunately demonstrates the slump *torimonochō* have been experiencing, given that a more traditional publishing process would prove to be economically untenable, it also speaks to the passion that still animates fans of the genre: the whole *raison d'être* of Torimono shuppan is to take old *torimonochō* which have long fallen out of print, and are suitably hard to find, and collect them in new, unabridged and often complete, editions to make them available to other fans – or, indeed, potentially to new fans. Regardless of their sales and popularity, *torimonochō* are still an important part of the Japanese literary landscape; author and critic Nozaki Rokusuke 野崎六助, in fact, has gone as far as claiming that passion for the genre is one of the Japanese national characteristics, and that to know *torimonochō* is to know the Japanese people.[1]

Despite the depth of the roots *torimonochō* have in Japan, scholarly attention towards the genre has not been forthcoming: literary criticism in Japanese is not plentiful, and tends to concentrate on a single series, *Hanshichi torimonochō*, to the near exclusion of others. In other languages, the topic is nearly unheard of, save in the form of brief mentions in compendiums of literary history, and the few exceptions tend to focus solely on *Hanshichi torimonochō*, like their Japanese counterparts. The situation is further exacerbated by the extreme scarcity of translations: while partial translations of *Hanshichi torimonochō* are available in several European languages (including English, French, Spanish, and Italian), they cover no more than roughly a sixth of the 69 stories which make up the series. Moreover, with the exception of very recent, self-published English translations of *Meiji kaika: Ango torimonochō*,[2] and of the first ten stories of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*,[3] other *torimonochō* have not reached foreign markets at all. The present work aims to bridge this gap, however partially, not just by introducing *torimonochō* to a Western audience, but by presenting some of its lesser-known aspects, and arguing for a re-evaluation of the genre itself.

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[1] Nozaki (2010b), p. 2.

Torimonochō are often presented, and present in the public mind, as an unambiguous unit, something of a monolithic block with little in the way of change: detective stories set in a nostalgia-fuelled Edo period – a 'golden age', or the 'good old times' – with very rigid, well-defined characteristics more or less impervious to modifications. On a closer look, however, within the compact and apparently strict definition of '*torimonochō*', one finds a much more fragmentary reality, an amalgamation of different elements which do not even necessarily mesh well with each other. *Torimonochō* are not a single block, then, but a construction made of many smaller 'bricks', quite varied and rarely homogeneous. A hybrid mass without substantial unity, in other words, a commixture the characteristics of which change depending on the author's vision – and even the reader's vision.

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[2] Sakaguchi (2017-2018).

[3] Nomura (2018).

This hybridity manifests itself in three different stages, or layers: *(a)* the origins of the *torimonochō*, how they came about and reached their present form; *(b)* its representational content, how they depict the fantasy world the protagonists inhabit and what this depiction tells us about the real world the authors lived in; and *(c)* their surrounding context, how the external circumstances around the times of their publication variously affected not just single works, but genre definitions themselves. These three forms of hybridity will be the main subject of the present thesis, the four chapters of which will explore each of these individual sides with the intention of demonstrating that *torimonochō* is a fundamentally inhomogeneous literary genre.

Chapter One, 'The Birth and Evolution of *Torimonochō*', will be dedicated to providing a working definition of what a *torimonochō* is, and briefly illustrating in chronological order the history of the main representatives of the genre. In doing this, we will also tackle the question of 'context', seeing how the fundamental characteristics of *torimonochō* changed with the times, how they dealt with war-time censorship, and how their very literary identity shifted between detective and historical fiction depending on the fluctuating views of authors, readers, and authorities.

Chapter Two, 'The Multiculturality of *Torimonochō*', will discuss the far and near origins of the genre, the influences which led to its creation by Okamoto Kidō 岡本綺堂 (1872-1939), and the literary forms which can be considered as its predecessors. This chapter will aim to prove that, despite their frequently protested 'Japanese-ness', *torimonochō* are a deeply multicultural product, and that while their Japanese side is undeniably the most visible and perhaps even the most substantial, it is decidedly not the only one which should be taken into consideration when facing this peculiar genre.

The following two chapters are both dedicated to the last remaining form of hybridity, the representational content of *torimonochō*. By analysing single works and how they represent the world, these chapters will attempt to demonstrate that even a fixture as apparently solid and immutable as the historical city of Edo itself is, in reality, ever-changing. Since most authors worked off the same maps and reference illustrations, the focus will be on the differences in atmosphere and character which lend each series a sense of uniqueness, rather than examining potential variations in the city's architectural style or urban planning. Given the plethora of *torimonochō* series, the discussion has been limited to the five most prominent examples of the genre, and these have been further thematically subdivided.

Chapter Three, 'A Familiar Place: Traditional Edos', examines two series which are presented as 'traditional'. The first one, though not in chronological order, is *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, which is often erroneously considered wholly representative of the genre, and therefore the most classical in the minds of critics and readers. The other is *Hanshichi torimonochō*, which is unquestionably 'traditional' by virtue of its status as founder of the genre, but which presents several peculiarities that might astonish one who is only familiar with Heiji-style 'classical' *torimonochō*.

Chapter Four, 'Breaking from Tradition: New Heroes, New Edos', moves on to three other series which are 'divergent' in their approach to the perceived genre conventions. Each of these works presents a different city: they might share a name, but the same cannot be said of their characteristics, as each Edo serves a distinct purpose and offers its own individual imagery. The world of *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, in particular, is completely antithetical to the prevailing ideal of the Edo period as a 'golden age'.

Lastly, I have included two Appendices to facilitate comprehension and consultation of the paper. Appendix 1 consists of a reference table, mainly intended for use in conjunction with Chapters Three and Four, which provides a summary of the main characteristics of each of the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*'. Appendix 2 is a table listing of all the *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* stories, with some basic bibliographical information and a brief synopsis for each of them. This series has been chosen for its importance in the history of the genre, as explored in Chapter

Four; furthermore, while several similar tables exist in Japanese for *Hanshichi torimonochō*, the few that list *Sashichi* stories are incomplete and/or presented in a scattered format. Information such as a list of characters appearing in each story, or the date on which the adventure is supposed to be taking place in-universe, have been excluded from the present listing. Unlike *Hanshichi torimonochō*, the time frame for the *Sashichi* stories is rarely stated, and in many cases there are no clues at all, so that determining it is all too often up to guesswork, and any attempt at a systematic in-universe dating would require a separate paper altogether. A list of characters, or other similar detailed points of data, on the other hand, have been left out due to space constraints, to present the table in an easier-to-read single-page format.

Naturally, one thesis alone cannot cover all the fascinating facets of the topic or remedy by itself decades of silence, any more than a plaster would serve to heal a gunshot wound, so it is my sincere hope that this paper will spark renewed scholarly interest in *torimonochō*, contributing to spreading this compelling genre outside its native Japan.

Chapter 1 – The Birth and Evolution of *Torimonochō*

1.1 – What Is a *Torimonochō*?

The concept of *torimonochō*, as well as the word itself, is unlikely to be familiar to any Western reader, and is indeed equally unfamiliar to many younger Japanese readers, so a short introduction is in order, if one is to touch on the topic to any degree of completeness. As a literary genre, the *torimonochō* is most often described as a quintessentially Japanese branch of popular literature (*taishū bungaku* 大衆文学), combining detective fiction (*tantei shōsetsu* 探偵小説, or *suiri shōsetsu* 推理小説)[4] and historical fiction (*jidai shōsetsu* 時代小説), in a way not at all unlike Western historical mysteries, which the *torimonochō* preceded by quite some time.[5] The simplest definition of *torimonochō*, and the one which can be usually found in a dictionary, is that of a detective novel or story set in the Edo period (1600-1868) and with an *okappiki* as a protagonist. This definition, while extremely convenient to give a broad idea of what a reader should expect, nonetheless presents several difficulties: not all *torimonochō* are set in the Edo period, a good number of them do not feature an *okappiki*, and many would argue that most of them do not qualify as detective fiction either. This invalidates every single point of the given definition, leaving prospective readers in quite a pickle – not to mention the fact that the average person, especially outside Japan, is unlikely to be aware of what exactly an *okappiki* is in the first place. We are therefore obliged to take a step back from describing the *torimonochō* genre, and briefly outline the justice system of the Edo period.

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[4] The two terms, though often used somewhat interchangeably, have a rich history behind them, one that is too long and involved to be fully explored in this paper. Let it suffice to say that, broadly speaking, by *tantei shōsetsu* (literally 'detective novel') one usually refers to the pre-war Japanese production, while *suiri shōsetsu* (literally 'reasoning novel' or 'deduction novel') usually refers to the post-war one. Recently, the English term *mystery* has become widespread as a more comprehensive name for the genre, avoiding any debates and ambiguities surrounding the previous nomenclature.

[5] One wonders why historical mysteries and *torimonochō* are so rarely compared, in spite of their many obvious similarities. The language barrier, and the lack of translations and awareness of *torimonochō* outside Japan are undoubtedly factors to be considered, but do not provide a full explanation by themselves. For a brief outline of the parallels between the two genres, see Paolini (2019).

There was no standardised national institution in Japan at the time: the roles which a modern reader would associate with the police force and the judicial system were combined and given to a wide range of officials, each place having its own structure. Attempting an accurate description of the state of things for every feudal domain, or even just for every territory under direct shogunal control, would require an extensive amount of historical research and a dedicated book: given that Edo is the most frequent background for these historical mysteries, we will limit ourselves to a sketch of how justice was handed out in the capital. The city of Edo can be broadly divided into three types of territories, each one answering to different authorities: the samurai occupied about 60% of the whole city with their lands and mansions, Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines made up a further 20%, while commoners (mostly *chōnin* 町人)[6] – which were the great majority of the population – were tightly packed in the remaining 20% of the territory.[7] The samurai answered to the *metsuke* 目付 and *ōmetsuke* 大目付, the clergy to the *jisha bugyō* 寺社奉行 and the commoners to the *machi bugyō* 町奉行, but these were far from the only relevant authorities: the other ones most frequently mentioned in these narratives are the *kanjō bugyō* 勘定奉行, with jurisdiction over financial matters, and the *hitsuke tōzoku aratame kata* 火付盗賊改方, military authorities who mainly dealt with major crimes, employed more violent methods and tortures than their civilian counterparts, and had jurisdiction over all three of the above-mentioned territories and classes.[8] Most *torimonochō* tend to focus on commoners, so the *machi bugyō* is the authority most often called into question, and the one to which most protagonists ultimately answer to. The term *machi bugyō* is often translated as 'city/town magistrate', which can be rather misleading as to the actual competences of this office: as historian Yamamoto Hirofumi puts it, the *machi bugyō* was the equivalent of the Governor of Tōkyō, the Superintendent-General of the Metropolitan Police, the Chief Justice of the District Court, and the Fire Chief of the Tōkyō Fire Department all neatly rolled into one single person.[9] Nonetheless, for the purpose of analysing *torimonochō* literature, we need not be overly concerned with the exact specifications, as even the most historically accurate works rarely delve deep into technical details. There were actually two *machi bugyō* in the city of Edo, the northern *machi bugyō* and the southern *machi bugyō*, and while the terminology might suggest a territorial division, they had mostly the same functions, but operated on a monthly rotation: the 'active' office was the only one taking in new cases, while the other one kept working on the ones received during the previous month.[10] This helped to balance the workload between the two *machi bugyō*, who had to deal with a constant stream of cases: for a brief time, between 1702 and 1719, there was also a third *machi bugyō*, which might suggest how hopelessly overworked these officials were.[11]

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[6] The term *chōnin*, literally meaning 'town people', specifically refers to a social class comprising merchants and craftsmen living in the city. It does not include farmers or outcasts such as the *hinin* or *eta*.

[7] Yamamoto (2015), p. 15.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16, 124, 197-198.

The *machi bugyō* did not work alone, naturally, but had a whole array of subordinates at their disposal, higher-ranking officials called *yoriki* 与力 and lower-ranked ones called *dōshin* 同心. Both were further subdivided according to their highly-specialised functions: the *yoriki* usually had either clerical roles, or roles of higher responsibility, such as supervising investigations or examining corpses to determine the cause of death; the *dōshin* were the actual patrolling and arresting officers.[12] The hierarchy of *yoriki* and *dōshin* was not exclusive to the office of the *machi bugyō*, as many other institutions used the same ranking system, though with differing responsibilities for the officials.[13] All these posts, from the *machi bugyō* himself to the lowest *dōshin*, were filled exclusively by members of the samurai class: no *chōnin* were allowed in the official 'police'. However, there were only 26 *dōshin* between the two *machi bugyō* offices,[14] a number which was patently insufficient to cover the whole city of Edo. As a result, the *dōshin* were more or less forced to privately employ subordinates from the *chōnin* class, usually former criminals, to compensate: these are the *okappiki* 岡っ引, also known as *meakashi* 目明し, *goyōkiki* 御用聞き, or *tesaki* 手先. This list of names is not exhaustive: since *okappiki* were not officially employed, they had no official title, and what they were called was therefore largely dependent on time and context. They usually preferred to call themselves *goyōkiki*, which had a more respectful sound to it, while the other terms ranged from neutral to derogatory.[15] *Okappiki* never enjoyed much favour with the population of Edo, as their criminal background and low wages often led them to extortion and other unsavoury practices.[16] The shogunate even tried to ban the use of *okappiki* several times, but with little to no success: understaffed as they were, the *dōshin* had little choice in the matter, and merely ended up finding ways of getting around the regulations.[17] Each *dōshin* had a range of *okappiki* at his disposal, and the *okappiki* sometimes had subordinates of their own, usually known as *shitappiki* 下っ引. The strictly unofficial nature of *okappiki* and *shitappiki* further facilitated corruption: for example, it was quite common for them to accept bribes from shop owners who had been witnesses to a crime but did not wish to appear in the official records, as that would have meant being summoned by the *machi bugyō*, incurring in bad publicity and possibly having to close shop for days to attend the trial.[18]

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 74-75.

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

To summarise, the *yoriki* supervised the *dōshin*, who physically conducted arrests with the unofficial help of *okappiki* and *shitappiki*. After the arrest, the criminal was temporarily held in a jail called *rōyashiki* 牢屋敷, and *yoriki* and *dōshin* conducted further investigations and interrogations, ideally resulting in a confession, and prepared a verdict based on previous cases. The *machi bugyō* was the official authority who meted out punishments, but since he was extremely busy, he usually followed documents prepared by his subordinates, only intervening with his own judgement when the case was exceptional, or had no precedents. The punishments which the *machi bugyō* could administer were rather varied, ranging from several types of death penalty to mere reprimands:[19] while imprisonment up to 100 days was a possibility, there were no long-term prison sentences, so the inmates of the *rōyashiki* were mainly criminals awaiting the conclusion of their trial, or the boat that would bring them to the island they had been exiled to.

Having thus given a brief overview of the background knowledge necessary to understand *torimonochō*, we can now turn to the word itself. Before becoming a literary genre, the *torimonochō* was a rather more prosaic ledger in use within the *machi bugyōsho* (the office of the *machi bugyō*), where officials recorded details of arrests, though its precise nature is disputed.[20] There is no exact English equivalent for the term, as it is quite specific to the Edo-period justice system, so any attempt at translation faces a marked disadvantage from the very beginning. The concept of case notes is nothing new to the detective genre, so many scholars and translators choose to take inspiration from classic titles such as *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* and adapt *torimonochō* as 'casebook': such is the case for Ian MacDonald's translation of Okamoto Kidō's *Hanshichi torimonochō* as *The Curious Casebook of Inspector Hanshichi*. This choice understandably sacrifices accuracy to obtain immediate comprehension, and unfortunately seems to be the only viable option, other than leaving the term untranslated, as will be done in this paper. Similar considerations can be made for derivative terms, such as *torimono hikae* ('case notes' or 'arrest notes') or *torimono techō* ('case/arrest notebook'), which are sometimes employed in titles as an alternative to *torimonochō*.[21]

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[19] Excellent in-depth accounts of the punishment system in the Edo period can be found in Botsman (1992) and Botsman (2005).

[20] See Section 3.2.1, pp. 102-104.

This brings us back to *torimonochō* as a genre, and its definition. The earliest critic to tackle this question was Shiraishi Kiyoshi 白石潔, who first described *torimonochō* as nostalgic, seasonal literature (*ki no bungaku* 季の文学), a keyword which to this day is often quoted as the essence of the genre.[22] In the course of his essay, published in 1949, he emphasises the importance of the seasons and the natural phenomena that accompany them, which according to him play a prominent role in *torimonochō* literature, to the point that *torimonochō* might be seen as a form of *saijiki* 歳時記.[23] He also uses the term *fūbutsushi* 風物詩, which originally indicated a poem about a certain scenery or season, and now more generally refers to anything that conveys a particular season: Shiraishi's point is that *torimonochō* act as intermediaries through which the reader can enjoy nature as it was in the Edo period, from frosty winter scenes to processions of river boats promising refuge from the summer heat. The other main characteristic which Shiraishi ascribes to *torimonochō* is their 'humanity' (*ninjōteki* 人情的): he argues that the protagonists of these stories are romantic good guys, who show love for other people and compassion for criminals; the criminals themselves, he claims, are much more human than those of other modern fiction, committing their crimes because of loyalty or love, not innate evil. Shiraishi's definition of *torimonochō* has enjoyed immense popularity, and has mostly gone unchallenged: to this day, the main characteristics of *torimonochō* are usually identified in their focus on the 'Edo atmosphere' and 'human relations', with the actual detection aspect relegated to the background. It is not a wholly inaccurate view, but it does ignore many important works that do not conform to these expectations.

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[21] It must be noted, though, that words such as *torimono hikae* or *torimono techō* have no historical basis, unlike the term *torimonochō*, and were presumably chosen by authors merely to differentiate their works from those of others.

[22] Shiraishi (1949).

[23] The term *saijiki* refers to any book which describes festivals, natural scenes and phenomena, usually arranged by season. The term has also come to be used for reference lists of seasonal terms for the composition of *haiku*, but this is arguably not the meaning intended by Shiraishi.

The concept of 'seasonal literature' in particular has been picked up by a good deal of critics through the years. In a short essay, Edogawa Ranpo 江戸川乱歩 (1894-1965) argued that *torimonochō* are composed of two elements, puzzle-solving and *fūbutsushi*, and that since these two elements are hard to balance, one is bound to favour one over the other; and Ranpo, in a personal opinion which he clearly defines as such, would favour the *fūbutsushi*, which he claims are the soul of *torimonochō*.[24] Okamoto Kidō himself, the author of *Hanshichi torimonochō*, seems to have shared this view, at least in relation to his own work, and his words are often quoted as the basis for similar remarks:

> If there is any distinctive feature in these stories, besides the normal 'detective interest', it must be in the fact that one can glean, to a certain extent, traces of Edo, which forms the background for these stories.[25]

Among the few who disagree with Shiraishi's definition is Tsuzuki Michio 都筑道夫 (1929-2003), himself an author of detective fiction and *torimonochō*. He argues that the definition of 'seasonal literature', however often quoted it may be, is not appropriate in literary discussions of *torimonochō*: it is Tsuzuki's opinion that Shiraishi was only referring to the 'sense of the seasons' (*kisetsukan* 季節感) as an important characteristic of many *torimonochō* that had been written up to that point, implying that this 'sense of the seasons' should not be taken as an essential element of the genre, but rather as an auxiliary component. He goes on to argue that the expression ‘seasonal literature’ is pointless: since daily life in the Edo period revolved by necessity around seasonal changes, any work that depicts it would also have to be defined as ‘seasonal literature’. He concludes his argument by attempting a more accurate, albeit less catchy, definition of *torimonochō*: a crime tale, born as a form of detective fiction, which is set in a period ranging from the middle of the Edo period to the early Meiji era.[26] Tsuzuki goes on to argue that Kidō’s above-mentioned words, so often cited as a sort of proof that Kidō himself saw his work as ‘seasonal literature’, are just as often misinterpreted: in his opinion, Kidō is not saying that in *torimonochō* mystery-solving is only secondary to the main interest, that is, the depiction of the Edo period; rather, Kidō is saying that mystery-solving is the main interest, and, besides that, the depiction of Edo atmospheres is also a characteristic of *Hanshichi torimonochō*.[27] While Tsuzuki’s definition has not been widely adopted by other critics, it is undoubtedly much more faithful to what the genre actually is, rather than what people tend to perceive it as. Describing it more generically as a ‘crime tale’, but specifying that it originated as a form of detective fiction, accurately represents the varying amount of relative importance attached to actual detection; extending the setting to include the early Meiji era allows for outliers such as Sakaguchi Ango’s 坂口安吾 (1906-1955) *Meiji kaika: Ango torimonochō*.

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[24] Edogawa (1949).

[25] Okamoto Ki. (1923), p. 1.

Nozaki Rokusuke has been even more exacting in his attempted definition of what exactly constitutes a *torimonochō*, going as far as saying that their formal characteristics are as precise and clear-cut as the syllabic divisions of a *haiku* or a *tanka*. His long definition involves many aspects: a *torimonochō* is necessarily a short story, independent and self-conclusive, but still at least loosely connected to the story that came before and the one that will come after in the series; the main protagonist is one and only one, but one or more supporting characters need to be present to make him stand out; the 'sense of the seasons' is important, as is the humanisation of criminals and their crimes. Nozaki concludes his explanation by saying that both detection (*suiri*) and human feelings (*ninjō*) have their place within *torimonochō* literature, and compares the genre to frequently visiting a famous hot spring: one always receives the same warm treatment and more or less the same service, but with constant small variations to keep the customer's interest alive.[28] Despite Nozaki's eagerness to present all these characteristics as being part of a strict definition, and his insistence on comparing *torimonochō* to Japanese poetry for its formal characteristics, one cannot help but notice how almost every one of his points has at least one major contradicting example: while admittedly rare, *torimonochō* 'series' that consist of only a single novel do exist, such as *Hanchiku Hansuke torimono banashi* 半ちく半助捕物ばなし (1976-1977),[29] and many major series feature a few novellas or even novels, besides their short stories;[30] while the supporting-character formula is very common, it cannot be considered universal, and the *Hanshichi torimonochō* series itself, for example, lacks a proper supporting cast, mainly featuring the sole Hanshichi; and the 'sense of the seasons', as we have seen Tsuzuki argue earlier, is not an essential component. On the whole, Nozaki's considerations are interesting, and they help put the genre in its proper context, as they tend to be generally valid; they cannot, however, be taken at face value as parts of a rigorous definition, unlike Tsuzuki's attempt. To solve this problem, Ichii Jō 一井穣 has introduced a distinction between *torimonochō shōsetsu* and *torimono shōsetsu*, treating the latter as a more generic term, and the former as a more strictly fixed literary form modelled after *Hanshichi torimonochō*, roughly corresponding with Nozaki's definition.[31]

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[26] Tsuzuki (1973), pp. 272-273.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

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[28] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 3-5.

[29] Furuyama (2018).

[30] Such is the case for *Hanshichi torimonochō*, *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* and *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō*. The distinction between short story, novella and novel is based on length but is not clear cut, so there can be disagreements among critics as to which stories belong to which category.

[31] Ichii (1986b), pp. 33-34.

Ichii's distinction has not been widely accepted, however, and the two terms are usually employed interchangeably.

Another characteristic that is often attributed to *torimonochō* is its reliance on the detective's intuition, rather than his skill in reasoned detection. Ranpo describes *torimonochō* as having simple tricks, with the culprit being found out through quick wits;[32] Ian MacDonald, author of a partial translation of *Hanshichi torimonochō*, describes the protagonist as based on theatrical representations of *okappiki*, 'whose reputation rested more on ready brute force than Sherlockian ingenuity', and whom Kidō imbued with 'a subtler, more three-dimensional persona';[33] and Mark Silver argues that 'Hanshichi's feats of detection rely considerably more heavily on his hunches and his sixth sense than they do on scientific deduction'.[34] All three of these critics use *Hanshichi torimonochō* as their sole – or at least main – point of reference: this is, unfortunately, a common trend both within Japanese and Western scholarly literature on the matter. Among Japanese academics, *Hanshichi torimonochō* has been the most frequent subject of discussion, to the point that it is quite rare to find any sort of work on the genre that does not at least feature it prominently; in the West, even Kidō's work has not received much attention, and other *torimonochō* series are rarely – if ever – mentioned outside of reference books or literary histories such as Sakai's *Histoire de la littérature populaire japonaise*. This is not wholly unjustified, given that *Hanshichi torimonochō* is undoubtedly of supreme importance as the founder of the genre, as we shall see, but it does tend to obscure the importance of other series which have greatly distanced themselves from their predecessor. In this specific case, the observation that *torimonochō* detectives seem to rely more on intuition than deduction is borne out by many – though not all – series, and leads into another important question: should *torimonochō* be considered detective literature, or historical literature?

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[32] Edogawa (2004), p. 69.
[33] Okamoto Ki. (2007b), p. xxix.
[34] Silver (2008), p. 117.

Cécile Sakai, in her seminal work on the history of Japanese popular literature, classifies *torimonochō* as a sub-genre of detective fiction, inasmuch as she includes it in the *tantei shōsetsu* section rather than the *jidai shōsetsu* one, but she also points out the genre's 'double definition of historical novel and detective novel'.[35] Ranpo also had a good deal to say on the matter:

> Even among writers of detective fiction, people like Kigi Takatarō were opposed to thinking of *torimonochō* as detective literature, but putting aside my personal friendship and goodwill towards Nomura and Yokomizo, purely logically, I think that the *torimonochō* [genre] founded by Okamoto Kidō is to be greatly prized as a uniquely Japanese [form of] historical novel, and naturally falls within the genre of detective fiction. The relative merits of each work must be separately analysed, but I think there is no room to raise objections on the fact that its essence is that of a detective-novel-like literature even purer than Gothic novels or thrillers.[36]

Ranpo's opinion is particularly interesting as it seems to show a certain degree of duplicity, or at the very least diplomacy. He points out that several of his fellow writers of detective fiction were loath to consider *torimonochō* a sub-genre, though the only name he explicitly mentions is Kigi Takatarō 木々高太郎 (1897-1969), who was also among those who opposed the inclusion of *torimonochō* writers in the Tantei sakka kurabu 探偵作家クラブ [Club of Detective (Fiction) Writers] in 1947, leading them to form their own association, the Torimono sakka kurabu 捕物作家クラブ in 1949. He declares himself willing to consider *torimonochō* a sub-genre of detective fiction, but he still describes it as historical literature first and foremost, only later specifying that it falls within the realm of detective literature, and subsequently calling it ‘detective-novel-like literature’, a rather vague expression. Ranpo here is deftly performing a balancing act between the two ‘factions’, leaning towards the one that sees *torimonochō* as a form of detective fiction, but still avoiding full commitment.

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[35] Sakai (1987), p. 169.
[36] Edogawa (2006a), pp. 127-128.

Tsuzuki Michio, as always, proposes a very rigorous line of reasoning. He says that *Hanshichi torimonochō* has the skeleton of an ideal detective story under the skin of a *sewamono*, which means that *torimonochō* were, at their beginning, purely detective fiction, definitely not just ‘seasonal literature’.[37] He does, however, admit that, after *Hanshichi torimonochō*, the genre greatly mutated, focusing on different aspects until finally settling in its most commonly known form with *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, a form that can be summed up as ‘atmosphere first, deduction second’, with some works going as far as almost lacking any detective-fiction-like elements at all.[38] A comprehensive assessment, according to Tsuzuki, would be that the *torimonochō* genre has some works that are close to detective fiction and some that are not, and he concludes by saying that not including *torimonochō* as a genre of detective fiction would be no more than prejudice.[39]

So, in summation, *torimonochō* run a fine line between detective and historical literature, and whether they ought to be considered one or the other has been both a hotly debated issue, and one that does not seem to present a definitive solution. Using Tsuzuki’s assessment as a starting point, I believe it is reasonable to state that the question is moot: *torimonochō* are undeniably historical fiction, and they are also undeniably detective fiction, regardless of how much historical accuracy or reasoned detection is present in any single work belonging to this genre. Any resistance to its inclusion in either of those categories can be easily identified as being biased, as has been the case with authors of detective fiction who thought themselves above the genre, or even politically motivated, as we shall see shortly in a brief run through the history of *torimonochō*.

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[37] Tsuzuki (1973), pp. 274-275.
[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 277-279.
[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 279-280.

1.2 – *Torimonochō* Before the War

The *torimonochō* made its first appearance in the world of literature thanks to Okamoto Kidō, celebrated for his work as a playwright, but even more famous as the author of *Hanshichi torimonochō* 半七捕物帳. In January 1917, Kidō published *Ofumi no tamashii* お文の魂 [The Spirit of Ofumi][40] in the magazine *Bungei kurabu* 文芸倶楽部, marking the first adventure of the titular character Hanshichi and giving rise to a successful series – as well as the many later works which would try to replicate its success. The adventures of Hanshichi were initially published on an almost monthly basis, albeit with a few minor interruptions, and on a variety of magazines, with *Bungei kurabu* still being the main host of the series. After the story *Mittsu no koe* 三つの声 [The Three Voices],[41] published in January 1926, there was a long hiatus until February 1932, when the serialisation of *Hakuchōkai* 白蝶怪 [The Mystery of the White Butterfly][42] began: this is the only novel-length story in the series, as well as the only one to be written in the third person. The serialisation concluded in June of the same year, after which there was another brief hiatus until the last run of the series, which saw a regular monthly publication from August 1934 to February 1937, almost exclusively in the magazine *Kōdan kurabu* 講談倶楽部.[43] Modern editions of *Hanshichi torimonochō* include 69 stories in total – 68 short stories and the single novel *Hakuchōkai* – but the original number was 72: three of them are actually pairings of stories which had initially been published separately, but were short enough to be subsequently coupled under a single title, as is the case for *Hiroshige to kawauso* 広重と河獺 [Hiroshige and the Otter],[44] which combines the stories *Kawauso* [The Otter] (September 1918) and *Hiroshige no e* 広重の絵 [Hiroshige's Picture] (January 1920), reversing their presentation order.

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[40] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 1, pp. 7-38.
[41] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 4, pp. 113-139.
[42] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 6, pp. 247-405.
[43] Bibliographical information is derived from Asago (2017-2018), vol. 1, pp. 2-4, and Imauchi (2010), pp. 938-941.

The stories' content and patterns will be more carefully analysed in Section 3.2, but roughly speaking they almost always involve an unnamed narrator listening to Hanshichi, now old and retired, who regales him with tales of his past exploits. Occasionally the stories are not Hanshichi's own, but are retellings of someone else's adventure, as in *Hakuchōkai*, where the main protagonist is Hanshichi's adoptive father Kichigorō 吉五郎, and Hanshichi is only telling the story to the narrator second-hand. A fundamental characteristic of the series is the skill with which Kidō depicts the atmosphere of Edo: the reader is easily transported into this past world, and the great attention to detail makes the experience not only entertaining but also educational.[45] Often enough, the resolution of the case itself centres around some more-or-less obscure piece of information relating to practices and customs of the Edo period, so that Hanshichi has occasion to give detailed explanations to both the narrator and the reader.

The series met with great success, and after about ten years of 'monopoly', the first epigones started showing up. The pre-war production of *torimonochō* became extremely prolific, to the point that attempting any kind of exhaustive list would be a very ungrateful task, especially considering the fact that the vast majority of these works is lost to time: stories never reprinted, often never even collected in *tankōbon* format at all, and therefore only readable in the magazines in which they were originally published, magazines which, often enough, are lost to time themselves. Therefore, this historical overview will only focus on those

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[44] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 1, pp. 292-326.

[45] Ichii (1986a), p. 21.

torimonochō series which have either had outstanding success, have changed and evolved the genre, or both.

One of the first to follow in Kidō's trail was Hayashi Fubō 林不忘 (1900-1935), one of the many pseudonyms used by novelist Hasegawa Kaitarō 長谷川海太郎 during his career. He published two series of *torimonochō*: *Kuginuki Tōkichi torimono oboegaki* 釘抜藤吉捕物覚書, which consists of 14 short stories published between April 1925 and June 1931, and *Hayamimi Sanji torimono kikigaki* 早耳三次捕物聞書, with just four stories, published from January 1927.[46] These series did not have much success with the public, and have been mostly forgotten except by aficionados: Nozaki describes them as being products of the author's attempt to find his own 'vein', but he also describes *Kuginuki Tōkichi torimono oboegaki* as being somewhat ahead of its time, proposing 'freaky' characters that do not conform to the 'good guy *okappiki*' stereotype that would soon become the standard for pre-war *torimonochō*.[47] Tōkichi, the main character Fubō's first series, is also something of a 'superman', being extremely intelligent, strong, and popular – although not altogether without human qualities.[48] Fubō's *torimonochō* stories are definitely not what he is remembered for, but they are enough of an outlier to merit a mention in any overview of the history of *torimonochō*.

The first big successor to the fame of *Hanshichi torimonochō* was *Umon torimonochō* 右門捕物帖 – though using the term 'successor' might be misleading, as the series began and ended in the span of a few years, while *Hanshichi torimonochō* had not yet concluded; in fact, it was almost entirely published during Kidō's long hiatus. *Umon torimonochō* was written by

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[46] The date of first publication for the fourth and last story in the series is as of yet unknown, so no clear boundary can be given. As the third story was published in January 1928, it is reasonable to assume that the fourth one was published some time in the same year.

[47] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 34-36.

[48] Ichii (1986b), p. 37.

Sasaki Mitsuzō 佐々木味津三 (1896-1934), and consists of 38 short stories.[49] It initially ran on the magazine *Fuji* 富士, between March 1928 and November 1930; after a short pause, the series continued on the *Asahi shinbun* 朝日新聞, from February 1931 to June 1932.[50] *Umon torimonochō* changed the formula by making the character a *dōshin* rather than an *okappiki*, by introducing a constant sidekick – as opposed to the many, sometimes nondescript, underlings Hanshichi has throughout his adventures – and by shifting the focus from a historically accurate detective story to a more 'cinematic' experience, mostly focused on the charm and peculiarity of its main character.[51] *Umon torimonochō* was a successful series, but it owes its popularity more to its numerous cinematic adaptations than to its own merits, as the stories have been often criticised for their plot holes, shallowness or even low quality: Nawata Kazuo 縄田一男 points out that many of the film adaptations fix the disastrous dénouements of the original stories,[52] while Tsuzuki goes as far as saying that the films are arguably the only reason why such a series survived to this day – though he does concede that the gaudiness of the plots and the well-established main character would easily appeal to readers who were not looking for detective fiction.[53]

The biggest push towards fame, however, came with Nomura Kodō 野村胡堂 (1882-1963) and his exceptionally popular series *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* 銭形平次捕物控.[54] The *Heiji* series is both the most prolific and the most present in the Japanese collective consciousness, to the point that even people who have never heard the word *torimonochō* are at least familiar with his name, if sometimes only through more modern adaptations and references such as the character of Inspector Zenigata in the *Lupin the Third* franchise, who is explicitly identified as a descendant of Heiji. The series began in April 1931 and ran monthly with almost no interruptions all the way up to April 1944, always in the magazine *Ōru yomimono* オール読物 (with a few extremely rare exceptions). This continuity is nothing short of astounding: not only does it mean that Kodō worked tirelessly to publish a story each month, to which one must add several extra stories which were published directly in *tankōbon* format, but it also means that *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* weathered the worst of the state censorship and of the extreme paper shortages which plagued the later years of the Pacific War, topics to which we will get back shortly. After the end of the war, Kodō did not wait much to resume the series: in October 1946 the monthly publications in *Ōru yomimono* resumed, and Kodō soon began to publish monthly stories in other magazines or newspapers as well, doubling his already considerable workload. The series would finally conclude in August 1957, reaching a total of 383 stories, ten of which are novel-length.[55]

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[49] Sasaki Mi. (1982).
[50] Manabe (1967), p. 181.
[51] Ichii (1986b), pp. 43-44.
[52] Nawata (2004), p. 161.
[53] Tsuzuki (1973), p. 278.
[54] Nomura (1956-1958).

The *Heiji* series is what most people think of when they imagine a *torimonochō*: its popularity has by far eclipsed that of *Hanshichi torimonochō* in all respects, and a frequent pitfall of both fans and critics is assuming that all *torimonochō* are like *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, or that this series somehow represents the genre in its entirety.[56] The *Heiji* series is responsible for the 'good old days' image of *torimonochō*, which are usually seen as idealising the Edo period and its customs, an aspect which we will come back to in Section 3.1. The series follows the investigations of the eponymous *okappiki* Zenigata Heiji: he has a loyal underling, like Umon, but he also has a faithful wife and an exceedingly wholesome view of life. Heiji is a constant defender of the oppressed against the oppressors, which in this context usually translates to defending the *chōnin* from the abuses of the samurai class.

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[55] Bibliographical information is derived from Manabe (1967), p. 250, and Nomura (2014), vol. 3, pp. 255-266.

[56] Ozawa (2001), p. 79.

A few years after the beginning of the *Heiji* series, Yokomizo Seishi 横溝正史 (1902-1981) was put in the unenviable position of trying to rival it with his own series. His first attempt was a short-lived series called *Shiranui torimonozōshi* 不知火捕物双紙, which comprised eight stories published between April and December 1937 in the magazine *Kōdan zasshi* 講談雑誌, starring Shiranui Jinza 不知火甚左.[57] To distance himself from Hanshichi, whom in his own mind he could not compete with, he decided to make the protagonist a mysterious *rōnin* rather than an *okappiki*, and to make him a bit of an 'outsider'.[58] The series did not have much success, however, and Yokomizo himself did not feel up to the task, and even considered abandoning it: but two letters, one from friend and former editor of *Kōdan zasshi* Inui Shin'ichirō 乾信一郎 (1906-2000), and the other from the latter's former assistant and new editor of the magazine Yoshizawa Shirō 吉沢四郎, convinced him to persevere, changing the protagonist to an *okappiki* and leaning more on the side of detective rather than historical fiction.[59] This marked the beginning of his most successful *torimonochō* series: *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* 人形佐七捕物帳.[60] The first 33 stories were published on a monthly schedule in *Kōdan zasshi*, but November 1940 marked his last story in the magazine, as an indirect consequence of the growing nationalism and censorship. He nonetheless published a total of 41 new stories in *tankōbon* format between March 1941 and September 1942, but the series then took a forced stop until the end of the war. The *Sashichi* series came back in February 1946, and would be then more or less regularly published in various magazines until October 1957. After a long hiatus, interrupted only by two stories published in May 1959 and January 1960, respectively, the last batch of new *Sashichi* stories would be published in *tankōbon* format between April and October 1968.[61] The series totalled 180 stories, some of them novel-length, and a good number of them adapted from other *torimonochō* series Yokomizo had written, including all eight stories from *Shiranui torimonozōshi*.[62]

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[57] With one exception, included in Yokomizo (2004b), these stories had never been collected until the publication of Yokomizo (2019c).
[58] Yokomizo (1972), p. 81.
[59] Yokomizo (2002), pp. 218-219.
[60] Yokomizo (1973-1975).

The *Sashichi* series distanced itself quite a bit from its predecessors: the eponymous protagonist is a playboy with a penchant for flirting with any good-looking woman he meets, he constantly bickers with his two underlings – who frequently poke fun at him, and vice versa – and endlessly quarrels with his wife because of her jealousy. The cases often feature graphic descriptions of corpses and sexual acts, and the general atmosphere is much less wholesome than that of previous *torimonochō*, especially the *Heiji* series. Yokomizo, who is mostly known as the master of post-war 'orthodox' detective fiction, also inserted many of its elements in his stories. The *Sashichi* series has enjoyed considerable success, albeit not comparable to that of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*: it developed a loyal fanbase, and its atypicality will be the subject of further discussion in Section 4.3.

Another author who deserves a mention is Hisao Jūran 久生十蘭 (1902-1957), whose contributions to the genre are brief but important. From January 1939 to July 1940, he published 24 stories as part of the series *Agojūrō torimonochō* 顎十郎捕物帳,[63] which followed in the tradition, established by *Umon torimonochō*, of assigning a clear distinguishing characteristic to its protagonist – in this case, the very prominent jaw which gives the detective his nickname. An undercurrent of *kōdan*-like humour pervades the series, especially when it comes to the physical descriptions of characters.[64] The series did not have as much success as *Heiji*, *Sashichi* or *Umon*, and has almost never been adapted for film or television, but it has a very high reputation for its quality as detective fiction: Shimizu Kunio 清水邦夫 rates it higher than the above-mentioned series in that respect,[65] and Tsuzuki similarly had great consideration for the series, so much so that years later he would ask for, and obtain, permission to write a sequel of sorts.[66] From January to August 1940, Jūran also published *Hiraga Gennai torimonochō* 平賀源内捕物帳, which consists of only eight stories.[67] It is considerably less known and appreciated than even *Agojūrō torimonochō*, but it has the distinction of starring a real person: unlike all the fictional heroes of previous *torimonochō*, the protagonist is the famous *gesakusha* Hiraga Gennai (1728-1779), who acts as a rather caricaturised detective in these stories.[68]

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[61] Bibliographical information is derived from Sōgen Suiri Kurabu Akita Bunkakai (2000), Yokomizo (2003), and Yokomizo (2004a).

[62] See Section 4.3 and the Appendix for more details.

[63] Hisao (1986), pp. 47-627. Bibliographical information is derived from *Ibid.*, p. 801.

[64] Ichii (1995), p. 14.

The last major *torimonochō* to begin serialisation before the war is *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō* 若さま侍捕物手帖,[69] by Jō Masayuki 城昌幸 (1904-1976). Jō was very prolific, though not to the extent of Kodō: the series consists of 277 stories, 29 of which are novel-length, published between April 1939 and September 1969.[70] The early days of *Wakasama* were very brief: in November 1941, after a mere 18 stories, the series took a long break, and only resurfaced after the war, starting from June 1946. The fact that almost all the stories were published after the war, and the great changes which the series went through before reaching a stable form, somewhat separate it from the other *torimonochō* discussed in this section. Despite its long run, the series has also been the object of very little scholarly attention.

Among the many *torimonochō* series, critics and fans have shown a particular reverence towards a specific set of them, which led to the creation of the term ‘Five Great *Torimonochō*’, which more specifically refers to *Hanshichi torimonochō*, *Umon torimonochō*, *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* and *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō*. One can often find the term 'Three Great *Torimonochō*' as well, but there is less agreement on its precise definition: some, like Nawata, use it to refer to the *Hanshichi*, *Umon*, and *Heiji* series while others, like Yamada Fūtarō 山田風太郎 (1922-2001), use it for the *Hanshichi*, *Heiji*, and *Sashichi* series. In other words, there is no doubt that *Hanshichi* and *Heiji* belong in the top two spots, but whether the third should be taken by *Umon* or *Sashichi* is a matter of debate and preference, with no widespread agreement.

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[65] SHIMIZU Kunio 清水邦夫. “Hisao Jūran no ‘katari’ to ‘katari’” 久生十蘭の“語り”と“騙り”. In: Hisao (1986), p. 796.

[66] Tsuzuki (1988).

[67] Hisao (1996). Bibliographical information is derived from Hisao (1986), p. 801.

[68] Nawata (2010b), pp. 91-92.

[69] Jō (2009). This edition is only a selection, as no complete edition exists yet. One is being published by Torimono shuppan 捕物出版, and is scheduled for completion in 2022.

[70] No authoritative and comprehensive printed bibliography exists for *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō*, unfortunately. Information has been derived from the thorough fan-maintained list available from: http://www7b.biglobe.ne.jp/~tdk_tdk/waka1.html [Viewed 30 October 2019].

1.3 – Detective Fiction and War-Time Censorship

Before moving on to post-war *torimonochō*, we should briefly consider the situation during the war, and more specifically what the relationship between *torimonochō* and censorship was. To better understand it, we should first have a brief look at the effect it had on detective literature in general, as the two are very closely connected.

Detective fiction first made its appearance in Japan at the end of the nineteenth century, in the form of translations from many contemporary Western works, mainly French, English, and American. The 'true' beginning of Japanese detective fiction – that is, the first work to be an original creation, rather than an adaptation or translation – is often identified in Edogawa Ranpo's *Nisen dōka* 二銭銅貨 [The Two-Sen Copper Coin] (1923); Ranpo himself, however, identified Kuroiwa Ruikō's 黒岩涙香 (1862-1920) *Muzan* 無惨 [Cruelty] (1889) as the actual starting point,[71] and from a purely chronological perspective, the honour should go to Sudō Nansui 須藤南翠 (1857-1920) with his *Satsujinhan* 殺人犯 [The Murderer] (1888).[72] After initially flourishing, detective fiction began to founder in the late 1930s, in a way which can be inversely correlated to the rise of nationalism and militarism. The dawn of this ‘dark age’ can be roughly identified in the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (7 July 1937), and the onset of the Pacific War (7 December 1941) greatly exacerbated the situation, eventually leading to the complete disappearance of detective fiction from books and magazines. During the last years of the war, the ever-worsening scarcity of all types of raw materials – with paper in particular becoming extremely rare – impacted all publications, which reached a historical low regardless of their type or genre.

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[71] Edogawa (2003), p. 222.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 636.

According to many scholars and critics, the setback suffered by detective fiction ought to be attributed to a direct form of repression and censorship by the military authorities aimed at the genre itself. Cécile Sakai argues that detective fiction was severely censored during the Second World War and the preceding years: according to her view, translations of detective novels were becoming more and more rare since 1938, and the genre was eventually completely banned, partly because of its status as a form of literature imported from the West (which meant ‘from the enemy’), and partly because any representations of violence by Japanese people against other Japanese people was considered inappropriate under the circumstances.[73] Nakajima Kawatarō 中島河太郎, arguably the most recognised historian of Japanese detective fiction, uses softer tones and refrains from explicitly speaking of repression, but still attributes the disappearance of the genre to the rising militarism and to a more or less direct imposition ‘from above’; he mostly focuses on the case of Ranpo, who was a frequent and infamous victim of censorship, thus implying that he can be considered something of an example of the treatment received by authors of detective fiction in general.[74] Similar considerations can be found in the works of many other scholars of the field, such as Hori Keiko 堀啓子,[75] Itō Hideo 伊藤秀雄,[76] and Gonda Manji 権田萬治.[77]

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[73] Sakai (1987), p. 161.

[74] Nakajima (1993-1996), vol. 3, pp. 209-213.

There are, however, numerous elements which lead one to believe that the gradual disappearance of detective fiction was not due to actual active repression by the authorities, but rather by the excessive zeal of both editors and censors, and by the authors themselves entering into a sort of 'voluntary' retirement. Leaving aside Ranpo's case, it is very hard to find examples of authors who were persecuted or forced to abandon the genre by a pervasive censorship system. It is very easy, on the contrary, to find examples of authors who chose to abandon detective fiction on their own initiative, and some went as far as publicly declaring and motivating such a decision. The most glaring example is undoubtedly the declaration which Kōga Saburō 甲賀三郎 (1893-1945) published on the January 1938 issue of the magazine *Shupio* シュピオ: the author declared that detective fiction is peace-time literature, unfit for a country at war, as Japan was at the time.[78] The first reason he presents as the basis of his statement is that reading of massive fictional police operations aimed at the arrest of a single person is senseless when confronted with the reality of the countless brave soldiers dying at the front each day. The second reason is that enemy countries might translate these stories and use them as propaganda, to depict Japan as a country rife with chaos and crime, when in actuality, as Kōga proudly declares, Japan has the great merit of faultlessly maintaining public order even in such troubled times. Both of these motivations are clearly in line with the nationalist school of thought, even if the second one is laughable in its improbability. What is worth noting, however, is that there is no record of Kōga ever having received any kind of pressure: his decision to move away from detective fiction, and towards this nationalist way of thinking, appears to be entirely voluntary.

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[75] Hori (2014), pp. 209-219.
[76] Itō (1993), p. 324.
[77] Gonda (1996), p. 15.
[78] The declaration is extensively quoted in Nakajima (1993-1996), vol. 3, pp. 212-213.

Another example, albeit less clear in its outline, can be found in the final issue of the above-mentioned magazine *Shupio*, which ceased publication in April 1938, just a few months after Kōga's declaration. In their note to the readers, the three editors and founders Unno Jūza 海野十三 (1897-1949), Oguri Mushitarō 小栗虫太郎 (1901-1946) and Kigi Takatarō explained that the magazine was closing for financial reasons. Sari Kawana argues, unfortunately without quoting specific evidence to support the statement, that the explanation did not particularly convince readers at the time, and that both readers and sympathetic critics saw the three authors-editors as victims of government repression.[79] In rather contradicting fashion, in the very same April number, Oguri published a brief farewell to the readers, in which he mentions that the magazine was closing at the peak of its commercial success, and that the sales department had actually urged them to continue publishing it.[80] Concluding that the magazine ceased publication because of government pressure or censorship would be rash, however: while there are definitely several unclear elements, it seems improbable that the authorities in 1938 would crack down on a magazine like *Shupio*, which had a relatively limited circulation. There are no declarations from the three editors which could lead one to think of such pressures, not even after the war, when it would have been quite safe or even advantageous to do so; and censorship in 1938 was not exceedingly pervasive yet. One need only look at *Midori no nisshōki* 緑の日章旗 [The Flag of the Green Rising Sun] (1939), a serialised novel published by Kigi, which contains considerable indirect criticism towards the Japanese government, and which nonetheless met with no obstacles in its publication. It is therefore reasonable to think that, rather than censorship or the weak justifications presented by Oguri in the closing issue, the magazine might have reached its end because of the differing views of its editors: Unno, who had been and continued to be openly nationalist; Kigi, who was initially both patriotic and critical of his own country, before settling in nationalist positions too; and Oguri, who became more and more critical of colonialism and of the military as the war dragged on, frequently running afoul of the censors because of the themes he tackled in his works.

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[79] Kawana (2008), pp. 148-149.

[80] Oguri (2000).

Ranpo's 'persecution' should also be re-evaluated and properly assessed, not as the victimisation of an author of detective fiction aimed at injuring the genre as a whole, but as a condemnation of Ranpo's style, made of deviant psychologies, morbid characterisations, and plenty of erotic and grotesque descriptions. In the late Thirties, Ranpo was frequently ordered to rewrite or even completely delete passages in his works, culminating in the full censorship of the story *Imomushi* 芋虫 [The Caterpillar] (1929) in March 1939. This process should certainly not be underestimated, but one should also remember that *Imomushi*, which had been initially published in the magazine *Shinseinen* 新青年 in January 1929, was the only one among Ranpo's works to be censored in its entirety,[81] while partial deletions were requested for *Ryōki no hate* 猟奇の果て [The Edge of Curiosity-Hunting] (1930) and *Kumo otoko* 蜘蛛男 [The Spider-Man] (1929-1930). After this period of active repression, Ranpo himself declared he 'understood the censors', and decided to self-censor many of his works, taking those he deemed particularly unfit for the times out of print; this left him, according to his memoirs, without either the possibility or the will to keep on writing detective fiction.[82] In March 1940, Ōshita Udaru 大下宇陀児 (1896-1966) commented on this state of things with a more positive outlook: he wrote that what had been ‘refused’ was not detective fiction itself, which in fact enjoyed continued monthly publications, but the decadent tendencies which had characterised the genre up until then.[83] According to Ōshita, in other words, detective fiction was not being oppressed at all, but rather would have flourished, if only it managed to purge itself of its decadent elements and find something to replace them with. In partial support of Ōshita’s thesis, it must be pointed out that *Shinseinen* kept publishing special issues entirely dedicated to detective fiction, including translations of Western works,[84] up until April 1940. Things were definitely not as rosy as Ōshita seemed to want to present them, but it would be overly simplistic to see in Ranpo’s abandonment of the field the end of pre-war detective fiction, and his fate as representing that of every other author.

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[81] Jacobowitz (2008), pp. 225-226. The author notes, however, that the work was banned 'not for its graphic scenes of sexual depravity and domestic abuse by an increasingly sadistic wife upon her disabled husband, but for depicting in the first place a war veteran who returns home quadriplegic and mute'.

[82] Edogawa (2006b), p. 43.

Ranpo’s decision to abandon the genre was irrelevant, in a way; regardless of his will, he gradually stopped receiving requests and offers by editors, who undoubtedly wished to steer clear of a ‘dangerous’ author such as him. The danger he posed was not so much moral as it was financial, since censorship at the time followed the guidelines established by the 1893 Shuppan hō 出版法 [Publication Law], for books and most periodicals, and the 1909 Shinbunshi hō 新聞紙法 [Newspaper Law], for newspapers and periodicals dealing in current events; these guidelines established the censorship process as taking place after editing and printing.[85] Having a part of a publication censored would have meant at the very least a re-pagination, or possibly even having to begin the whole editing process anew. This would have meant huge time and financial losses for the editors, who were therefore compelled to operate any deletions or rewrites without altering the previously established pagination and formatting.

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[83] Nakajima (1993-1996), vol. 3, pp. 211-212.

[84] One might be surprised by the continued presence of these translations in a time of such political and ideological hostility towards the Western world; it must be remembered, however, that Ranpo and all contemporary critics saw detective fiction as a fundamentally Western literary genre. The exponents of *Shinseinen*, in particular, often emphasised the West’s superiority in this field, and the absence of ‘true masters’ of detective fiction in Japan. See Silver (2008), pp. 132-133, 167-172.

[85] Kōno (2009), pp. 14-19, 33.

In the case of partial deletions, this meant the complete removal of the offending pages, something which could easily cause confusion in the readers: this happened, for example, with Yokomizo Seishi's *Onibi* 鬼火 [Will-o'-the-Wisp], published in the February 1935 issue of *Shinseinen*, an issue in which page 36 was immediately followed by page 47, without any sort of explanation.[86] Rewrites were even more complicated, as one had to change the content while maintaining exactly the same amount of characters: Ranpo, for example, found himself in the position of substituting coherent conversations with inexplicable passages in which the characters, without any rhyme or reason, started talking about the weather.[87] It is therefore easily understandable why editors, even those who did not necessarily have a pro-government stance, preferred to avoid publishing authors such as Ranpo, who came with a high probability of incurring such wastes of time and money.

Another factor which contributes to discrediting the theory of the persecution of detective fiction as a genre is the attitude of the censors themselves. For the most part, they were young officials of the Home Ministry, fresh out of university, completely inexperienced in literary matters, and therefore even more ruthless in calling for deletions and rewrites.[88] A good illustration of their way of thinking can be found in a report by Ranpo on a 1942 meeting between several (now former) authors of detective fiction, including Ranpo himself, and some of these young censors. The latter – who, according to Ranpo, were very respectful of 'pure literature' – found themselves in a difficult position when the conversation turned to the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable works, and one of the authors asked them whether they would have banned a hypothetical contemporary work comparable to *Crime and Punishment*: the answer was that they would have never hindered the publication of works of the level of Dostoevsky's, and that the problem was rather in crime-themed entertainment literature.[89] Nakagawa Yūsuke 中川右介, besides noting that the authorities never passed any specific prohibitions against detective fiction, interprets the censors' vague response as a further demonstration of the fundamental lack of criteria in their decisions.[90] Censorship based on 'moral corruption' (*fūzoku kairan* 風俗壊乱) was particularly subjective, since it purely hinged on the sensations engendered in the reader – that is, the censor – who consequently had complete freedom to suppress anything he judged to be obscene or morally offensive.[91] This lack of defined standards left the censors with huge discretionary power, and the collaboration of both authors and editors made it so that, paradoxically, as the number of targets grew and the censorship became more severe, the actual number of censored publications decreased.[92]

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[86] Nakagawa (2017), pp. 128-129.
[87] Edogawa (2006b), p. 24.
[88] Gōhara (2010), p. 271.

A careful examination of these circumstances leads to the conclusion that Japanese detective fiction, in contrast to what was traditionally supposed to be the case, did not go through a real persecution under the militarist authorities. While this does not mean that censorship had no effect on the genre, it should be noted that prohibitions on detective fiction were statistically insignificant compared to those on erotic or proletarian literature.[93] After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, some authors spontaneously decided to distance themselves from the genre, judging it unfit for the times. Others had their work criticised or censored, not because it was detective fiction, but because of erotic, gothic and/or grotesque elements in their writing style: it was the so-called 'unhealthy' (*fukenzen* 不健全) or

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[89] Edogawa (2006b), p. 86. The censors' opinion, however ignorant they might have been of literary matters, was undoubtedly influenced by the many heated debates on the distinction between pure – or artistic – literature and mass – or entertainment – literature, which had arisen in the Twenties. With nationalist ideologies becoming more and more widespread, in the late Thirties the debate moved towards the promotion of the so-called 'national literature' (*kokumin bungaku* 国民文学), which incorporated the previous themes, rather than abandoning them. Takakura Teru 高倉輝 (1891-1986) and Tanikawa Tetsuzō 谷川徹三 (1895-1989), for example, saw popular literature as a dangerous 'pseudo-national literature' (see Ikimatsu [1961]), a stance that seems to adequately reflect that of the censors met by Ranpo.

[90] Nakagawa (2017), p. 148.

[91] Kōno (2009), p. 41.

[92] Uchida (2017), pp. 210-211.

[93] Abel (2012), p. 109.

‘unorthodox’ (*henkaku* 変格) style of detective fiction, though the terminology is far from being universally agreed upon.[94] The uninterrupted, albeit reduced, publication of detective fiction up until April 1940 shows that the problem was not with the genre itself, but rather with this ‘unhealthy’ trend, which had by then become the main current of Japanese detective literature. As was noted before, the Second World War made the censorship gradually more severe, and the ever-decreasing availability of materials brought publications of all kinds to a marked decline and, eventually, to a standstill. Detective fiction had disappeared, not because of active persecution by the government, but as a natural consequence of editors hesitating and authors abandoning it to move to other genres, when they did not give up writing altogether. It is, however, more than reasonable to state that the authorities discouraged detective fiction, and this discouragement prompted many authors to turn to other genres, ones different enough to avoid censure, but still somewhat related. One of these was *torimonochō*.

1.4 – *Torimonochō* and War-Time Censorship

Despite the cliché that sees the Japanese people as conformists, Japan has a long and rich history of dissension and rebellions, which are usually expressions of unease towards an establishment guilty of betraying ancient values and ideals; this reproach is often confined to what is generally the only weapon available to intellectuals, writing, and does not necessarily give rise to actual insurrections.[95] *Torimonochō* literature of the late Thirties and early Forties can perhaps be interpreted as one of these numerous modes of dissent, even as a form of resistance, albeit absolutely personal, against limitations on the freedom of expression.

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[94] The terms *kenzen* 健全 (healthy) and *fukenzen* (unhealthy) were first used in reference to detective fiction by Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke 平林初之輔 (1892-1931) in 1926, while the terms *honkaku* 本格 (orthodox) and *henkaku* (unorthodox) owe their existence to Kōga Saburō, who proposed them with the aim of reaching a set of terms which he deemed more neutral, as ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ tend to imply a quality judgement. Despite Kōga’s distinction, the concepts of *honkaku* and *kenzen*, as well as those of *henkaku* and *fukenzen*, overlap for the most part, and are still in widespread use among critics. Kōga was at the centre of many debates on this theme and on detective fiction in general, alongside authors and critics like Kigi Takatarō, Ōshita Udaru, Edogawa Ranpo and Unno Jūza (for an overview of these debates, see Gōhara [2013] and Saito Satomi [2007]). Posadas notes that, besides actively participating in the debates, Ranpo also used the *doppelgänger* theme in many of his works – especially *Injū* 陰獣 [The Beast in the Shadows] – as a form of metacritical intervention on the limits of detective fiction, and particularly on the *honkaku*/*henkaku* schema (Posadas [2018], pp. 27-32).

The first critic to identify this genre as a form of resistance was Shiraishi Kiyoshi, who described *torimonochō* as a 'stratagem' employed by authors of detective fiction to be able to keep writing in their genre, deftly eluding the censors' watchful eyes and exploiting their ignorance.[96] According to Shiraishi, Heiji and Wakasama (though I would argue that this can be said for Sashichi as well) are defenders of the people who fight the feudal system and oppressors, and therefore represent a form of subversion which escaped the authorities, and which has a double value in the case of Wakasama, a samurai by birth. Shiraishi, possibly because of the times in which he was writing,[97] seems too eager to assign an anti-militarist value to *torimonochō*, though he does briefly consider the possibility that it was not intended by the authors; the characteristics he ascribes to these *torimonochō* protagonists are, however, undeniable.

Just as undeniable are the strong detective-fiction elements in *torimonochō* literature, which follows the classical structure of the genre, albeit within a historical context: crime, investigation, and resolution. On the one hand, this can be interpreted as a further demonstration that the censors' ire was not directed at detective fiction itself, but at its less 'wholesome' elements: *torimonochō*, lacking any such unpleasant features, never had any problems with the authorities. On the other hand, it is often said that *torimonochō*, together with spy and adventure novels, were used by authors of detective fiction as a 'loophole' of sorts to keep on writing without leaving the genre, masking their detective stories and novels under a superficial coat of paint, in a way. Nozaki, for example, sees in Yokomizo Seishi's *torimonochō* nothing less than a form of 'literary resistance': he describes Yokomizo's 'conversion' to *torimonochō* as a *fumie* 踏み絵, a public act of utter submission, but one which hid the desire to secretly keep professing one's faith – in this case, detective fiction.[98]

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[95] Migliore *et al.* (2016), pp. 10-13.

[96] Shiraishi (1949).

[97] Though this hypothesis is difficult to verify, it is not hard to imagine that in the immediate aftermath of the war, with the American presence in Japan, Shiraishi would be particularly prone to finding traces of resistance to the nationalist regime.

I would personally argue that both of these interpretations are rather exaggerated. Shiraishi's desire to attribute a strong anti-militarist character to *torimonochō* is easily understandable when one looks at the publication year of his book – 1949 – and imagines the desire many Japanese undoubtedly felt to put that blackest of periods in recent history behind them. The reason for Nozaki's strong position is less clear, especially since he attributes to Yokomizo a behaviour which, by Nozaki's own admission, is practically impossible to verify in any way, except through very bold assumptions. There is no doubt that Yokomizo took advantage of *torimonochō* to go on writing detective fiction without running any risk of censorship; it is another thing entirely, however, to demonstrate that this 'conversion' happened to avoid or resist pressures from the authorities, that it was in some way forced, and that Yokomizo perceived it as a humiliating, unwelcome form of submission.

We have seen how Yokomizo began his foray in *torimonochō* fiction in 1937 with *Shiranui torimonozōshi*, before moving to the more successful *Sashichi* series in 1938. The 'conversion' Nozaki speaks of, therefore, is to be identified in Yokomizo's decision to begin writing *Shiranui torimonozōshi*, and the shift to the *Sashichi* series can only be considered a continuation. The decision was taken in 1936, and Yokomizo himself explains it in great detail in his memoirs.[99] Yokomizo was publishing a serial detective novel on the magazine *Kōdan zasshi*, when the editor Inui Shin'ichirō wrote to him with the proposal of trying his hand at a *torimonochō*. Yokomizo was surprised, and more than a little hesitant, as he felt rather ignorant on the Edo period, but Inui's enthusiasm made such a good impression on him that he decided to accept the challenge. Yokomizo imagined that the proposal was born of the fact that detective fiction was not a good fit for the tone of the magazine, but he also harboured the suspicion that his long-time friend Inui wanted to help him during his long recovery: in 1933, Yokomizo had contracted tuberculosis, and the illness would plague him for years to come; writing a *torimonochō* would have been less demanding for him, and the precedents of *Hanshichi torimonochō* and *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* gave good reason to believe that another work in the genre would have been well received. Inui himself, in his memoirs, presents a slightly different but not contradictory version of events: when he took the reins of *Kōdan zasshi*, the magazine was struggling, and turning to *torimonochō* was one of the many stratagems he devised to improve finances.[100]

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[98] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 53-54.

[99] Yokomizo (1972), pp. 67-83.

Both Yokomizo's and Inui's declarations clearly show that the former's 'conversion' to *torimonochō* was not at all aimed at avoiding censorship – which, incidentally, Yokomizo had encountered only in the above-mentioned case of *Onibi* in 1935, which was targeted for its inclusion of erotic scenes – but merely happened for financial convenience and a convergence of interests on the part of both men. Not to mention that in 1936, the year of conception of *Shiranui torimonozōshi*, the Second Sino-Japanese War had not begun yet; censorship had yet to reach its peak, and it was mainly aimed at content that expressed a socialist mindset, or obscene elements. Given that the works of Ranpo himself kept being published until 1939, it seems rather improbable that Yokomizo, three years earlier, felt the compelling need to seek refuge from censorship, and that he never disclosed this motivation, not even after the war. It seems more likely that Yokomizo, after taking up *torimonochō* for mere financial convenience, simply kept writing them even as the censorship system grew more oppressive, as he had no reason to go back to detective fiction, a genre which was by then disappearing from the literary world, and therefore offered little to no prospects. Even more so since Yokomizo, who had approached *torimonochō* with reluctance, developed a passion for the genre: in just a few years, he had grown deeply fond of Sashichi and his entourage,[101] and after the end of the war he felt so nostalgic towards *torimonochō* that he immersed himself in study to write an educational work on the city of Edo, not dissimilar to Yada Sōun's 矢田挿雲 (1882-1961) *Edo kara Tōkyō e* 江戸から東京へ [From Edo to Tōkyō] (1920-1923), though he later abandoned the idea as he realised he could not compete with major historians and scholars of his time.[102] In other words, *torimonochō* gave him the opportunity to go on writing about crimes and detectives, but in a way that was left untouched by censorship: in this sense, one might speak of dissent and literary resistance, but one should be wary of exaggerating and overly romanticising the author's position, making him something of a modern Yoshitsune in his futile struggle against overpowering forces.

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[100] Inui (1991), pp. 146-148.

It is often observed that *torimonochō* was completely untouched by censorship, both that of Japan's military authorities and that of the American occupation force (which oversaw the politically-motivated censorship of many historical novels), and this is usually attributed to its 'wholesome' characteristics, as opposed to the mostly 'unwholesome' nature of detective fiction; Sakai observes that the crimes featured in *torimonochō* did not bother the authorities because they were set in a distant past, that *torimonochō* were resolutely optimistic and made no concession to those decadent and morbid elements which characterised many works of detective fiction, but rather idealised Edo-period mores and Confucian values, presenting themselves as a completely reassuring form of literature.[103] This is arguably a fundamentally correct assumption, considering that *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* was published without interruption until April 1944, and that Yokomizo published *torimonochō* (though not the

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[101] Yokomizo (1979), pp. 107-108.
[102] Yokomizo (2002), pp. 241-242.
[103] Sakai (1987), p. 162.

Sashichi series) all the way until January 1945. There is, however, an important episode that is worthy of closer examination: in 1940, after almost three years from its first publication, the *Sashichi* series was interrupted due to pressures from above. Yokomizo himself expressed the doubt that the order to interrupt the publication came not from the authorities, but from a private initiative of Ōhashi Shin'ichi 大橋進一, the head of Hakubunkan 博文館 (the company which published *Kōdan zasshi*), who was always very eager to please the censors and the government.[104] The problem was apparently not with the *torimonochō* genre itself, but with the character of Sashichi, who was 'immodest and "unwholesome" under the current circumstances', and should have therefore been replaced with a more appropriate protagonist. Questioned on the matter many years later, Yokomizo imagined that the trouble was with Sashichi's marked playboy-like tendencies, or perhaps the fact that his two underlings often make fun of him and often (try to) pull pranks on him, an attitude which might have been interpreted as a form of disrespect towards one's superiors, and therefore a less-than-ideal quality to present in the context of Japan's militarism.[105] Nozaki proposes two further possibilities: that the problem was Yokomizo's style itself, being very baroque and rich in graphic details, or that Yokomizo's 'plan' to mask his detective fiction under the guise of *torimonochō* had been somehow uncovered, and the ban was a repressive reaction.[106] The latter possibility is patently unrealistic, as Nozaki himself admits. The former is more plausible, but it is still doubtful that Ōhashi would have tried to tackle such a matter by targeting the character of Sashichi, whose substitution would have in no way guaranteed a change in Yokomizo's style.

As for the source of the order of interruption, though both Yokomizo and Nozaki tend to avoid definite statements, it is almost certain that there was no direct involvement by the authorities, and that it was merely an initiative which Ōhashi undertook himself, to preemptively protect his publishing house. The complete censorship of *Imomushi*, an event of unprecedented proportions at the time, had been ordered just the year before, and it is easy to imagine that Ōhashi might have wanted to play it safe and anticipate any potential bans (and consequent financial losses), knowing full well that Yokomizo, like Ranpo, was an exponent of the *henkaku* style of detective fiction, and had been targeted by censorship in 1935 with his *Onibi*. A fact which further supports this thesis is the publication, just a few years after the interruption of the series in *Kōdan zasshi*, of several *tankōbon* editions of the *Sashichi* series, which collected stories that had been previously published in the magazine, but also included several new ones, and others which had been adapted from other *torimonochō* series Yokomizo had written in the meantime: the first such publication was with Shun'yōdō shoten 春陽堂書店 (five volumes, published between March and July 1941), and the second with Sugiyama shoten 杉山書店 (three volumes, published between February and September 1942).[107] Neither of these incurred in any problems with the authorities, and they were eventually cancelled for unrelated reasons: the former because of the growing lack of materials,[108] and the latter by Yokomizo's choice, as he realised he could not keep up with the rhythm of publication and produce all the stories in the required amount of time.[109]

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[104] Yokomizo (2002), p. 227.
[105] Yokomizo (1976), pp. 218-219.
[106] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 70-71.

In conclusion, the traditional concept of detective fiction as a genre severely repressed by the military authorities, and of *torimonochō* as a means of escape and resistance, as a genre which was immune to any form of repression, ought to be revised and clarified. While detective fiction did gradually disappear from the literary world, it must be admitted that this was not due to any active persecution by the government, but because of the voluntary abandonment by some authors, a form of pre-emptive control exercised by editors, and the strong presence of erotic and grotesque elements in the main representatives of the genre, Ranpo above all. As for *torimonochō*, it can certainly be interpreted as a form of protest or resistance by some authors – Yokomizo Seishi in particular – who used it to keep writing detective fiction at a time when this genre was effectively being disapproved of. One must not yield to the temptation of excessively romanticising this process, however, and it should be remembered that *torimonochō* have occasionally had their share of obstacles as well.

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[107] See the Appendix for more information on these two publications, and on which stories were adapted from which series.

[108] Yokomizo (1976), p. 209.

[109] Yokomizo (2002), 2002, pp. 228-229.

Despite these considerations, the fate of detective fiction and *torimonochō* literature in the Thirties and Forties are inextricably linked to censorship, the reach of which should not be underestimated either. Abel reminds us that censorship is always a two-layered phenomenon, that there is no censorship without self-censorship, and that indeed self-censorship is the ultimate objective of any form of suppression: paradoxically, censorship achieves its highest peak through its own obsolescence, when there is no more need of external censors, because authors and editors have internalised the process deeply enough to become censors themselves.[110]

So, if it is true that detective fiction itself was never explicitly a victim of censorship, but only of a form of 'discouragement' by the authorities, if it is true that the authors' abandonment was voluntary, and the editors' control pre-emptive, the tangible presence of censorship as an institution has undeniably shaped the evolution of this form of literature: it was the mechanism of censorship, internalised by authors and editors, which brought the former to turn to other genres, and the latter to change or remove parts of their own publications. The same mechanism brought some others to turn to *torimonochō*, specifically, and at least one editor– as we have seen – to cease the publication of a successful series, in a genre which is usually deemed to be completely untouched by censorship both in pre-war and post-war Japan. Even if the order of interruption for *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* did not come directly – or, should we say, explicitly – from the authorities, its ultimate source can still be traced to the censorship system, which acted in an indirect or implicit form through the editor instead of the censor, and in so doing realised its full potential.

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[110] Abel (2012), pp. 16, 32-33, 148.

1.5 – Post-War *Torimonochō*

With the end of the war came the American occupation, and with it several new rules on which publications were allowed and which ones were not. *Torimonochō* went right back to being successfully published, somehow skirting the ban the GHQ had imposed on historical novels.[111] The new authorities, which had replaced the old ones even in the field of censorship, judged that these works exalted the 'feudal spirit' of old Japan, and were therefore undesirable. Despite its double nature, however, *torimonochō* literature escaped this ban, perhaps by leaning more on the detective-fiction side, or, as Nozaki suggests, because they incarnated the ideal of *kanzen chōaku* 勧善懲悪,[112] had a rational spirit, and were well-suited to the ideal of post-war democracy.[113]

Torimonochō, in a sense, experienced a boom in the immediate post-war period; this, however, was more of a continuation of the pre-war boom than a separate phenomenon of its own, though the privation of the latter years of the war had naturally caused a certain stagnation even in this flourishing genre. For this reason, scholars such as Nozaki have proposed that the first 15 years after the war should not be separated from the period that came before, especially in light of the fact that these years saw very few innovations, with one major exception represented by Sakaguchi Ango.[114] Besides the publications themselves, this period also saw two important events, both in 1949: the erection of the Hanshichi-zuka 半七塚, a monument dedicated to Hanshichi which can still be found in the precinct of the Sensōji 浅草寺, and the foundation of the Torimono sakka kurabu. As with the overview of pre-war *torimonochō*, this section will only focus on a necessarily limited set of examples, apt to illustrate innovations and changing trends in the genre.

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[111] Sakai (1987), p. 71.

[112] The expression *kanzen chōaku* does not lend itself well to pithy translations, unfortunately. Dating back to Prince Shōtoku's Seventeen-article constitution, the basic meaning of this expression is 'rewarding good and punishing evil', not too dissimilar from the concept of poetic justice. It is most often employed in literature (especially books and plays of the Edo period) to refer to the principle behind what we would call morality plays, or didactic novels.

[113] Nozaki (2010b), p. 181.

[114] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

The very first post-war *torimonochō* was published only a few months after the end of the Pacific War: it is *Kada Sanshichi torimono sobaya* 加田三七捕物そば屋, written by Murakami Genzō 村上元三 (1910-2006), the first episode of which was published in October 1945 in the magazine *Taishū bungei* 大衆文芸.[115] This series is particularly important for several reasons, the first of which is the fact that it was written before *torimonochō* had fully come back in vogue, which means that the author did not merely turn to the genre because it was popular, though he could have of course calculated that this might be the case.[116] The other important factor is that the series is not set in the Edo period, but rather in the Meiji era: the protagonist is a former *dōshin* who has had to reinvent himself in order to survive in the post-restoration world, and is now running a *soba* shop – hence the title. He finds himself involved in cases which he investigates without any official authority, and often gives in to his frustrations towards the current situation and nostalgia for the Edo period. This setting can easily be interpreted as an indirect criticism of post-war Japan, with the protagonist representing the author's uneasiness with the American occupation.[117] The series would last until 1952, and the author would later publish a prequel series as well, which more traditionally narrates the protagonist's adventures in the Edo period, when he was an actual *dōshin*.[118]

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[115] Ichii (1991), p. 30.
[116] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 183-184.
[117] *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.
[118] *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.

While the *Kada Sanshichi* series is historically the first one to be set in the Meiji era, the most famous one is Sakaguchi Ango's *Meiji kaika: Ango torimonochō* 明治開化　安吾捕物帖, which consists of 20 short stories published between October 1950 and August 1952 in the magazine *Shōsetsu shinchō* 小説新潮.[119] The stories feature the constant presence of Katsu Kaishū 勝海舟 (1823-1899), one of the many instances of real persons being used as detectives in a *torimonochō* series, and Sakaguchi focused on providing a fair example of detective fiction, one which the reader could measure his intellect against by trying to solve the case before the detective, using the clues provided in the narrative.[120] Like the *Kada Sanshichi* series, and perhaps even more so, these stories can be interpreted as a criticism of post-war Japan: the celebrated critic of popular literature Ozaki Hotsuki 尾崎秀樹 rated the series highly precisely because of Ango's deft use of the character of Katsu Kaishū, and of the literary form of the *torimonochō*, to express his social views.[121] Nozaki, in turn, argues that the fixed nature of *torimonochō*, their strict set of rules, appealed to Ango's rebellious spirit, and even helped him to escape from his madness, from the drugs, acting as a sort of stabiliser,[122] implying that writing *Ango torimonochō* somehow helped him soothe his wayward personality at least temporarily. Whether this be considered accurate or not, there is no doubt that the *Ango torimonochō* series survived in the collective memory when many other contemporary *torimonochō* series did not: this might partly be because of the author's pre-established fame, of course, but it is also a testament to his work's innovative nature, in a period when few dared to challenge the by-then established norms.

Kuromonchō Denshichi torimonochō 黒門町伝七捕物帳 was also an interesting experiment, albeit for completely different reasons. This series of short stories was published between March 1951 and October 1960 in the *Kyōto shinbun* 京都新聞, and its most noticeable characteristic is that it did not have a single author: it was, in fact, a collaborative effort by many members of the Torimono sakka kurabu, including Yokomizo Seishi, Jinde Tatsurō 陣出達朗 (1907-1986), Jō Masayuki, Nomura Kodō, Murakami Genzō, and Sasaki Moritarō 佐々木杜太郎 (1906-1983).[123] The character therefore belonged to no one, single author, as each of them devised a certain number of his adventures; Yokomizo Seishi, for example, would later re-use all of these plots for his more successful *Ningyō Sashichi* series.[124] The author who is most associated with the name of Denshichi, however, is Jinde Tatsurō: a few years after the collaborative effort ended, he would pick up the character again, this time by himself, and it would go on to be one of his most iconic creations;[125] most, if not all, cinematic and TV adaptations of the series come from Jinde's *Denshichi*, rather than the original one.

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[119] Bibliographical information has been derived from Sakaguchi (1985), pp. 752.
[120] SAKAGUCHI Ango. "Dokusha e no kōjō" 読者への口上. In: Sakaguchi (1985), pp. 314-315.
[121] Ozaki (1969a).
[122] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 113-114.

One of the last works to come out before the first decline of *torimonochō* was the *Dōshinbeya goyōchō* 同心部屋御用帳 series, written by Shimada Kazuo 島田一男 (1907-1996) and serialised between October 1960 and May 1962.[126] *Torimonochō* books had all but completely disappeared by this time, and the publication of this series in *tankōbon* format, four volumes released between 1961 and 1962, was the only exception.[127] Its most notable feature is that it breaks the tradition of having a strong protagonist: there is no single main character, and the role is instead filled by a group of *dōshin* who gather in the titular *dōshinbeya*.[128]

It is around this time that the *torimonochō* boom slowly fizzled out. Sakai actually dates the decline at around 1955, and ascribes it to the fierce competition of historical novels – which by then were no longer the object of censorship, as the American occupation force had left the country – identifying the *torimonochō* genre as a form of transitional literature, a bridge for authors to cross until they could go back to their 'proper' genres.[129] Nozaki puts the end of this 'golden age' a few years later, around the Sixties, and specifies that it only affected the literary world: film and TV adaptations of *torimonochō* were still going extremely strong, even as the original stories were floundering.[130] Giving a precise date for this decline is difficult, but there is no doubt that *torimonochō* suffered a period of recession until the late Sixties and early Seventies, when a spate of new works brought fresh attention and big changes to the traditional formula. The most noticeable of these changes is undoubtedly the newly-introduced social realism: *torimonochō* no longer represented an ideal world where the protagonists were good guys, and justice always triumphed; rather, the new *okappiki* was something of an anti-hero, if not a villain altogether, and the perception of the Edo period shifted to a nitty-gritty world of crime and decay. There were exceptions and varying degrees to this process, just as there were for the 'golden age' of *torimonochō*, but this general tendency is undeniable.

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[123] *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.
[124] See Section 4.3 and the Appendix for more details.
[125] *Ibid.*, p. 189.
[126] Ichii (1993), p. 9.
[127] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-12.
[128] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

One of the earliest examples of this new tendency is Shibata Renzaburō's 柴田錬三郎 (1917-1978) *Okappiki Dobu Shibaren torimonochō* 岡っ引きどぶ柴錬捕物帖 (6 novellas published between May 1967 and September 1968), which has some hardboiled elements, and features an ugly and malicious protagonist with a sketchy past, kept somewhat in line by his superior *yoriki* who guides his investigations.[131] Takigawa Kyō's 多岐川恭 (1920-1994) *Yukkuri Utarō torimono hikae* ゆっくり雨太郎捕物控 (published between September 1967 and July 1968, and then again from September 1972 to June 1973, in the magazine *Shūkan shinchō* 週刊新潮) also features hardboiled elements and 'picaresque' traits, though less prominently than Shibata's work;[132] this series' most notable feature is rather in the way the stories conclude. At the end of every case, instead of a traditional dénouement, the reader finds a brief note which sums up the case, and then a couple of lines describing the crime in very laconic and almost legal terms, as if one were reading an official report written by the detective himself – a detective who is not always truthful about what he records in these documents.[133] Another important feature of the series, according to Ichii, are the home-life descriptions, which reflected the changing trend in Japanese society towards a family-orientated way of life at the time.[134]

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[129] Sakai (1987), p. 169.
[130] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 190-194.
[131] *Ibid.*, p. 196.
[132] *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

The most famous example of this new kind of *torimonochō*, however, is unquestionably *Onihei hankachō* 鬼平犯科帳, by Ikenami Shōtarō 池波正太郎 (1923-1990).[135] This long-running series comprises 130 short stories and 5 novels, and was published between January 1968 and July 1989 on *Ōru yomimono*,[136] to great acclaim: new editions of the collected stories are never out of print, and film, TV, and even *anime* adaptations abound. The protagonist is Hasegawa Heizō 長谷川平蔵, and he is the head of the *hitsuke tōzoku aratame kata*, a big departure from the solitary *okappiki* or, more rarely, *dōshin* of classical *torimonochō*. Heizō, who is modelled after a real eighteenth-century *hatamoto* of the same name and office, appears at first glance similar to any other classical hero in his private life: loyal family man, strong sense of justice, unfailingly virtuous. But he also has another side, which earns him the titular nickname of Onihei (Demon Hei[zō]), and which he nonchalantly shows at work: he has no qualms about resorting to extreme violence to obtain his goals, he has no hesitation in torturing supposed criminals for information or confessions, and he is occasionally rather quick to condemn them to death without bothering to conduct in-depth investigations when he is convinced of their criminal character.[137] All this might horrify a modern reader, who might wonder how two utterly opposite sides such as these could coexist in the same individual, whom one is supposed to identify and empathise with as the main character; but the contradiction is only an apparent one, as a contemporary of Heizō would have probably had no difficulty in seeing him unequivocally as the 'good guy', in a time when such brutal methods were the norm. The series' success has made it so that Heizō is most likely to be considered the face of this new kind of *torimonochō*, the ideal representative of this new trend of social realism in the depiction of the Edo period.

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[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 199-201.

[134] Ichii (1994), p. 18.

[135] Ikenami (1974-1994).

[136] Bibliographical information is derived from Ikenami (1990), pp. 310-314.

[137] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 208-210.

Another important step in the evolution of *torimonochō* was taken by Tsuzuki Michio with his *Namekuji nagaya torimono sawagi* なめくじ長屋捕物さわぎ, a series which comprises 76 short stories published between December 1968 and 1997.[138] Besides Tsuzuki's penchant for *honkaku* detective fiction, which makes the stories very enjoyable as intellectual puzzles, the *Namekuji nagaya* series offers another shift in protagonist: as in *Dōshinbeya goyōchō*, there is no single main character, but unlike Shimada's series, the detectives are far from being respected officials. The plots centre around the inhabitants of a *nagaya*, a low-end tenement house, who act as mercenaries by solving crimes for money; moreover, it is a sort of 'Court of Miracles', as the characters which form this group are all outcasts, discriminated and shunned by society for their status.[139] Other *torimonochō* in the past had occasionally featured *hinin* and/or *eta* characters, as they were nevertheless a part of life in the Edo period, but arguably none of them involved them to such an extent before, not to mention made them the main characters of a whole series.

Other works worth mentioning are Kajiyama Toshiyuki's 梶山季之 (1930-1975) *Hori Tatsu torimonochō* 彫辰捕物帖 series (24 stories published between 1970 and 1973), which was one of the earliest examples of erotic *torimonochō* – arguably leaning much more on the former aspect than the latter;[140] Sasazawa Saho's 笹沢左保 (1930-2002) *Jigoku no Tatsu Muzan torimono hikae* 地獄の辰無残捕物控 (September 1971 – January 1973), another series which focuses on the gritty side, with a protagonist turning from criminal to *okappiki* in the hopes of avenging the rape and murder of his wife;[141] Hiraiwa Yumie's 平岩弓枝 *On'yado Kawasemi* 御宿かわせみ series (February 1973 – November 2005), which, besides its long-running status, has the merit of featuring a female-centric world in what has traditionally been a male-dominated literary genre;[142] Yamada Fūtarō's *Keishichō zōshi* 警視庁草紙 (18 short stories published between July 1973 and December 1974), which is set in the Meiji era and flouts *torimonochō* conventions so much that it might be termed an anti-*torimonochō*, and is not even universally recognised as being one in the first place;[143] Yūki Shōji's 結城昌治 (1927-1996) *Shitateya Ginji kakushi daichō* 仕立屋銀次隠し台帳 (March 1978), a hardboiled series set in the Meiji period which depicts the cooperation and almost symbiotic relationship between criminals and officers of the law, combined with an anti-war message;[144] and Ariake Natsuo's 有明夏夫 (1936-2002) *Dainaniwa shojin ōrai* 大浪花諸人往来 series (February 1978 – February 1986),[145] set in Meiji-era Ōsaka, a rare change of scenery from the overused city of Edo, and with solutions to the cases presented in the form of newspaper articles written by one of the characters, a stratagem which recalls the *Yukkuri Utarō* series' reports.

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[138] Tsuzuki (2010-2011). Bibliographical information is derived from the lists at the end of each volume.

[139] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 228-229.

Torimonochō are still alive and well today, with many new series being written, and some old series still being continued; since the early Nineties, however, the genre has once again entered into a period of stagnation, losing much of its appeal and popularity, to the point that many Japanese born within the past three decades have never read a *torimonochō*, and are even unfamiliar with the word itself, not even recognising its meaning.

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[140] *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252.
[141] *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.
[142] *Ibid.*, pp. 211-214.
[143] *Ibid.*, pp. 214-218.
[144] *Ibid.*, pp. 244-247.
[145] Ariake (2018). The bibliographical information is derived from the lists at the end of each volume.

Chapter 2 – The Multiculturality of *Torimonochō*

In contrast to their debated status as either detective or historical fiction, there is one aspect of *torimonochō* that has never been in any doubt: as we have remarked at the beginning of Section 1.1, *torimonochō* are almost universally referred to as being quintessentially Japanese. Shiraishi Kiyoshi was perhaps the one who most insisted on this:

> *Torimonochō*, which do not exist in any [other] country in the world, never wavered in any time or social condition. In that sense, *torimonochō* are the only [kind of] detective fiction which Japan can export. To the point that, while Americans might not understand this world of 'seasons', today, at a time when the *Genji monogatari* and the *Man'yōshū* are being translated, one is tempted to send [*torimonochō*] to Ellery Queen.[146]

He was by no means the only one to remark on this, however: Nozaki Rokusuke describes *torimonochō* as 'a literary form peculiar to Japan',[147] Cécile Sakai as 'a specifically Japanese category of popular literature',[148] and Ranpo noted that it should be 'greatly prized as a uniquely Japanese [form of] historical novel'.[149] Even the members of the Torimono sakka kurabu themselves were of the same opinion: Sasaki Moritarō casually referred to the genre as 'the form of popular literature called *torimonochō*, unique to Japan',[150] and Namiki Yukio 並木行夫 (1910-1958) went as far as writing 'Anyway, I doubt there is any objection to the fact that [*torimonochō*] are a [type of] novel unique to Japan'.[151]

What I would like to propose in this chapter is precisely that: an objection to the fact – or rather, the assumption – that *torimonochō* are a uniquely Japanese form of literature. Or, to put it in more accurate (though, unfortunately, less appealingly sensational) terms, I would like to point out that *torimonochō* are not a purely Japanese product, but were instead the result of a curious mixture of cultures and influences, which interacted in a more or less direct way to produce what we now deem 'uniquely Japanese'. More specifically, I consider the genre as being composed of three main aspects: its Chinese roots, a Japanese core, and Western clothing.

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[146] Shiraishi (1949), p. 88.
[147] Nozaki (2010b), p. 2.
[148] Sakai (1987), p. 150.
[149] Edogawa (2006a), p. 128.
[150] Sasaki Mo. (1953), p. 6.
[151] Namiki (1955).

The Chinese roots of *torimonochō* might not be apparent at first, until one considers the close relation the genre – and its founder, Okamoto Kidō – has to *saiban shōsetsu* 裁判小説 (court-room novels), and especially to their best-known representative, *Ōoka seidan* 大岡政談. Through them, one can easily trace back the original impulse towards *torimonochō*, and indeed towards detective fiction in general, back to China, whence the court-room novel had been imported.

The Japanese core certainly needs no explanations, as everything about *torimonochō* appears blatantly Japanese, from the setting and its conventions to its sphere of influence itself, since the genre has flourished in Japan but has been mostly ignored everywhere else, where it can only be said to have trickled, at best. There will therefore be no need to specifically focus on this part, even more so since it is thoroughly explored in the preceding and following chapters.

The Western clothing which *torimonochō* inevitably ends up wearing is arguably more evident and recognised than its Chinese roots, but it is also easily masked under the sheer 'Japanese-ness' the genre flaunts. The very form of the detective novel was imported from the West, mostly from English and American sources, and being clad in 'detective garb', the *torimonochō* can hardly avoid owing its very existence to this modern innovation.

The greatness of *torimonochō* is the blend of all these aspects into one cohesive whole. Kidō, like those who came after him, did not merely borrow and re-use foreign conventions as they were: he absorbed them, re-packaging them into a new and innovative entity which can indeed be praised as being ‘uniquely (= peculiarly) Japanese’, despite paradoxically not being uniquely (= solely) Japanese at all.

2.1 – Chinese Roots

Despite the status of modern detective fiction as a Western import, Chinese literature has a good claim to its ancestry as well, a claim which becomes unquestionable when we consider crime fiction in general. It is to China that we owe the existence of the *saiban shōsetsu*, or court-room novel, arguably the earliest form of Japanese crime fiction. Together with *dokufumono* 毒婦物, Meiji-era embellished biographies of infamous female criminals dubbed ‘poison women’ by the press, the *saiban shōsetsu* form the foundation on which modern detective fiction would be built.[152]

Japanese court-room novels bear more than a passing resemblance to *gōngàn xiǎoshuō* 公案小说 (*kōan shōsetsu* in the Japanese reading), which first appeared during the Song dynasty (960-1279) before being widely popularised in the following centuries, particularly during the latter half of the Ming (1368-1644) dynasty. The best-known example of this genre is undoubtedly represented by the many Judge Bao stories, and Western readers in particular might be familiar with the character of Judge Dee,[153] but the list of exalted officials – usually based on real, famous judges who had lived in the periods the stories are set in – stretches much farther than just these two names. The *gōngàn xiǎoshuō* is marked by many characteristics which set it apart from the modern concept of detective fiction, the most apparent one being perhaps the fact that the criminal is usually revealed at the very beginning of the novel. This structure, usually referred to as an ‘inverted detective story’, is not unheard of in Western detective fiction, and has been successfully popularised by works such as the TV series *Columbo*, but it can hardly be said to be the norm. This style of narration, unable to rely on the puzzle element of the reader trying to figure out by himself who committed the crime, focuses instead on the process through which the detective – or the judge, in this case – uncovers and catches the perpetrator. As the definition of 'court-room novel' suggests, the main character of a *gōngàn xiǎoshuō* is not a professional or amateur detective at all, but the judge, who not only decides on the most fitting punishment for the criminals brought before him, but personally conducts the investigations on those same cases, a concentration of powers and roles which will undoubtedly give pause to contemporary readers used to the workings of more modern judicial systems. The judge usually faces multiple cases at once, with a cast of secondary characters which can easily reach the hundreds, and it is not at all unusual for him to receive help from supernatural sources, such as ghosts denouncing their own murderers or otherwise providing information which forwards the plot and aids in solving the case. Despite the fact that Japanese *saiban shōsetsu* lack many of these overt characteristics – they usually deal with one case at a time, have a limited cast of secondary characters, do not present the criminal at the very beginning, and do not normally feature supernatural occurrences – they are clearly linked to and inspired by the *gōngàn xiǎoshuō* for their themes, and for many plot-related conventions.[154]

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[152] Silver (2008), p. 22.

[153] Robert Van Gulik is responsible for popularising the character of Judge Dee to English-speaking readers, first by translating from the Chinese, and subsequently by creating his own series of stories featuring the famous judge. For an interesting study of his work in relation to the *gōng'àn xiǎoshuō* genre, see Wright (2004).

Their most direct ancestor is usually identified in the *Tángyīn bǐ shì* 棠陰比事 [Parallel Cases from Under the Pear Tree] (*tōin hiji* in the Japanese reading), compiled by Guì Wànróng 桂万栄 in 1211. It is a collection of 144 court cases, collected and paired – hence the title 'parallel cases' – for a total of 72 couples. Like the *gōngàn xiǎoshuō*, it features the judge in his double role as detective, and the focus is markedly not on the deduction process or on the psychology of criminals. There has been extensive scholarly literature dedicated to the study of the influence the *Tángyīn bǐ shì* had on Japanese literature,[155] so this chapter will be limited to a brief summation. Despite having been authored in 1211, at least according to its preface, the *Tángyīn bǐ shì* did not reach Japan until the Edo period, and the first translation was published only in 1649, under the title *Tōin hiji monogatari* 棠陰比事物語 [Tales of Parallel Cases from Under the Pear Tree]. This work would go on to meet great success, spawning a great number of Japanese imitations: the first one would be Ihara Saikaku's 井原西鶴 (1642?-1693) *Honchō ōin hiji* 本朝桜陰比事 [Parallel Cases of Our Country from Under the Cherry Tree] (1689), the very title of which is clearly modelled on the Chinese original, albeit with a shift to Japan through the symbolism of the cherry tree substituting that of the pear tree, and the use of the prefix *honchō*, a common convention when adapting Chinese works. *Honchō ōin hiji* comprises 44 stories, and effects a complete shift to Japan: the setting is Japanese, and the judge is pointedly identified as a *bugyō* (though his name is not specified). The judicial system is markedly presented as infallible, admitting no slip-up on the part of the judge, no miscarriages of justice; the stories themselves, however, are rarely based on those found in the *Tángyīn bǐ shì*, and are more often invented by Ihara, based on actual Japanese court records or on the *Itakura seiyō* 板倉政要 (which we will examine shortly),[156] and the convention of the 'parallel cases' is also dropped, despite its presence in the title. Less famous epigones would be Getsu Jindō's 月尋堂 (?-1715) *Kensō hiji* 鎌倉比事 [Parallel Cases from Kamakura] (1708), featuring court cases which show in a good light the Hōjō regency of the Kamakura period, and the anonymous *Nihon tōin hiji* 日本桃陰比事 [Japanese Parallel Cases from Under the Peach Tree] (1709), which imitates Saikaku's wordplay in the title, arguably doing him one better by playing on homophones in substituting the peach tree to the pear tree; it would be later retitled *Honchō tōin hiji* 本朝藤陰比事 [Parallel Cases of Our Country from Under the Wisteria Tree], once again making full use of homophony to switch plants again, this time to the wisteria). The 'detection' in these *hijimono* 比事物, according to Nakajima, follows four main lines: pure intuition, methods which were deemed scientific at the time but which today we would classify as mere superstition or magic, traps set to determine the culprit, and reasoning based on clues; the overwhelming majority of cases, however, merely involve intuition (a characteristic which is decidedly in common with the traditional conception of *torimonochō*), and detections based on clues are particularly rare.[157]

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[154] For a detailed analysis of similarities between *gōng'àn xiǎoshuō* and Ihara Saikaku's *Honchō ōin hiji*, see Chapter 17 of Shōji (1989).

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[155] The most recent example, which also includes a brief survey of previous works on the topic, is Zhōu (2015).

[156] Silver (2008), p. 24.

Next to the *hijimono* come, at last, the *saiban shōsetsu*, also known as *saibanmono* 裁判物 or *sabakimono* 捌物. These are also often referred to as *jitsurokumono* 実録物, since they purportedly take inspiration from 'real cases', but the embellishments and adaptations are invariably much more substantial than any claim to historicity, so it goes without saying that none of these stories should be taken at face value.[158] The most famous examples of this current are the *Itakura seiyō*, Kyokutei Bakin's 曲亭馬琴 (1767-1848) *Aoto Fujitsuna moryōan* 青砥藤綱摸稜案 (1812), and most famous of all, *Ōoka seidan*. The *Itakura seiyō* is a collection of stories featuring Itakura Katsushige 板倉勝重 (1545-1624) and his son Itakura Shigemune 板倉重宗 (1586-1657), and the cases they solved as Kyōto shoshidai 京都所司代 (deputies of the shogunate in Kyōto). The date of composition is uncertain, as this work circulated as a manuscript; its follow-up was compiled in the Kyōhō 享保 era (1716-1736), so the *Itakura seiyō* itself must be earlier than that, but no more definite data are available.[159] *Aoto Fujitsuna*

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[157] Osaragi *et al.* (1980), pp. 214-216.

[158] It should be noted that the term *jitsurokumono* does not exclusively refer to *saiban shōsetsu*, but more generically includes a wide variety of literary forms which were based on real cases, augmented with fictional embellishments.

[159] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

moryōan is a somewhat derivative work, taking direct inspiration from *Ōoka seidan*, although it enjoyed only a fraction of the popularity the latter can boast of; the main character is the legendary Kamakura-period warrior Aoto Fujitsuna, who had also been featured in *Kensō hiji*, and was often depicted in Edo-period literature and theatre as a fair judge and a defender of the common folk.

Strictly speaking, the title *Ōoka seidan* properly refers to an 1896 publication containing 16 stories starring the famous *machi bugyō*, but the stories themselves are much older, and circulated under a variety of titles: they reached their present form around the end of the Edo period, their original versions were probably composed shortly after the death of the historical Ōoka Echizen no Kami Tadasuke 大岡越前守忠相 (1677-1752) himself, and the plots can be traced even further back to stories of Indian and Chinese inspiration (only three of the stories refer to actual Edo-period cases, the historical Ōoka was involved in only one of them, and none are particularly accurate to the real events anyway).[160] Over time, the character of Ōoka proved so successful that not only was he the most popular *bugyō* to be featured in these tales (though a case could be made that Tōyama Kagemoto 遠山景元, affectionately known as Tōyama no Kin-san 遠山の金さん, surpassed his popularity in more recent times, thanks to numerous historical novels and TV adaptations), he also ended up 'absorbing' some of his more-or-less fictional colleagues, as cases adjudicated by others were quite likely to be attributed to him in popular culture and, consequently, in literature. The collection of stories about Ōoka were not well received by the shogunate, not for their dubious historical accuracy, but because the *bakufu* explicitly forbade the publication of any work which dealt with real-life cases to begin with, as *Ōoka seidan* purported to be: for the longest time they were banned, and only circulated as manuscripts, which gave rise to a wide variety of different versions that, as we have seen, did not stabilise until the end of the Edo period, and were published only long after the fall of the shogunate. Works such as Bakin's *Aoto Fujitsuna moryōan*, despite being explicitly modelled after *Ōoka seidan*, changed the names of the persons involved and brought the time of narration back to the Kamakura period, avoiding the problem altogether. Even then, *Ōoka seidan* still enjoyed widespread popularity thanks to the *kashihon'ya* 貸本屋, stores which specialised in renting books, instead of selling them, as their high price would have otherwise put them out of the reach of common folk: manuscripts, not being technically publications, were something of a blind spot in the Edo-period legislation on the matter, and this allowed the tales about Ōoka to flourish in spite of everything.[161]

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[160] Tsuji (1984), vol. 1, p. 367.

Ōoka seidan can hardly be described as a proper form of detective novel – and indeed few try to argue the contrary – but it undeniably presents many points in common with modern Japanese detective fiction, and has to be considered one of its predecessors.[162] The judicial system in *Ōoka seidan* is not as infallible as it used to be: the cracks in an imperfect system show every now and then, such as when following procedure seems to lead to the death of an innocent man in *Komamonoya Hikobē* 小間物屋彦兵衛 [Hikobē the Haberdasher]. Judge Ōoka, however, quickly sets everything right by revealing that the man had not actually been executed, but is still alive and well, proceeding then to condemn the actual culprit. Cases like this, which would have been unthinkable in works such as Saikaku's *Honchō ōin hiji*, might at first glance seem to expose the faults inherent in the system, but, by glorifying the judge's infinite wisdom, they actually end up justifying the immense authority and latitude given to him in performing his duties.[163]

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[161] *Ibid.*, p. 369.

[162] For an analysis of *Ōoka seidan* as a mystery, and whether it qualifies as a form of detective novel, see Fujisawa (2005).

[163] Silver (2008), p. 27.

It goes without saying that, being the ancestors of Japanese detective fiction in general, all these works should by extension be considered ancestors of *torimonochō* as well. *Saiban shōsetsu*, however, and *Ōoka seidan* in particular, have a special relationship with this genre that goes beyond general considerations of precedence and inspiration. The most obvious similarity is naturally the setting: both Japanese court-room novels and *torimonochō* are set in the Edo period (though not always explicitly so, as we have seen), and extensively feature the same justice system, though the former focuses on the figure of the *bugyō* himself, while the latter tend to star his subordinates, or occasionally different branches of the 'police force' of the Edo period. This is far from being the only influence *Ōoka seidan* had on *torimonochō*, however, and these influences are most apparent and best analysed in Kidō's work with *Hanshichi torimonochō*, and in his relationship towards *Ōoka seidan*. Okamoto Kyōichi remarks that, in writing the *Hanshichi* series, Kidō 'distanced [himself] from the forms of the court-room novel and of the criminal biography, traditional to our country, taking foreign modern detective fiction as his model'.[164] There is no doubt that Kidō did as much, since the end result is far closer to a Western detective story than to a *saiban shōsetsu*, but there is more to be read in this statement than what is suggested on the surface: to consciously distance himself from this literary form, Kidō necessarily had to be familiar with it, to know its characteristics so as to avoid them or improve on them. The very fact that Kyōichi feels the need to mention court-room novels and criminal biographies suggests their importance as antecedents, and while Kidō did not extensively work off of the latter, he had a very particular relationship with the former. In fact, a play about Ōoka was the occasion for young Kidō's very first meeting with the theatre: in February 1875, when Kidō was two years and four months old, he was brought to the Shintomiza 新富座 for *Ōgi byōshi Ōoka seidan* 扇音々大岡政談, a play written by Kawatake Mokuami 河竹黙阿弥 (1816-1893) and based on the story of

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[164] Okamoto Ky. (2009), p. 66.

Ten'ichibō 天一坊.[165] Given his young age, it goes without saying that Kidō remembered nothing of this theatre visit in his adult years, so he did not derive any actual intellectual stimulation from the experience; but it is nonetheless curious, and symbolically telling, that his very first contact with the theatre should be with an adaptation of a *saiban shōsetsu*.

More importantly, though, Kidō would later go on to write an *Ōoka seidan* adaptation himself: a *shin kabuki* play titled *Gonza to Sukejū* 権三と助十, which would be first represented in 1926, and which introduces some variations on the original story it is based on, *Komamonoya Hikobē*.[166] The original story centres around the crime of the titular Hikobē, a haberdasher who is accused of having murdered an old woman whose house he frequented because of his work, stealing a great amount of money from her. He is arrested and condemned to the *gokumon* – a form of death penalty which also entailed beheading, and subsequent exposure of the severed head as a warning to other criminals – at Suzugamori 鈴ヶ森. Hikobē's son Hikosaburō is utterly convinced of the innocence of his father, and tries to appeal the decision; a mere testimonial to Hikobē's good character, however, is not enough to secure his release, and since there is no proof to the contrary, his son's appeal gives no results. In his desperate search for witnesses, Hikosaburō chances upon two palanquin bearers, Gonza and Sukejū, who claim to have seen a man named Kantarō washing a bloodied sword on the night of the murder; the two are brought to Judge Ōoka to testify, and justice is finally done, as the *bugyō* condemns Kantarō. The fact that Hikobē has been unjustly executed, however, seems to be a black mark for Judge Ōoka and for the judicial system as a whole. It is at this point that the judge reveals that he had been aware of Hikobē's innocence from the beginning, producing the man himself, who had not been executed after all: the severed head exposed at Suzugamori had been that of another prisoner, skinned so as to render it unrecognisable. The case thus ends with the judge's wisdom restored and justice fully served, though no detailed explanation is offered as to why Judge Ōoka should have acted in this flamboyant (and blatantly improper) way, instead of handling the case in a more matter-of-fact manner.

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[165] For a more detailed account of the experience, see the chapter titled 'Morita Kan'ya' 守田勘弥 in Okamoto Ki. (1993).

[166] Tsuji (1984), vol. 2, pp. 3-43.

Komamonoya Hikobē is one of the most famous *Ōoka seidan* stories, and it has been adapted many times through the years for theatre, TV, and cinema, usually by shifting the focus to the characters of the two palanquin bearers. Kidō's adaptation shifts the focus to Gonza and Sukejū as well, as can be easily inferred by the title, but otherwise mostly adheres to the original plot, with two glaring exceptions: the first one is that Kidō thought that the skinning of the head was too exaggerated, even for the Edo period and even for *Ōoka seidan*; he figured that it must have been a re-hashed element from some Chinese tale, and decided to substitute it so that the head is rendered unrecognisable by some illness contracted in prison, rather than by purposeful flaying.[167] The second, and much bolder one, is that Kidō decided to remove Judge Ōoka altogether: the *bugyō* never appears, and the samurai class itself is hardly represented. The cast is almost entirely composed of *chōnin* and low-class citizens in general, and the main appeal of the play is in their shifting interactions and emotions, rather than the wise rulings of the *bugyō*, who therefore became an unnecessary character in Kidō's view.

As is evident from Kidō's conclusion that the skinning element had been taken from a Chinese story, he was very familiar not just with *Ōoka seidan*, but with Chinese crime fiction as well, of which he was an avid reader. He was especially interested in Chinese ghost stories, just as he was in Japanese ones, something highlighted by works such as his *Chūgoku kaiki shōsetsu shū* 中国怪奇小説集, but his expertise was not limited to them. In fact, Arisaka Shōzō 有坂正三 dedicated a whole book to the relationship between *Hanshichi torimonochō* and Chinese crime fiction, in which he outlines some of the most tangible borrowings and influences present in the series. Arisaka points out that, in writing his *torimonochō*, Kidō consulted a wide variety of books, both Japanese and Chinese (and some Indian materials, as well); however, he was loath to simply transpose Chinese stories to an Edo-period setting, leaving the plot itself unchanged, and so he rather used his own ingenuity and creativity to complement the ideas sparked by his readings.[168] Kidō was extremely well versed in Chinese literature, and he managed to seamlessly insert such inspirations without explicitly betraying their origins: 'even if it is superficially Edo, the world of Chinese novels lurks in the underside',[169] argues Arisaka, citing the role of corrupt monks as one of the most constant and pervasive elements of this influence.

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[167] Okamoto Ki. (1956), pp. 349-354.

2.2 – Western Clothing

While its remote origin is traceable to Chinese fiction, as we have just seen, the more immediate impetus for the birth of Japanese detective fiction – as distinct from the more generic category of 'crime fiction' – came from the West, in the form of translations. It goes without saying that Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), usually regarded as the founder of detective fiction, also had a huge impact on future Japanese authors of the genre: this is perhaps most strikingly demonstrated by the fact that Edogawa Ranpo, arguably the most famous among them, chose his pen name as a deferential tribute to Poe. The American author made his first appearance in Japan in 1887, when Aeba Kōson 饗庭篁村 (1855-1922) translated his short story *The Black Cat* (1843) under the title *Seiyō kaidan: Kuroneko* 西洋怪談・黒猫 [A Western Ghost Story: The Black Cat] – though one ought to note that his translation was rather loose. Many other authors and translators contributed to introducing Western detective literature to the Japanese public, such as Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遥 (1859-1935), who also translated Poe, Sudō Nansui, or Morita Shiken 森田思軒 (1861-1897).

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[168] Arisaka (2005), p. 3.
[169] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

The first single major figure in Japanese detective fiction, however, was undoubtedly Kuroiwa Ruikō, journalist and founder of the newspaper *Yorozu chōhō* 萬朝報, who first rose to fame with his *Hōtei no bijin* 法廷の美人 [The Courtroom Beauty], an 1888 adaptation of Hugh Conway's *Dark Days* (1885), and would go on to contribute more than a hundred adaptations of foreign novels and short stories. His language of choice was English, and though his detective-fiction repertoire included French authors such as Émile Gaboriau (1832-1873) and Fortuné du Boisgobey (1821-1891), he accessed them through the medium of English translations. His activity was not at all limited to detective fiction: he famously translated works such as *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Les Misérables*, and several stories by H. G. Wells (1866-1946). His contribution to the introduction of Western detective fiction, however, is what he is mostly remembered and celebrated for. While the term 'translation' is occasionally loosely applied to what Ruikō did with his source material, and he also self-identified as a 'translator' in his publications, it should be more properly referred to as a work of 'adaptation': he liberally excised or added sections to the novels he published, often modified place and personal names so that the stories appeared to take place in Japan despite being ostensibly set in foreign countries, and occasionally failed to inform his readers whether they were reading fiction or accounts of actual events. In doing all this, he was more often than not motivated by political agendas: he 'saw in detective fiction the means to educate the newly-literate masses', and turned to it 'to criticize the shortcomings of the state's reforms and to point out the underdevelopment of democratic principles in Japan'.[170] Examples of this tendency can be found in his adaptation of Gaboriau's *L'Affaire Lerouge* (1866), titled *Hito ka oni ka* 人耶鬼

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[170] Kawana (2008), pp. 8-9.

耶 [Man or Devil?] (1888), in which Ruikō completely changes the ending to advance his case against capital punishment; and in his adaptation of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's (1835-1915) *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), titled *Hito no un* 人の運 [People's Luck] (1894), which he exploits to draw a critical comparison to the Japanese justice system in reference to a popular trial.[171] Despite his prolific work in adapting foreign literature, Ruikō only published a single novel born of his own imagination: *Muzan* [Cruelty] (1889), one of the earliest examples of original Japanese detective fiction. He would finally abandon the genre around the turn of the century, leading to a period of relative stagnation.

The trend popularised by Ruikō was not destined to abate, though: at the beginning of the twentieth century the literary world saw the introduction of new contemporary authors, who would go on to reach the peak of their success by the Taishō era, such as Maurice Leblanc (1864-1941) with the character of Arsène Lupin, and most importantly Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) with his Sherlock Holmes. Japanese Holmesians have gone to great lengths to determine which of the numerous adaptations had the honour of being the very first one, and in 1982 Hata Minoru 畑實 settled the question – for now, at least – by pointing to *Kojiki dōraku* 乞食道楽 [A Passion for Begging], an adaptation of *The Man with the Twisted Lip* published between January and February 1894 in the magazine *Nihonjin* 日本人. Before that, the first adaptation was thought to be *Chizome no kabe* 血染の壁 [The Bloody Wall], an anonymous translation in 83 episodes of *A Study in Scarlet*, published between 16 April and 16 July 1899 in the *Mainichi shinbun* 毎日新聞; before that, it was identified in *Fushigi no tantei* 不思議の探偵 [The Mysterious Detective], an adaptation of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* published by Mizuta Nan'yō 水田南陽 (1869-?), under the pseudonym of Nan'yō Gaishi 南陽外史, between 12 July and 4 November 1899 in the *Chūō shinbun* 中央新聞; and before that, Kimura Ki 木村毅 (1894-1979) claimed it was *Shin onmyō hakase* 新陰陽博士, a 1900 adaptation of *A Study in Scarlet* published by Hara Hōitsuan 原抱一庵 in the magazine *Bungei kurabu*.[172] Like the above-mentioned 'translations', these adaptations featured more or less heavy changes to adapt them to a Japanese audience: to cite just a few examples, Nan'yō adapted *The Red-Headed League* as *Hageatama kurabu* 禿頭倶楽部 [The Bald-Headed League], since Japan was decidedly lacking in red-headed inhabitants, and Japanese readers would have been more familiar with the concept of a club for bald people; while *Dokuhebi no himitsu* 毒蛇の秘密 [The Secret of the Poisonous Snake], Nan'yō's adaptation of *The Speckled Band*, is for some reason set in Germany instead of England, and Watson himself is presented as a German doctor – perhaps due to the close association Germany and medical studies had in the mind of the average Japanese, also testified by the large number of words of German origin in the medical jargon. In *Chizome no kabe*, Watson becomes Wada Shin'ichi 和田進一, while Sherlock Holmes is Komuro Tairoku 小室泰六, they meet in Tōkyō after Wada has been wounded in Taiwan during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895): everything is utterly Japanese, including the ambiguity between the word '*Rache*' and the name 'Rachel' in the original, which is rendered as that between the name Ofuku お福 and the word '*fukushū*' 復讐 (revenge).

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[171] For detailed analyses of these adaptations, see Silver (2008), pp. 67-87.

The influence Sherlock Holmes had on Japanese detective fiction cannot be understated: the fact that a work of literary history such as Hori Keiko's *Nihon misuterī shōsetsu shi* 日本ミステリー小説史 opens its very first page with a discussion of the character is decidedly telling.[173] But Holmes also had a huge impact on *torimonochō* specifically, as is apparent even to the most casual reader, from one of the concluding remarks of *Ofumi no tamashii*, the very first story of the very first *torimonochō* series:

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[172] For a more detailed discussion of these adaptations, see Kobayashi and Higashiyama (2005), pp. 318-324.

[173] Hori (2014), pp. i-v.

> This story was engraved in my young mind as an extremely interesting one. But, thinking back to it later on, [I realised that] since detective tales such as this were just a piece of cake for Hanshichi, there were still many other astonishing adventures of his. He was a hidden Sherlock Holmes of the Edo period.[174]

This reference to Sherlock Holmes in Hanshichi's debut story, which draws a direct and very explicit parallel between the two characters, was no coincidence: Okamoto Kidō had been deeply influenced by Doyle's work in producing his own form of detective fiction, and would not shy away from admitting this indebtedness in his essays.

> I remember that I first happened upon the idea of writing *Hanshichi torimonochō* around April 1916. At the time I had desultorily read Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, but I had never read all [the stories] from beginning to end, so [one day], while I was at Maruzen, I bought Sherlock Holmes's *Adventures*, *Memoirs* and *Return*, and when I had finished reading all three books in one uninterrupted stretch, an interest towards detective stories welled up in me, and I began to feel like writing my own. Of course, I had also read the works of Hume and others before then, but the ones which stimulated me were decidedly Doyle's.[175]

It is clear that Kidō, like so many others before and after him, was so taken in by the Holmes stories that he ended up consuming all of them in one sitting – possibly an exaggeration, as the total number of stories in the three books mentioned is 36, which would make reading through them in a single day quite unlikely. The use of the term, however literally or figuratively it is taken, suggests that Kidō devoted his mind uniquely to the stories for a short and concentrated burst, which in turn attests his admiration for Doyle's work. Kidō makes no mention of the four novels, which had all been published at the time, suggesting that he was more familiar with – or more interested in – the short-story format, of which he left out nothing: *His Last Bow* and *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*, the other two collections of short stories, had not yet been published as of April 1916, so Kidō effectively bought and read all that was available to him. Nawata Kazuo suggests that, beyond the general appeal of the tales as detective fiction, what most attracted Kidō's attention was the description of customs and social conditions of nineteenth-century London which Doyle masterfully interwove in his narratives:

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[174] Okamoto Ki (2001), vol. 1, p. 38.

[175] Okamoto Ki. (2007a) p. 333.

> Two-wheeler cabs speeding through the foggy London streets, Holmes's profile standing out against a gas lamp: in these [descriptions], through the form of detective fiction, were vividly carved, without any loss of lustre, the figures and customs of the people who lived in those times.[176]

It is easy to see why Nawata would draw such a comparison, given Kidō's attention to historical detail and his focus on presenting the reality of the Edo period to modern readers as vividly as possible, and indeed other critics have pointed out the possibility that Kidō first realised the potential of 'city literature' by learning from Doyle.[177] A small clarification is in order, however: Doyle was describing the very society he was living in, all his portrayals are accounts of contemporary life and culture, not of the past. It is true that his later stories (published as late as 1927) were still mostly set in the 1890s, just like the first ones, which had come out in those years (the first two novels and 24 stories were published between 1887 and 1893, before an almost ten-year hiatus); this, however, is still not enough to mark them as nostalgic works. On the contrary, Doyle was always projecting towards the future, both in his character's progressive attitudes and his innovative methods of detection. Kidō, on the other hand, as we shall see in more depth in Section 3.2, was writing about times long gone, both temporally – Hanshichi's adventures are mostly set between the 1840s and early 1860s, more than fifty years before their publication, and before Kidō was even born – and culturally, as society had radically changed since the Edo period. Nostalgia was one of the main, if not the main, driving factor behind *Hanshichi torimonochō*, while mental and technological advancement is the main theme in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Still, the similarities between the two are undeniable, beginning with Nawata's comparisons, up to lighter considerations such as the fact that the two series had a similar run (four novels and 56 short stories for Holmes, one novel and 68 short stories for Hanshichi), and that both have shined at the expense of their authors' more 'serious' work – fantasy, science fiction, and historical novels for Doyle, theatre plays for Kidō.

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[176] Nawata (2004), pp. 24-25.

[177] Yokoyama (2002), pp. 156-158.

The connection between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the world of *torimonochō*, however, might go even deeper: Sakaguchi Ango, himself an author of detective fiction, including *torimonochō* specifically, identified in him, rather than Kidō, the founder of *torimonochō*. He wrote the following in an essay first published in 1950:

> In today's Japan, the world up until Doyle has been transplanted in *torimonochō*. *Torimonochō* do not feature fingerprints or scientific forensics analyses, but the deductions and the trick styles are Doyle's; Doyle is the founder of *torimonochō*, and he is more *torimonochō*-esque than detective fiction[-esque].[178]

At the end of the same essay, after arguing that the format of the novel suits detective fiction better than that of the short story, since the brevity of the latter makes it difficult for the writer to properly draw in and fascinate the reader, Ango goes back to his parallel between Doyle and *torimonochō*:

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[178] Sakaguchi (1998), p. 58.

> To make [people] read detective fiction in the short-story [format], Doyle's approach is the peak; in other words, the reasoning [typical] of *torimonochō* fits the purpose. It is only natural that *torimonochō* should be popular as one-off reading material; it is impossible for detective fiction which [aims to] engage author and reader in a battle of wits through complicated mysteries to display its charm in [forms] other than the novel.[179]

Ango's reasoning is arguably biased towards the concept of detective fiction as a 'puzzle game' and nothing else, an idea which was rather widespread among both authors and public in Japan at the time, and seems to imply a not-too-subtle slight towards *torimonochō*, Doyle's work, and the short-story format in general as something less than 'proper' detective fiction. Such value judgements notwithstanding, it is striking that he would go as far as equating Doyle's work to a *torimonochō* series – sans scientific advancements, naturally – and Doyle himself as the progenitor of the genre. It goes without saying that such a statement is nothing more than poetic exaggeration, but Ango's words have the merit of expressing just how tight the connection between these two worlds is.

2.3 – A Multicultural Product

We have seen how *torimonochō* were born of a variety of international inputs and influences, making them a fundamentally multicultural product, even if the various parts they are made out of are not equal in importance or in the 'space' they occupy. The concept of multiculturality can be applied not just to *torimonochō* themselves, but more widely to Japanese detective fiction – and arguably to detective fiction in general as well, though that would require a separate and very different line of reasoning. The various connections which have been mentioned in the course of this chapter, linking Chinese and Western literary trends to the ultimately Japanese product of *torimonochō*, could be applied equally well to demonstrate the multiculturality of Japanese detective fiction, with the exception of those which more specifically relate to the former genre, such as Kidō's knowledge of Chinese tales.

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[179] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

Despite this consideration, detective fiction and *torimonochō* have traditionally been seen as distant enough from each other to warrant being treated as almost completely separate entities, in this as in other matters, to the point that the latter has constantly been considered a purely Japanese product, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, while detective fiction was initially regarded as 'an imported and novel narrative structure' whose 'relative fixity meant it could not so easily withstand hybridization with native Japanese forms and still remain true to itself', meaning that 'early Japanese detective writers were [...] keenly aware of their status as borrowers from Western sources'.[180] And while authors' and critics' views on detective fiction have since radically changed – Sari Kawana has pointed out how we should revisit the concept of the West-Japan relationship as a unilateral master-pupil one, and rethink the notions of originality and authenticity themselves in this context,[181] and Satoru Saito has argued that Ranpo's use of famous tricks from Western detective stories, with subverted endings to lull his readers into a false sense of security, gives us a different way of perceiving the same relationship,[182] just to cite two recent examples – the same cannot be said to have happened with regards to *torimonochō*, which to this day are all too often still depicted as 'just Japanese'.

This is not to deny that the Japanese element in *torimonochō* is both the most readily apparent and the most important one. Quite the contrary, the very 'Japanese-ness' of

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[180] Silver (2008), pp. 2-3.
[181] Kawana (2008), p. 19.
[182] Saito Satoru (2012), p. 246.

torimonochō invites the critic to mark down the many influences which led to its creation, and how these sources have been processed and refined into a final product which can boast an entirely Japanese essence at the same time as a host of foreign elements, seamlessly blended into the whole, their integration so complete that they, too, appear to be just another aspect of a fully Japanese entity, not dissimilarly to how once-foreign words such as *tenpura* or *zubon* are now considered utterly Japanese. Silver suggests that Kidō was profoundly aware of the differences between Western modernity and Japanese traditionalism, and that his works are informed by his fear of this difference not being preserved;[183] and yet Kidō carried out an extremely difficult balancing act, taking elements of Western modernity (in the form of the newly-imported detective story) and of Japanese traditionalism (in the form of *Ōoka seidan* and other *saiban shōsetsu* of Chinese origin), and yet managing to distance himself from both of these poles to create something well and truly Japanese. This clever 'trick' of purely-Japanese multiculturality is perhaps best exemplified in a quote by Kidō himself:

> So, what I thought when I actually got to the point of writing [*Hanshichi torimonochō*] was that up to that point there had been no detective story [set] in the Edo period. I thought that since works like *Ōoka seidan* or *Itakura seidan* [sic] rather placed the emphasis on court cases, it would have been interesting to try and write something new which placed the emphasis on the detective. Furthermore, I did it because I thought that if I were to write a detective story [set] in modern times, there would have inevitably been the danger of easily falling into imitating Western [works]; so, if I were to write it in pure Edo style instead, maybe the end result would have been something with a somewhat unique charm.[184]

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[183] Silver (2008), p. 178.

[184] Okamoto Ki. (2007a), p. 334.

Chapter 3 – A Familiar Place: Traditional Edos

As we have seen in the previous chapter, *torimonochō* are composed of many multicultural parts, but they are, after all, Japanese at heart. This might lead one to believe that they all represent the same past, providing a constant and coherent window on old Japan, and more specifically on old Edo. As a matter of fact, one can find a tendency to indiscriminately ascribe certain characteristics, only appropriate for some *torimonochō*, to the whole genre. Author and critic Nozaki Rokusuke speaks of ‘a beautified Edo, an otherworldly realm of fantasy and desires’,[185] while Cécile Sakai describes *torimonochō* as ‘resolutely optimistic’, saying that ‘the idealisation of Edo-period mores and the exaltation of Confucian values served to reinforce the nostalgia for a lost Golden Age’.[186] The consensus, both among scholars and the general public, seems therefore to be that *torimonochō*, as a genre, offer a biased picture of life in the Edo period, viewed through the lens of nostalgia for the ‘good old days’. This is not necessarily untrue, but it could be argued that it constitutes an oversimplification: some works do indeed present such a rose-tinted view, but one can also easily find counter-examples, series that distance themselves from this mould and yet fully belong to the genre. It is probably not a coincidence that *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, the series which most closely resembles this description of *torimonochō*, is also the most famous, and the most well-remembered amongst the public: the character of Heiji is synonymous with *torimonochō*, he has become a fixture in popular culture not only through the hundreds of stories he stars in, but also through countless TV, film, and radio adaptations, not to forget the homages often paid to him by other authors (the readiest example of which is to be found in Inspector Zenigata, from the *Lupin the Third* franchise, exceptionally well known even to Western audiences). Ozawa Nobuo 小沢信男

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[185] Nozaki (2010b), p. 3.

[186] Sakai (1987), p. 162.

argues that this formula, the *torimonochō* as a paean to the good old days of Edo, has become commonly accepted precisely because of the *Heiji* series.[187]

And yet, if one looks beyond this overarching generalisation, it is easy to see how each *torimonochō* has its own particular spin, how the city of Edo which forms the background for almost all of them is actually a different place each time, though sometimes only subtly so. The next two chapters will therefore be dedicated to comparing and contrasting the settings of the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*', especially focusing on the *Hanshichi* and *Sashichi* series, to highlight the specificities of each work, and how they contribute to carrying the author's message and individual style. We will first discuss the two works which, albeit for different reasons, are most closely associated with the 'traditional' current of *torimonochō*: *Hanshichi torimonochō*, which, by virtue of originating the genre, has an exceedingly legitimate claim to tradition, and *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, which most closely embodies what a traditional *torimonochō* is popularly assumed to be like. Instead of following a strict chronological order, however, we will first examine the *Heiji* series – precisely because it is so often considered representative of its whole genre to the point of stylisation – and then *Hanshichi torimonochō*. Beginning with the 'most typical' *torimonochō* will allow us to better grasp how the others differ in their approach to the subject matter.

3.1 – Zenigata Heiji's 'Utopia of Law'

Nomura Kodō 野村胡堂 (1882-1963), the author of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, was born in Iwate prefecture, in a farming family. He moved to Tōkyō later in life, to attend university, and remained there, working for a newspaper and beginning his literary career. Unlike Okamoto Kidō, being the son of a farmer in northern Japan, Kodō did not have any particular connection to Edo, nor any grounding in its culture and mores. One might argue, then, that he was decidedly at a disadvantage in writing *torimonochō*, a genre which seems to completely revolve around the description of seasons, evoking the picturesque atmospheres of the pre-modern period. And yet it was he, not Kidō, who managed to propel this genre to its fullest heights, to brand the name of its protagonist in the minds of countless Japanese readers, and from there even in the minds of those who have never read a single story, or who do not even recognise the word *torimonochō* itself. Okamoto Kidō created the genre and, through his endless knowledge of Edo society and history, captured the hearts of scholars, nostalgists and Edo-period aficionados; but Nomura Kodō captured the hearts of the masses.

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[187] Ozawa (2001), p. 79.

How did he manage to overcome this supposed handicap, then? Trying to build a realistic Edo was out of the question, because it would have meant competing directly with the *Hanshichi* series, and it would have been an uphill battle. But there might have been more than just that: Nawata Kazuo draws attention to Kodō's relationship with Yada Sōun.[188] Yada worked with Kodō at the *Hōchi shinbun* 報知新聞, and from 1920 to 1923, while Kodō was head of the local news department, he published *Edo kara Tōkyō e*, a work not dissimilar in style to the classical *Edo meisho zue* 江戸名所図会, dedicated to exploring the various wards and neighbourhoods of Tōkyō with the intent of finding remnants of the Edo period, both in the form of buildings and memorials, and in the form of old tales and historical traces that had not yet been erased. This turned out to be an extremely fortunate endeavour, as the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1 September 1923 had disastrous consequences for the city of Tōkyō, and reputedly destroyed what was still left to connect the city to its ancient roots, creating in turn a wave of desire among the residents to go back, if only on paper, to the past that had been forcefully taken from them. Kodō and Sōun are traditionally described as old friends, and very close to each other, but Nawata argues that their relationship was actually somewhat strained, as the newspaper's office was too small to contain two talents of their calibre, and Kodō as a moralist disapproved of Sōun's extramarital relationships. When he was asked to write what would go on to become the *Heiji* series, Nawata argues, Kodō was very conscious of Sōun's work, of its status as heir apparent to one half of the *Hanshichi* series' legacy: its historical dives, the accurate portrayal of Edo, albeit deprived of a framing fictional narrative. Nawata's conclusion is that Kodō therefore avoided focusing on historical detail, for fear of being seen as retreading old ground, and coming up as second-best to Sōun's *Edo kara Tōkyō e*: he decided, instead, to challenge *Umon torimonochō*, the successor to the other half of the *Hanshichi* formula, the nostalgic entertainment.

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[188] Nawata (2004), pp. 246-251.

Kodō's aim in writing the *Heiji* series has therefore been to describe the world not as it historically was, but as it should have been: he is not so much depicting Edo society as he is moulding it into his preferred shape, in his own ideal image. This means that his stories often contain inaccuracies, anachronisms, expressions and thoughts that do not rightly belong to a Japanese citizen in the Edo period, and Kodō has sometimes been rebuked by fans and critics for these slips. The most frequent, and probably the most glaring, of these 'poetic licences', is probably Heiji's defiant attitude towards samurai, his interference in their affairs, and even his occasional raid in one of their mansions (an absolutely unthinkable action for a lowly *okappiki* like him). Nawata, however, rightly argues that the *Heiji* series is, after all, fiction and not a historical treatise, and therefore one should give priority not to the accuracy of the historical facts presented within the author's work, but to the question of what the author wanted to write and communicate by overstepping the boundaries of historical accuracy.[189] Taking liberties with established facts is nothing new to Japanese fiction and theatre, and Kodō himself drew such a comparison to 'defend' his work from similar accusations.

> […] I'm a farmer, a child of the Nanbu Domain [more commonly known as the Morioka Domain] peasant revolts of the Tenpō era [1830-1844]. I've had

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[189] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

> an antipathy towards samurai since I was a child, so even now I tend to make fun of them. When I wrote *Maigofuda* [The Identification Tag], I was rebuked. Heiji, an *okappiki*, raids a big *hatamoto* mansion and makes some cutting remarks. Such a ridiculous thing could never happen, but it's similar to the fisherman Fukashichi bursting in the residence of Minister Iruka and verbally attacking him in the play *Imoseyama*. When the *chōnin* of Edo saw this play, they cheered loudly, [doing something like] that was a dream of the *chōnin* class.[190]

In drawing a parallel between his own story and the classical play *Imoseyama onna teikin* 妹背山婦女庭訓, Kodō was clearly not comparing the two in quality or critical reception – that is, he wasn't flattering himself as being the equal of Chikamatsu Hanji 近松半二 (1725-1783), or any other great *kabuki* and *bunraku* playwright – but merely bringing attention to how this specific stylistic device had been employed in the past, and how well it had been received by audiences. At the same time, Kodō's words plainly represent his empathy towards the *chōnin* class, and his desire to build an ideal society for them in 'his' Edo.

Despite the liberties he took with history, Kodō nonetheless strived to make the best of his stories' setting, not just by exploring its possibilities, but also by cleverly exploiting its innate limitations. This is perhaps most evident in the following excerpt, where Kodō is discussing detective fiction 'tricks', literary devices used by authors of the genre to pull the wool over the reader's eyes, in order to make the final reveal more effective.

> In devising tricks, one must rely on one's quick wit, logical way of thinking and vast knowledge; I compare this to *go* or *shōgi* problems. It goes without saying that psychological tricks, such as those born from discrepancies or distortions [found] between individuals' feelings, are more interesting than

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[190] NOMURA Kodō *et al*. "Torimonochō no sekai" 捕物帖の世界. In: Nomura (1979), pp. 235-236.

> those employing new machines, complicated devices, or poisons without chemical equations.
>
> In period novels, there are no pistols, telephones, motor vehicles or potassium cyanide. As a result, tricks are severely restricted, but in return one does not need to worry about [the possibility that] in ten years' time social conditions or economic frameworks will radically change, making said tricks useless. For example, in the past ten years, postcards in Tōkyō have gone from 1 *sen* 4 *rin* [0.014 yen] up to 5 yen, while the train fare has risen from 8 *sen* [0.08 yen] to 10 yen; but, in the Tokugawa period, a bowl of *soba* kept [a fixed price of] 16 *mon* for hundreds of years.[191]

Where most people saw constraints, Kodō apparently saw opportunities to forge better tricks and immortal plots, capitalising on the possibilities offered by the Edo-period setting.

Precise year references are rare, but it is clear that the stories in the *Heiji* series initially take place at the very beginning of the Edo period. The fifth story, *Yūrei ni sareta onna* 幽霊にされた女 [The Woman Who Was Made into a Ghost],[192] for example, specifically mentions that Heiji was active from the Kan'ei 寛永 era (1624-1644) up to the Meireki 明暦 (1655-1658) and Manji 万治 (1658-1661) eras. However, the time setting was destined to change quite soon: without so much as an explanation, or a change in the character's age and appearance, there is a clear shift to the Kasei 化政 period (1804-1830).[193] Looking back on them, the first stories in the series emerge as a sort of experiment: the author seems to be trying out many different things, before finally settling on what would become the basic formula for the whole series. Oshizu お静, Heiji's devoted wife, does not even appear at first, and it is only with the tenth story, *Shichinin no hanayome* 七人の花嫁 [The Seven Brides][194] that the two marry and the chronological evolution of the characters stops. From that point on, Heiji is eternally 31 years old (Oshizu being 23), never appearing to age or change in any way despite his numerous adventures; concurrently, references to era names become even rarer, and the cultural mores clearly shift to those of the Bunka-Bunsei period, arguably a more typical time frame for period pieces of this kind.

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[191] NOMURA Kodō. "Torimono shōsetsu wa tanoshi" 捕物小説は楽し. In: Nomura (1979), p. 165.

[192] Nomura (1956-1958), vol. 1, pp. 60-74.

[193] The term 'Kasei period', while often used as if it were a unit, does not actually point to a single era, being rather a collective name for the Bunka 文化 (1804-1818) and Bunsei 文政 (1818-1830) eras taken together. The term 'Bunka-Bunsei period' is also quite common.

Why did Kodō initially choose such an early setting, and why did he later decide to change it? There is no certain and definitive answer, but several theories have been proposed by scholars. Ozawa Nobuo believes that one of the reasons might be found in the public's perception of the *bakumatsu* period at the time: since the Sacchōdohi 薩長土肥 alliance (the alliance between the domains of Satsuma 薩摩, Chōshū 長州, Tosa 土佐 and Hizen 肥前, the main force behind the Meiji Restoration) had been in power since the end of the Edo period, most stories with a *bakumatsu* setting tended to have imperialist tendencies, their heroes being members of the anti-shogunate faction, with the Tokugawa side, exemplified by figures such as Kondō Isami, mostly relegated to the roles of antagonists.[195] This, Ozawa argues, might have led to a form of self-censorship, or self-constraint, which made it difficult for authors to propose a pro-shogunate figure such as an *okappiki* – let alone a *dōshin* – as the hero of a *bakumatsu* story. Another potential reason, according to Ozawa, was the much more prosaic deference towards leading experts on the Edo period such as Okamoto Kidō or Mitamura Engyo 三田村鳶魚 (1870-1952), both alive and active at the time: Kodō would not have felt up to the task of recreating a historically accurate *bakumatsu* Edo, and therefore decided to 'seek refuge', as it were, in earlier times. Ozawa's conclusion is that, despite the presence of some anachronisms such as the appearance of Ryōgokubashi (which had not yet been built at the time), Kodō ended up feeling too confined in the small Edo of the early seventeenth century, and therefore decided to move forward in time, while still keeping the same ageless characters. While Ozawa's explanation for the initial choice seems well-researched and convincing enough, the motivation he puts forward for the subsequent shift to the Bunka-Bunsei period appears too vague to be immediately agreeable. Nawata's reasoning in this matter appears more satisfactory:

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[194] *Ibid.*, pp. 137-153.

[195] Ozawa (2001), pp. 77-78.

> But, while the very kernel of this work's ideology – that is, the 'utopia of law' (法のユートピア) – was gradually forming, a release from historical verisimilitude was also concurrently taking place, story after story. In other words, this means that at the same time as the 'fantasy Edo' within *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* was being established, a clear time setting became unnecessary to the story.[196]

Kodō was not aiming to create a realistic Edo in the first place, so it seems very probable that, the more he refined his own ideal version of the city, the more unnecessary it became to provide any actual time frame to the reader. While the social mores and outward appearances were borrowed from the Bunka-Bunsei period, the city Heiji operated in was not actually nineteenth-century Edo, but rather Kodō's own Edo, a place that bore many superficial similarities to the real one, but was nonetheless a different city altogether.

The reason Kodō decided to make his world an idealised space, as opposed to any of the other possible routes he could have gone, is to be found in his nature as a moralist. He himself describes his own work as a 'utopia of law', arguing that the Edo period was a dark age under many respects, and the object of *torimonochō* was to provide an ideal image, a positive reflection of the times.

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[196] Nawata (2004), p. 246.

> The Edo period, from an institutional point of view, was a very bad period. But there were countless, hidden good sides. I want to delve deeply into those. Taking advantage of the strange game that are *torimono shōsetsu*.[197]

Heiji is a strictly monogamous, loving husband, his wife Oshizu is likewise the epitome of a good wife, and Kodō described both Heiji's *kobun* Hachigorō 八五郎 and himself as feminists: 'People who oppress innocent women, in particular, will be punished without fail [in my stories]. That's because I, like Hachigorō, am a feminist'.[198] Nozaki goes as far as describing Kodō as 'not only someone who polished and perfected *torimonochō*, but a transmitter of morality as well'.[199] The agelessness of the characters also supports Kodō's fantasy by placing them in a timeless vacuum, far away from any undesired influence that might risk bringing them back to earth and out of the author's 'dream world'.

This utopia, however, is not regulated by cold laws, but rather by upstanding citizens who act as self-appointed moral guardians, in a way that might be described as anarchical, or at the very least a form of vigilantism, a clear attempt at subverting what was considered the natural order of things at the time, the unequal relationship between samurai and *chōnin*, the latter being more or less subjected to the former. Heiji, as a mere *okappiki*, is neither a samurai nor a high-ranking officer of any kind, and is technically only responsible for conducting basic investigations and dragging criminals to his superiors; and yet, he frequently takes the law into his own hands, often deciding to forgive criminals and not to arrest them, following the classical Confucian principle of *tsumi o nikunde hito o nikumazu* 罪を憎んで人を憎まず (variously translated as 'hate the person but not the vice', 'condemn the offense, but pity the offender', etc.).

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[197] NOMURA Kodō. "Heiji minoue banashi" 平次身の上話. In: Nomura (1979), p. 151.
[198] *Ibid.*
[199] Nozaki (2010b), p. 49.

> Both in the second story, *Furisode Genta* 振袖源太,[200] and the third story, *Daitō zange* 大盗懺悔 [Repentance of a Master Thief],[201] Heiji in the end lets the criminals go unpunished. An attitude of customary hatred not towards the people who commit crimes, but towards the hypocrisy and authority that drove them to it, and Kodō's strong belief that what sustains a true society should not be the cold letter of the law, but the spirit of humanism that pulses in people's hearts, are clearly engraved here.
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> Realists would certainly laugh, calling this an ideal.
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> But Kodō would undoubtedly not mind that. Rather, he would probably offhandedly reply like this:
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> 'Of course it's an ideal. But precisely because the warped aspects of our world are overlooked at the level of reality, we have to correct them within novels, at least.'[202]

In the *Heiji* series, the criminals are often depicted as victims of their circumstances, resorting to crime only to redress some wrongs that formal justice has neglected or failed to rectify, highlighting the flaws and contradictions of society in the process. Of course, Heiji does not let every single criminal escape, but even when he ends up arresting them, he always listens to their story and feels compassion for their plight, a sentiment that the author tries to convey to the reader as well. In fact, Kodō draws a parallel between himself and Victor Hugo in this respect:

> […] Seven or eight times out of ten, my Zenigata Heiji forgives criminals, and on the contrary punishes hypocrites. The spirit of modern law is 'punish the actions, not the motives', but Zenigata Heiji concerns himself with those

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[200] Nomura (1956-1958), vol. 1, pp. 15-29.
[201] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-45.
[202] Nawata (2004), pp. 228-229.

> motives too, punishing hypocrisy and immorality. Such a wilful *kanzen chōaku* is quite improbable. Victor Hugo, in writing his immortal masterpiece *Les Misérables*, criticised the shortcomings and cruelty of the law. I, by having Zenigata Heiji throw his coins, am creating a 'utopia of law', in which criminals with good intentions are forgiven. Such a state could only be established in the world of period pieces.[203]

The series itself espouses a state of honest and dignified poverty, which is perhaps best exemplified by a quote from the story *Garappachi shūgen* ガラッ八祝言 [Garappachi's Wedding].[204] Near the end, Heiji mentions that 'not knowing the good taste of poverty is where rich people are to blame', likely channelling the author's opinion on the matter. In fact, this ideal of honest poverty might be at the root of the series' warm reception by the general public, or at least be one of its many causes. Moreover, like *Umon torimonochō*, but standing out from most other series, *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* is written not in the usual *de aru* style, but in the *desu-masu* style. This gives readers a sense of comfort and familiarity, putting them in a relaxed state of mind, as if they were listening to a friend or relative telling a story, instead of simply reading it, making for a more approachable product. Nozaki further argues that this strong idealisation by Kodō is closely linked to the series' popularity:

> There were no respectable guys among Edo-period *okappiki*. This is not a historical secret or anything. Anyone with a certain degree of historical knowledge would know this as a matter of course. But the *okappiki* in the world of *torimonochō* are the kind of sparkling champions of morality who might glory in a People's Honour Award, as exemplified by Zenigata Heiji. The popularity of *torimonochō* clearly belongs to an imaginary world. Fully

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[203] NOMURA Kodō. "Heiji minoue banashi" 平次身の上話. In: Nomura (1979) p. 151.

[204] Nomura (1956-1958), vol. 5, pp. 271-284.

> knowing it's a lie – or rather, specifically because it's a complete fabrication – people could relieve their everyday exhaustion through *torimonochō*.[205]

As we have seen, Kodō's Edo is ideal, rather than realistic, but more specifically it reflects the spirit of the citizens of Edo, drawing from the world of *ukiyo-e* for its panoramas and descriptions (Kodō was an avid collector of Hiroshige prints) and from that of *senryū* for its light-hearted humour and 'common touch' – Kodō, in fact, often urged young *torimonochō* authors to read *senryū* to help them in their story-crafting, and the 'people's point of view' that pervades *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, and sets it apart from other series, is aptly represented by this form of poetry.[206]

The main characteristics of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, as defined by the author, are 'first of all, not easily creating criminals, having felt affection towards *chōnin* and locals, having thoroughly chastened samurai and *tsūjin*, and trying to make [the series] as a whole a bright and healthy *torimono*'.[207] The article containing this statement was originally published in September 1957 on *Ōru yomimono*, the magazine which had hosted the great majority of the *Heiji* series, and which just the previous month had released to the public the 383rd and last story of this *torimonochō*, *Teppō no oto* 鉄砲の音 [The Sound of a Gun].[208] Kodō, therefore, was not outlining his plans for the future, but looking back on what he had already written in the past twenty-six years, with a comprehensive – if not completely objective – view on his work. These four points are mostly accurate to the series as a whole, and would subsequently be picked up by critics discussing it, but they do not necessarily apply to Heiji's very first adventures. As was mentioned before, the initial run of the series, broadly defined as including the first ten stories, was quite experimental and could often be read more as an action-packed tale of the bizarre than a typical *torimonochō*.[209] The first story, *Konjiki no shojo* 金色の処女 [The Golden Maiden],[210] published in April 1931, would probably shock many long-time fans of the series: starting with the double thread of a conspiracy to assassinate the shogun on one side, and a serial kidnapping of young girls on the other, the plot quickly evolves to Oshizu – at the time Heiji's lover – being sent undercover to investigate, getting captured and almost falling victim to what could probably best be described as a kind of black mass. Heiji finds her just in the nick of time, completely naked and about to be sacrificed, and saves her in the climax of the story by throwing not his customary 4-*mon* coin but a *koban* he had been entrusted with for expenses, earning the gratitude of shogun Ienari and widespread fame as a master detective (or, more actually, a master of *torimono*). This is a far cry from the characteristics outlined above, arguably contradicting all of the points except for the love for the common people: the criminals are plentiful and irredeemable, saving the shogun from an assassination plot and earning his gratitude could hardly be qualified as a chastisement of the samurai class, and a black mass with the naked lover of the protagonist as its centrepiece is by no means healthy and cheerful.

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[205] Nozaki (2010b), p. 195.

[206] Nawata (2004), pp. 217-221.

[207] NOMURA Kodō. "Heiji to ikita nijūshichinen" 平次と生きた二十七年. In: Nomura (1979), p. 195.

[208] Nomura (1956-1958), vol. 26, pp. 109-122. The story *Yari no ho* 槍の穂 [The Spearhead] (*Ibid.*, pp. 99-108) was published in the same month on the magazine *Ie no hikari* 家の光, so which one should be regarded as the last story is debatable. I am personally following the order of stories chosen by the only complete collection of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* to date, Nomura (1956-1958).

Regardless of these 'growing pains', Kodō's four points are an accurate summation of the spirit of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, and a closer examination will yield more insight into the author's worldview.

The first point, 'not easily creating criminals', might seem somewhat contradictory for what is, after all, a form of detective story, where everything necessarily revolves around crimes and the people committing them. The solution to this apparent incongruity is in how Kodō uses the word 'criminal' (*zainin* 罪人): while usually simply defined as 'someone who committed a crime', another possible definition of the word is 'someone who has been irrevocably judged as guilty'.[211] In light of what has been mentioned before about Heiji's frequent practice of taking the law into his own hands, by forgiving criminals – as in, people who have committed crimes – he is effectively making them non-criminals, because they have been absolved of all charges. Of course, there are occasions when even Heiji cannot avoid arresting a criminal, but they are relatively rare, which corresponds perfectly with the concept of 'not easily creating criminals'. Another perspective on the matter, wider and less based on playing with the literal meaning of the words, is that Kodō did not like to create 'evil' characters: the criminals in his stories tend to be people who have been forced in such a position by society, or by coincidences conspiring against them in general, rather than base, despicable individuals acting for profit or even less savoury motivations. In other words, Kodō believed in the basic goodness of man, and therefore he disliked 'creating criminals', as it were, which in turn usually led him to produce stories with fundamentally good people forced to commit crimes, rather than felons with no redeemable qualities.

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[209] Nozaki (2010b), p. 44.

[210] Nomura (1956-1958), vol. 1, pp. 1-14.

The fourth point, 'trying to make [the series] as a whole a bright and healthy *torimono*', is equally indicative of Kodō's optimism and humanism, albeit on a different level. While the previous point exemplified his idealistic outlook within his imaginary world, this one brings forth his attitude towards real society. It can easily be imagined how Kodō, who aimed to correct the warped aspects of the world within his stories, would also want to present them as a product that would inspire people, focusing on positivity and wholesomeness rather than on the darker and more morbid sides of Edo life. This approach is particularly interesting as it contrasts, as we will see in later sections, with those taken by other series, *Hanshichi torimonochō* and *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* in particular. Many other authors, however, sought to replicate Kodō' success by imitating his formula and producing works that lacked in variety and quality, leaving the true development of the genre to just a few works.

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[211] Definitions taken from Shinmura (2008).

The second and third points, 'having felt affection towards *chōnin* and locals' and 'having thoroughly chastened samurai and *tsūjin*', are two sides of the same coin, best treated as a single entity, and they are perhaps the most central characteristic of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*. It is no mystery that Kodō had a predilection for 'commoners' – by which term I include *chōnin*, farmers, outcasts and in general all those persons in the Edo period who were considered to be less fortunate than samurai and/or subject to their authority – and a deep dislike for the military class. The whole series is pervaded by the commoner's point of view, looking up towards those of higher standing not in defeat but with a good deal of pride and defiance, something that cannot be found in series like *Umon torimonochō*, and which gives Kodō's work a not-too-subtle undercurrent of rebellion against authority. *Hanshichi torimonochō* often deals with samurai too, but it is a mirror that reflects both *chōnin* and samurai societies in a parallel, balanced way, argues Nawata; *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, on the other hand, is always extremely critical of the latter whenever the case its protagonist is currently solving sees him leaving his customary *chōnin* surroundings to deal with the military class.[212] Heiji is a 'man of the people', and the reader is always encouraged to take his side in sympathising with commoners and looking down on samurai, in a complete reversal of the roles of Edo-period society as it is traditionally described.

There are several possible explanations for this attitude, one of which is Kodō's above-mentioned opinion that real-world injustices should be corrected at least within works of fiction. But an argument could be made that this has much more personal roots, going back to Kodō's countryside background: as the son of a farming family, he had always been very conscious of peasant oppression by the upper classes, and of the revolts that frequently happened not too long before his time. Opposing samurai rule, albeit in the form of the fiction he wrote, was a sensitive topic for him, and one he cared much about. Shiraishi Kiyoshi, an early scholar of detective fiction and *torimonochō*, recognised this fundamental characteristic of the series, arguing that Heiji and his *kobun* Hachigorō loved the *chōnin* class and rebelled against samurai oppression like true democrats, and even goes as far as arguing that this attitude can be extended to the *torimonochō* genre in general, which near the end of the Second World War provided the masses – conscious of the imminent defeat, disillusioned by the heartless military government, and deprived of other outlets – with a way to channel these rebellious sentiments.[213] Kodō himself, in one of his essays, reminisces on how deeply he felt about this:

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[212] Nawata (2004), p. 223.

> Talking about myself is somewhat inappropriate, but using me, the most prolific author of *torimono shōsetsu*, as an example, I believe that in my 300 *Zenigata Heiji* stories and my 100 *Ikeda Daisuke* stories, not once have I praised or advocated the feudal system, morals or society. Even during that great war [World War II], when baffling ideologies and morality were rampant, I feel that I kept rejecting things like that bigoted, feudalistic [concept of] loyalty [based on] a mistaken *giri ninjō*, the slavery, the hypocrisy, the *otokodate*, the *yakuza*, prostitution. On occasion, I also severely attacked the morals, customs and pride of the narrow-minded samurai class. I was born in a family of farmers that had been farmers for generations, and as a teenager I grew up smelling the embers of the feudal system; it was completely natural that I resented the high-handedness of samurai, the heroism of gamblers, and the warped feudal *giri ninjō*. If someone can find, among the more than 400 *torimono shōsetsu* I have written,

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[213] Shiraishi (1949), pp. 81, 95.

> even a single [expression of] praise or encouragement for feudality, I will make the humblest of apologies in front of him.[214]

The animated way in which Kodō deals with this speaks volumes about his passion for justice and his profound awareness of social distinctions in the Edo period, originating not from scholarly research but rather from personal experience. In a short essay entitled *Heiji to kaji* 平次と火事 [Heiji and Fire], Kodō retails a very interesting episode from his childhood which further cements the personal connection between him and Zenigata Heiji.[215] When he was just 10 years old, he was abruptly woken up one day because the shed behind the family home had caught fire, and since at the time his village did not have a pump or other appropriate fire-fighting equipment, all they could do was watch as the fire spread to the house and eventually razed it to the ground. The shed contained dry horse feed, which was quite flammable, but no flames of any kind, so everyone was puzzled as to the origin of the blaze. The Nomuras built a temporary shed and started rebuilding the house, a work which took several months, and Kodō noticed a young farmhand who was staying with them and who worked frantically every day to help with the reconstruction, and as soon as the house was completed, he vanished into thin air, never to be seen again. The young Kodō kept wondering about this disappearance, until he finally came up with an answer: the young man had probably gone out at night, and when he came back at dawn found the door to the house closed, repaired to the shed, lit a cigarette and then inadvertently fell asleep while smoking it, thus igniting the fire. The man never confessed, and no one had seen him, but this seemed to be the most likely course of events. Kodō points out that, however amusing it might be to think of this as one of the causes that brought him to write *torimonochō* later in life, no such deep connection exists. There is no reason to doubt his word on this, but it is nonetheless possible to find in this an example of Heiji’s philosophy of forgiving criminals, as Nawata argues: since even a child like Kodō had figured out the truth behind the matter, no doubt the adults realised the farmhand's guilt as well, but no one said anything nor tried to pursue him after his disappearance, because they believed that his help in the reconstruction work had been a sufficient atonement, and had forgiven him for his carelessness.[216]

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[214] NOMURA Kodō. “Heiji tanjō” 平次誕生. In: Nomura (1979), p. 174.

[215] Nomura (1981).

It is perhaps excessively fanciful to trace back the origins of such a central tenet of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* to an episode which, by Kodō's own admission, probably had no special connection to it. Regardless, there is no doubting that this event impressed itself upon the author's memory, and the comparisons which can be easily drawn to his work are striking. The world of Heiji, despite being fundamentally a world of dreams, of ideals, is closely linked to the real world, the world of the author Nomura Kodō, and this arguably gives it at least part of its poignance.

3.2 – Hanshichi's 'Real Edo'

Hanshichi torimonochō is the first *torimonochō* series ever written, and Okamoto Kidō 岡本綺堂 (1872-1939), its author, is the originator of the whole genre. The decision to discuss an epigone like *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* before the founder, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, might therefore appear misguided or, at least, unusual. As is often the case not just with literary genres, but with ideologies or movements in general, the progenitor exhibits characteristics which would seem strange to those familiar with later instalments, which tend to change certain aspects of the original to create a new form, which then becomes recognised as the main-stream one. *Hanshichi torimonochō* is no exception, being quite atypical when confronted with its imitators, or even with comprehensive treatments and definitions of the genre – which is somewhat paradoxical, as most of the critical attention seems to be focused precisely on the *Hanshichi* series.

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[216] Nawata (2004), p. 232.

One of the 'oddities' of *Hanshichi torimonochō* is the very fact that its protagonist is a shogunate official in the *bakumatsu* period. As mentioned when discussing the *Heiji* series' setting, it was unusual – and unpopular – to present such characters as heroes in a post-Meiji Restoration Japan. If this was true of later *torimonochō*, which also had the further excuse of imitating the original formula, it was even more true for the *Hanshichi* series, which began in 1917, much closer to the Meiji Restoration itself. Why did Kidō then, without precedents to follow, make this unusual decision? As with Kodō, there is no clear-cut answer, but several factors in Kidō's life seem to point in the right direction, two in particular: his knowledge, and his ancestry. Regarding the first one, Kidō was a celebrated *kabuki* playwright, and had extensive knowledge of the Edo period, and of the *bakumatsu* period in particular, being the closest to him; so it was only natural that he should make use of his historical expertise in the setting of his *torimonochō*. The second point is perhaps less solid, but nonetheless merits some thought: Kidō's father Keinosuke 敬之助 (later Kiyoshi 潔, after the Restoration) was a retainer of the shogun by adoption, and did not easily submit to the imperial army: in fact, he fled Edo in April 1868 and fought in several battles of the Boshin War until he was wounded, at which point he secretly came back to Edo, and from there to Yokohama, hiding at the house of Brown, an English trader, who finally secured him a position at the English Legation.[217] It is arguably not a stretch, then, to point out that Kidō's father, not so much personally as by legacy, might have had an influence on his son when it came to Edo-related notions.

Whatever the influences, as we have seen in Section 1.2, *Hanshichi torimonochō* came before Edogawa Ranpo's *Nisen dōka* (1923), usually – albeit not universally – considered as the beginning of Japanese detective fiction. The *Hanshichi* series can therefore rightfully be considered not just the founder of a genre, but a pioneer of Japanese detective literature in general: some critics subscribe to this view, but the vast majority either refuse this possibility, or seem to ignore it entirely, without bothering to explain their reasons. Nozaki tries to explain this apparent contradiction:

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[217] Okamoto Ky. (2006), pp. 9-12.

> The middle of the Taishō era, when Hanshichi appeared. According to the generally accepted viewpoint, it was a period when the Japanese detective novel had not been born yet, the support for [works ranging] from adaptations of foreign works to true crime stories had begun to cool off, and the production of purely Japanese-made works was eagerly anticipated. The debut of Edogawa Ranpo was still a few years away.
>
> Okamoto introduces the *okappiki* Hanshichi as 'a Sherlock Holmes of the Edo period'. Translations of the Holmes stories were popular, but attempts to transfer the city detective story of Victorian-era England to Japanese soil had not been made by anyone. The *Hanshichi* series was the first. To put it plainly, it was Okamoto who led the way in the original production of Japanese detective novels. But the histories of literature for this genre, up until now, have been distinguishing Okamoto as the originator of *torimonochō*, and Edogawa as the front-runner for detective novels. Were the paths two? This is clearly the root [of what] blurred later interpretations. Everything will be easier if we think that the path was only one.[218]

In Nozaki's opinion, therefore, the reason why Kidō is usually not considered a pioneer of detective literature is that his production, being a *torimonochō*, was considered an entirely separate thing from 'actual' or 'proper' detective fiction: two diverging lines which are only rarely considered, as Nozaki does, a single one. In fact, *torimonochō* were generally looked down upon not only by readers, but also by most authors of detective fiction, not without a certain degree of haughtiness: even those who dealt with both *torimonochō* and 'proper' detective fiction tended to consider the former as nothing more than a sub-genre of historical literature, and when they devised a new 'trick', they used it in their 'proper' detective fiction first, only recycling it for *torimonochō* at a later stage.[219] Is there any merit to this consideration? Should we refrain from considering *torimonochō* – and the *Hanshichi* series specifically – detective literature, and if so, on what basis?

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[218] Nozaki (2010b), p. 20.

Nozaki himself, despite his earlier statements on *torimonochō* and detective novels as 'a single path', admits that it is difficult to defend *Hanshichi torimonochō* from the accusation of straying from the usual format and characteristics of the detective story (the clear presentation of clues, the solution reached through chains of logical reasoning, etc.); he also rightfully points out, however, that such rules were established in the West only by the mid-Twenties, much later than the *Hanshichi* series' first instalments.[220] The most famous examples of such rules are Ronald A. Knox's (1888-1957) "Decalogue" – also known as the "Ten Rules of Detective Fiction" or even the "Ten Commandments" – compiled in 1928, or the "Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories" (also called Van Dine's Commandments) published by S. S. Van Dine (1888-1939) in *The American Magazine* in September of the same year.[221] It is hardly fair to judge the worthiness of *Hanshichi torimonochō* on the basis of later rules, rules which had been gleefully disregarded by earlier Western authors like Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose status not just as members but as founders of detective literature is undoubted. Moreover, the critics themselves readily ignored these rules in practice, for example when compiling their lists of 'The Hundred Best', so it could be argued that they mostly remained theoretical guidelines rather than strict 'commandments', as they are often presented.[222] Still, it must be conceded that *Hanshichi torimonochō* is closer to the world of *kaiki shōsetsu* 怪奇小説 (horror or gothic novel) than to that of detective stories, as the grotesque or the uncanny often take precedence over the intellectual pleasure of a logical unravelling of the mystery, which is not always central or even important; a fact which, nonetheless, does not in the slightest diminish the series' value as detective literature, concludes Nozaki.[223] Indeed, the *Hanshichi* stories would not pass muster if judged by the standards of Western detective fiction of the so-called Golden Age – but there is no reason why they should be, not only for the points outlined above, but also because detective literature is a much wider field than just the Golden Age formula familiar to Agatha Christie (1890-1976) fans, even in the West. This should be doubly true for a Japanese work of the early nineteenth century such as *Hanshichi torimonochō*; and yet, paradoxically, Kidō's work seems to have been scrutinised in a particularly harsh way in an apparent effort to exclude it from the genre and relegate it to the realm of 'mere' historical literature. The main reasons *Hanshichi torimonochō* has not been read as detective fiction, as summed up by Nozaki, are *(a)* the focus on the historical side, *(b)* the preponderance of the bizarre over the modern and, most importantly, *(c)* the fact that the protagonist is not an amateur detective, but part of the official police force.[224]

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[219] TSUZUKI Michio 都筑道夫. "Angoryū tanteijutsu" 安吾流探偵術. In: Sakaguchi (1985), pp. 745-746.

[220] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 26-27.

[221] Saito Satomi (2007), p. 59.

However, we can also find dissenting voices among detective novel authors and critics. The best example is probably Tsuzuki Michio, critic and author of detective literature, and also of the much appreciated *Namekuji nagaya torimono sawagi* (see Section 1.5). In an essay written as a commentary for Hisao Jūran's *Agojūrō torimonochō*, he goes as far as arguing that *Hanshichi torimonochō* is 'purely detective literature', clearly 'possessing the intellectual framework of English detective novels'.[225] He does admit that this does not extend to

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[222] Symons (1993), p. 3.
[223] Nozaki (2010b), p. 27.
[224] Nozaki (2010a), pp. 46-47.
[225] Tsuzuki (1973), p. 275.

torimonochō as a whole, and that the genre took a rather different turn with subsequent works – especially *Umon torimonochō* – but he still maintains his point for *Hanshichi*, and for several other series.

Nawata, on the other hand, sees the problem of the fairness of the *Hanshichi* stories as strictly connected with the depiction of social classes.[226] He argues that the debate over the fairness or unfairness of the series – that is, its quality as an intellectual game and therefore a good part of its standing as a piece of Golden Age detective literature – is not applicable, loses meaning when faced with Kidō's intent in writing. His intent, Nawata concludes, was to create a 'commoner hero' who also took private cases which, often enough, dealt with samurai or monks: in so doing, the values and worldview of the commoners would be contrasted and compared with those of the higher classes, and it is precisely from the shared ground and oscillation between these two extremes – the amplitude, as Nawata puts it – that the solutions to the cases are born and drawn. This is in stark contrast to what has been previously said about *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*: Heiji too is a 'commoner hero', but in his case we find no meeting grounds with samurai, no compromises. Heiji's Edo is a place where the *chōnin* can take their revenge – at least on moral grounds – on the warrior class, invariably depicted in a negative light; Hanshichi's Edo, on the other hand, is a place where the coexistence of the two classes, with their pros and cons, is the substance behind the mysteries. The core of *Hanshichi torimonochō* is confrontation, not subdual.

3.2.1 – Kidō's Realistic Approach

The format of the *Hanshichi* stories is particularly interesting, as it offers certain characteristics which are unique to it, or at least rarely if ever picked up by other *torimonochō*. The usual pattern is as follows: the narrator – who is never explicitly called by name and only refers to himself as *watashi*, but is heavily implied to be Kidō[227] – meets Hanshichi, either by chance or by visiting him on purpose; while they are conversing, some event sparks Hanshichi's memory, and so he starts talking about one of his old cases, at which point Watashi invariably takes out his notebook and diligently jots down the old man's tale; Hanshichi relates his adventure, at which point the narration shifts from a first-person account by Watashi to a third-person chronicle of the events; when the tale nears its end, the narration shifts back to the present and to the first person, and Hanshichi explains any remaining mysteries, often adding details on what happened to the people involved with the case, personal comments or 'morals' that can be drawn from the story.

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[226] Nawata (2004), pp. 77-79.

This structure is not present in every single instance. The clearest exception is probably the very first story, *Ofumi no tamashii* [The Spirit of Ofumi],[228] which serves as a sort of introduction to the character of Hanshichi: Watashi is still a child, he has not yet met Hanshichi himself, and instead hears the story from his uncle, who had taken part in the investigation alongside the *okappiki*. Regardless of the rare structural variations, the shift to third-person narration presents interesting features: it is never explicitly stated, but everything leads the reader to believe that the framework of the stories – the beginning and ending sections in first person – are direct reminiscences of Watashi, while the third-person section – the bulk of the story, usually taking up as much as 90% of the narrative – is a subsequent revision, a polished product based on the notes he took while listening to Hanshichi's story. While the framework sections contain dialogue and even discussions between the two, the central part is a more straightforward narrative; however, this does not mean that it is a sterile, mechanical chronicling of events. On the contrary, Hanshichi often interjects with comments or explanations – since Watashi, like the ideal reader, is ignorant of many of the lesser-known customs of the Edo period. These comments are presented without returning to the present, and without recourse to the name of Hanshichi himself: in other words, they are written as if they were mere asides by the narrator. But the narrator, in this case, is Hanshichi, not Watashi. What we find is, therefore, a double shift: from a direct first-person narration by Watashi, to an indirect third-person narration by Hanshichi, but through the pen of Watashi and presumably, in-universe, through his revision.

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[227] In order to avoid confusion, from now on I will refer to this narrator as Watashi, capitalised as if it were a proper noun.

[228] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 1, pp. 7-38. In Okamoto Ki. (2007b), Ian MacDonald translates the title of this story as 'The Ghost of Ofumi'.

The fact that Watashi, in his role of listener, is universally equated with Kidō is no coincidence. Besides occasional implicit admissions to this effect (as we will see later), one must note that, when he was young, Kidō loved visiting old people and listening to their stories of times long past, and he employed this framework as a narrative style not just for the *Hanshichi* series, but for many of his works, most notably perhaps the series of short stories *Miura rōjin mukashi banashi* 三浦老人昔話.[229] One might be tempted, as critics invariably do when it comes to analysing detective stories, to draw a parallel between the relationship of Hanshichi and Watashi, and that of Holmes and Watson. Not only do the initials of the names correspond – a coincidence that is surprisingly rarely if ever remarked upon – but the characters also seem to fill the same respective roles, that of the investigator and his chronicler. The differences are arguably more noticeable than the similarities, and one should be wary of trying to force the framework of a Holmes-Watson-like relationship in every work of detective fiction. The large influence the Holmes stories had on Kidō, however, inevitably means that he was at the very least aware of this dynamic and of the possibility, if not necessity, of improving upon it, modifying it and adapting it to his own work - Saneyoshi Tatsuo 実吉達郎, in fact, argues that Kidō specifically avoided forging an identical relationship for fear it would come across as a mere imitation.[230] The most obvious modification is their age difference: whereas Holmes and Watson are only a few years apart, Hanshichi is several decades older than Watashi: this, Nawata argues, is a masterful literary technique to bring out the past to better effect.[231]

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[229] Nawata (2004), p. 46.

One of the founding characteristics of *Hanshichi torimonochō* is its realism: however, the concept of 'realism' as intended here ought to be clarified, as this series is by no means a realist work, for example, nor does it place literal realism as its foremost value. One expression of this realism is the fact that the reader can follow Hanshichi's life as if he were reading the biography of a real person: despite the stories not being published in chronological order in this sense, there is a remarkable degree of internal consistency, every story is precisely dated and often includes or mentions appropriate historical events. In describing this characteristic, Nozaki distinguishes two types of serialisation: chain-type serialisation, where each story is independent and only loosely connected to the others, so that any one of them can be read out of order without any great difficulty (this is the type most *torimonochō* series fall in); and tree-type serialisation, where each story can still be read separately from the others, but they are all strictly connected to a main narrative trunk, forming single branches of the protagonist's life with a precise collocation.[232] Tree-type serialisation allows the reader to piece together Hanshichi's biography with the utmost accuracy, and to read the stories – if he were so inclined – in chronological order, following the *okappiki*'s life from his earliest case to his last one. The consistency is not perfect in every single occasion, as Yamada Fūtarō points out in an essay where he analyses several such anachronisms; in conclusion, however, he still remarks that they are very few, and he is thoroughly impressed by Kidō's attention to detail.[233]

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[230] Saneyoshi (1988), p. 67.
[231] Nawata (2004), p. 50.
[232] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 23-24.
[233] Yamada (2017), p. 415.

Another expression of Kidō's realism is the historical detail that permeates nearly every story, and which is always remarked upon and explained by Hanshichi: when this happens in the middle of the story, as mentioned earlier, these remarks are presented as asides by the narrator, but when this happens at the beginning or end of the story – the Meiji-era framework – they assume a more direct character, which Okamoto Kyōichi, Kidō's heir, likened to the *makura* and *ochi*, respectively, of a *rakugo* performance.[234] One of these historical details, arguably the main one, is the status of *okappiki* themselves: although the popular image of this shogunate official, as presented in most *torimonochō*, is usually that of a good-natured and able detective, the reality was starkly different, as *okappiki* were not actually proper officials in the first place, and they were often reformed ex-criminals who kept side activities to round up their meagre salary, and did not shy away from intimidation and bribery to obtain their goals. This detail is usually ignored in *torimonochō* series, which tend to present a more idealised image of the Edo-period detective: *Hanshichi torimonochō* is not an exception in all respects, as its protagonist is indeed a good-natured investigator – if perhaps a bit more heavy-handed than some of his literary colleagues. An important difference, however, is that Kidō openly admits that most *okappiki* were less than benevolent, and in the very first story he presents Hanshichi as an explicit exception to this rule:

> Hanshichi was influential even among his fellow *okappiki*. However, he was a frank and honest Edo man, a rarity for people of his profession. One never heard bad rumours about him abusing his authority to bully the weak. He was a kind man towards everyone.[235]

In the following story, *Ishidōrō* 石灯籠 [The Stone Lantern],[236] Hanshichi talks in great detail about the lives of the *okappiki*, explaining the reasons behind their usual behaviour:

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[234] Okamoto Ky. (2009), p. 65.
[235] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 1, p. 24.
[236] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-71.

> Regarding us, apparently we were arbitrarily given many names by people, such as *goyōkiki*, *okappiki*, or *tesaki*; *goyōkiki* was a sort of honorific term, people used it when talking respectfully about us, and we used it when threatening others; the official name was *komono*. Since *komono* doesn't cut much of a figure,[237] we said *goyōkiki* or *meakashi*, but people often called us *okappiki*. Each *yoriki* had four or five *dōshin* under him, each *dōshin* had two or three *okappiki*, and those *okappiki* in turn had four or five *tesaki* under them; if an *okappiki* was somewhat influential, he might even command by himself from seven or eight *tesaki* up to ten. The salary given by the *machi bugyō* to *komono*, that is *okappiki*, was 1 *bu* and 2 *shu* a month, at best, and at worst just 1 *bu*. It might have been a time of low prices, but one couldn't make it with 1 *bu*, or 1 *bu* and 2 *shu* a month. On top of that, they employed five, or ten *tesaki*, who didn't receive a salary from anyone at all, so their *okappiki* boss had to take care of them somehow. In other words, it was an impossible system, with no chance of profit to begin with; so, naturally, it bred abuse, and often enough *okappiki* and *tesaki* came to be treated as vipers by the people. Most *okappiki* had some other, separate profession, though. They operated bathhouses under their wives' names, or small restaurants.[238]

In the same story, we also find the first and only mention in the whole series (except in the title itself) of the term *torimonochō*:

> Speaking of *torimonochō*, when *yoriki* and *dōshin* listened to the reports of *okappiki*, and in turn passed them on to the *machi bugyōsho*, in the office there was something like a ledger, where a scrivener provisionally recorded [the report]. This register was called *torimonochō*.[239]

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[237] The term *komono* 小者 literally means 'small person', in much the same sense we might say 'small fry' when referring to someone of minor significance within an organisation.

[238] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

[239] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Surprisingly, the very explanation for the title might be one of the few historical inaccuracies Kidō incurred in. First of all, the word itself should arguably be written not as 捕物帳 but rather as 捕者帳, with the implication therefore that they are registers of arrested criminals, rather than of the arrests themselves, however pettifogging the distinction might be. A more accurate definition of what exactly a *torimonochō* was can be found in Ōkuma Miyoshi's 大隈三好 (1906-1992) historical treatise on the matter:

> When *yoriki* and *dōshin* mobilised for arrests, they invariably reported the details [of the operation] to the *bugyō*. This goes without saying. A scrivener in the office recorded this report on a register, which was called *torimonochō*; nowadays people think of them as [registers] kept by *dōshin* or *okappiki*, but that is not so.
>
> In any case, since *torimonochō* were memos of their relative reports, as long as the reports did not contain any falsehoods, they can be thought of as accurate. It seems there were no regulations as to the contents and form of the report, but naturally the mobilised personnel, their composition, their leader and vice-leader were written down, and the circumstances of the arrest itself, who sprang on [the criminal] to wrestle him to the ground, who tied [him] up, were marked in detail, as they later became the basis for rewards. Of course, if there had been casualties, that would also be marked down.[240]

The celebrated Edo-period scholar Mitamura Engyo also had something to say on the matter, with what might seem like a grudge against *torimonochō* literature itself:

> Incidentally, let me mention that this *torimonochō* is a record of mobilisations for arrests from the *bugyōsho*. Nowadays, with [these] *So-and-so torimonochō*, it appears that people think that *dōshin* or even *meakashi* used

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[240] Ōkuma (1973), p. 248.

> to keep records. Some people seem to even think [of *torimonochō*] as something like the notebooks that today's constables carry with them, but there was nothing like that. The old *torimonochō* were no such things.[241]

The situation is not so clear-cut, however, as former *yoriki* Hara Taneaki 原胤昭 (1853-1942), for example, asserts that *dōshin* kept at their homes something like the ledgers described by Kidō; Nawata's conclusion is that Mitamura's criticisms should be considered as referring not to *Hanshichi torimonochō*, but rather to the other two series in circulation at the time, *Umon torimonochō* and *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, much less concerned with historical accuracy, and that Kidō is not so far off the mark in any case, and in other matters his view and Mitamura's generally coincide, both with each other and with reality.[242] Ozaki Hotsuki, an authority on Japanese popular literature, goes as far as postulating that Kidō probably sought to differentiate the historical *torimonochō* 捕者帳 from the fictitious *torimonochō* 捕物帳 by purposely changing the *kanji*.[243] What is certain beyond any doubt is that, fictionalised or not, it was Kidō who popularised the term, as argued, among others, by Kimura Ki through the simple comparison of dictionary entries: Meiji-era dictionaries listed the word *torimono* but not *torimonochō*, while it is only from the Shōwa era onwards that we find the latter.[244]

Historical detail is a big part of the *Hanshichi* formula to the point that some of the stories may seem to be secondary to it, like *Jūgoya goyōjin* 十五夜御用心 [Beware the Night of the Fifteenth],[245] which according to Nawata is clearly a by-product of Hanshichi's explanations to Watashi on the precepts and life of the *komusō* 虚無僧.[246] This attention to detail is perhaps easier to understand in light of a famous anecdote about the conception of the series, told in overlapping detail by Kimura Kinka 木村錦花 (1877-1960) and Suzuki Shikō 鈴木氏亨 (1885-1948): once, when Kidō was forced to bed by an illness, he tried to read a novel he had by his bedside, but found that the printed characters were too small and difficult to read for him in his sick state, and so turned to *Edo meisho zue*,[247] which was printed in a much bigger font, and the idea struck him that he should find a way to introduce old Edo to the new generations.[248] And in this he undoubtedly succeeded, judging by the plethora of books which use *Hanshichi torimonochō* as a way to invite readers to know more about Edo and Tōkyō, to visit the places where the action took place: both Tamura Ryūichi's 田村隆一 *Hanshichi torimonochō o aruku* 半七捕物帳を歩く and Okada Kiichirō's 岡田喜一郎 *Hanshichi torimonochō Oedo aruki* 半七捕物帳お江戸歩き lay out the city in an ideal walk through the various locations which serve as background for the stories.[249] King in this effort, however, is undoubtedly Imai Kingo 今井金吾, who has authored many works on the historical grounding of *Hanshichi torimonochō*. Chief among them *'Hanshichi torimonochō' Ōedo saijiki* 「半七捕物帳」大江戸歳時記,[250] which follows not a spatial but a temporal arrangement, going season by season and month by month through the yearly events of Edo as they appear in the *Hanshichi* stories; and *Hanshichi no mita Edo* 半七の見た江戸,[251] which meticulously contrasts Kidō's descriptions with those present in *Edo meisho zue* (and the title of which is a tribute to Charles Viney's *Sherlock Holmes in London*, which was translated to Japanese as *Shārokku Hōmuzu no mita Rondon* シャーロック・ホームズの見たロンドン).

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[241] Mitamura (1996), p. 63.
[242] Nawata (2004), p. 39.
[243] Ozaki (1969a), p. 589.
[244] Nawata (2004), pp. 41-42.
[245] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 4, pp. 140-182.
[246] *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

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[247] Saitō G. (1996-1997).
[248] Okamoto Ky. (2006), pp. 215-217.
[249] See Tamura (1991) and Okada (2004).
[250] Imai (2001).
[251] Imai (1999).

Edo meisho zue, however, is probably not the only source employed by Kidō as a reference work for his setting: chronicles in the *Bukō nenpyō* 武功年表,[252] a chronology of events of the Edo period published in the Kaei 嘉永 era (1848-1854), are sometimes recalled by descriptions in the *Hanshichi* stories, even though Kidō's prose is more colourful and vivid than the somewhat matter-of-fact records of the *Bukō nenpyō*. Imai provides an interesting comparison between these two works, limiting himself to a few examples, but arguing that countless more can be found throughout the series, and demonstrating the extent to which Kidō paid attention to the detail of his stories, painstakingly comparing them with the actual conditions in the Edo period, to the point that it can be said without exaggeration that *Edo meisho zue* and *Bukō nenpyō* engendered *Hanshichi torimonochō*.[253] This attention to historicity and intertwining of real-life events with the fictional narrative seems even more intense during the last phase of *Hanshichi torimonochō*, the stories published between August 1934 and February 1937 after a hiatus of several years, when one considers that more than half of them – 12 out of 23 – revolve around historically attested events of the *bakumatsu* period.

All this attention to historical detail must not lead one astray, however, as *Hanshichi torimonochō* is far from being a dry treatise on life in the Edo period. Kidō's writing easily keeps the reader both informed and entertained, adroitly fusing an engaging crime narrative to his more pedagogical intent. Nawata poetically distinguishes these two aspects with the terms *chi* 知 (knowledge, wisdom), for the attention to the historical detail of the neighbourhoods of Edo, and *jō* 情 (feelings, emotion), for the descriptions of said locations.[254]

Kidō's touch is also felt on a much more personal note, more specifically a dash of self-referentialism and even self-insertion. Regarding the former, it is no surprise that a renowned

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[252] Saitō G. (2003-2004).
[253] Imai (2004).
[254] Nawata (2004), p. 59.

kabuki author such as him should provide frequent references to plays, even in his popular fiction: Hanshichi likes *kabuki*, often speaks in a rather theatrical tone, making references to or even quoting lines from famous plays. More than that, a good number of stories find their very beginning in a play.[255] Kidō is a master at appropriately dosing these cultural inserts, however, avoiding any didactic excesses that might bore the reader: Okamoto Kyōichi argues that Hanshichi's *kabuki*-related speech is not one exclusive to Meiji-era elders, but has the same quality as day-to-day conversations in pre-war Japan, as the references are not those of an expert, but are limited to renowned plays.[256] The *kabuki* world is also regularly present in many small details that require no great effort of comprehension on the part of the reader, but nonetheless act as a constant base note. One particularly suggestive example is in the story *Hiroshige to kawauso* [Hiroshige and the Otter]:[257]

> 'Well, let's go. Mukōjima has completely changed too, hasn't it?'
>
> And as if the old man [Hanshichi] getting up while looking round himself had been the beat of the clappers, the sound of a siren in some factory signalled the fall of the curtain. A play of old would not have had such a musical accompaniment. Yes, Mukōjima has certainly changed too, I thought.[258]

An English translation is hard pressed to do justice to the original, unfortunately, so one feels compelled to add some supplementary explanations to the above quote. The term which has been rendered as 'beat of the clappers' is *ki no kashira*, which has a much more precise range of meaning: it indicates that very specific beat of the clappers which, in *kabuki* or *jōruri* plays, accompanies the closing line or pose, and is therefore the first musical signal of the end of the play. The factory siren, in its turn, is likened to the continued sound of those clappers by using the onomatopoeia *chon chon*, completing the metaphorical picture Watashi has painted for the reader. What Kidō has done, in other words, is closing this story exactly as one would a *kabuki* play, creating an impressive audio-visual effect in the mind of the reader.

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[255] Yamada (2017), pp. 404-405.
[256] Okamoto Ky. (2009), p. 65.
[257] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 1, pp. 292-326.
[258] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

In another story, the already-mentioned *Jūgoya goyōjin*, we find another interesting *kabuki* tie-in, and also a very notable self-insertion which seems to confirm the identity of Watashi as Kidō himself, something which is constantly implied but rarely, if ever, explicitly confirmed as in this case.

> I once wrote a two-act play called *Komusō*, which was performed at the *kabukiza*. I'd made some research myself on the religious precepts and lifestyle of these *komusō*, but the foundation for most of it was what I'd heard from old Hanshichi back then.[259]

Neither the title of Watashi's play, nor the topic of the story, are random: Kidō published his play *Komusō* in the magazine *Shin shōsetsu* 新小説 in 1925, and it was performed in the *kabukiza* in September of the same year.[260] It is quite clear, then, that this should be seen as an element of definite proof that Watashi and Kidō are indeed the same person, even if the former never explicitly refers to himself as the latter. The self-insertion and self-referentialism grow ever deeper the more one looks into the series: Kidō often uses Hanshichi as a fictional mouthpiece, quite often having him express detailed opinions on very specific plays, real and precisely dated, which closely mirror Kidō's theatrical reviews – in one case for a play which Kidō had attended as a child, but did not actually remember, Hanshichi becoming a voice of hopeful nostalgia rather than criticism, in this instance.[261]

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[259] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 4, p. 140.
[260] Imauchi (2010), p. 346.
[261] Nawata (2004), pp. 102-106.

3.2.2 – A Tale of Two Cities

There is undoubtedly much of Kidō in *Hanshichi torimonochō*, beyond the obvious authorship of the series, and even the self-insertion. Kidō had been raised in such a way that he must have felt in a limbo between two worlds, in a period which 'on the one hand had received the baptism of *bunmei kaika* [civilisation and enlightenment, key tenets of the modernisation sought after the Meiji Restoration], and on the other was still an extension of Edo', and this is sure to have had an influence on his depiction of Hanshichi's Edo.[262] One of his many connections to old Edo was Tsukahara Jūshien 塚原渋柿園 (1848-1917), author of historical novels and older colleague of Kidō at the *Tōkyō nichi nichi shinbun* 東京日日新聞: Kidō felt his influence so much that he was compelled to include him twice in his stories, once as the semi-anonymous Professor T, and once as the author of the serial *Yui Shōsetsu* 由井正雪, which Hanshichi is enthusiastically reading.[263]

It follows that an easily-identifiable major theme of the series is Kidō's nostalgia towards the Edo period: Nawata argues that *Hanshichi torimonochō* was born out of a combination of Kidō's taste for detective literature and his desire to write something about old Edo, to leave something to posterity of this age that was disappearing more and more.[264] Many concur with this view, notably Edogawa Ranpo himself, who points out that the beauty of *Hanshichi torimonochō* is in the atmosphere, expressing nostalgia for a period which had already passed its stage of maturity and was destined for an 'elegant' decline.[265] However true this might be, Kidō's nostalgia is much more nuanced and complex than one might assume at first glance. His story is not the story of one city at one point in time; it is the story of two very distinct cities – Edo and Tōkyō – across the span of three ages, in what might perhaps be likened to an Edward Rutherfurd novel, though much more limited in range and scope.

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[262] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[263] Imauchi (2010), p. 906.

[264] Nawata (2004), p. 22.

[265] EDOGAWA Ranpo. "Eibei no tanpen tantei shōsetsu ginmi" 英米の短篇探偵小説吟味. In: Edogawa (2004), p. 76.

These three ages do not claim an equal amount of space in the stories, but they can be neatly divided by using the Japanese imperial era system: the first age is the Edo period (1600-1868), more specifically the *bakumatsu*; the second is the Meiji era (1868-1912); and the third spans the Taishō (1912-1926) and early Shōwa (1926-1989) eras. The part the Edo period plays in the stories need hardly be argued: the bulk of the action, the investigation itself, is set firmly in this age, and this is also the part most people remember and associate with *Hanshichi torimonochō*. More interesting and subtle is the role the Meiji era plays in the narrative: almost every story begins and ends with Watashi and old Hanshichi's interactions, which not only serve as a framework but also as a clever lead-in to each case, and often contain insightful comments on the changing times. Finally, the third age is rather on a metanarrative level: it spans the years 1917-1937, the years of the first publication of *Hanshichi torimonochō*. One can trace a certain change in style between the first stories, written in a formative period preceding the 'golden age' of Japanese detective literature, and the last ones, written and published at a time when detective fiction had already become established and much loved by the public. Despite this fluidity, or perhaps because of it, the importance of this third layer should not be underestimated, as the people of this time were the intended audience, and as such had a definite, if indirect, impact on shaping the series.

If one were to bring this thread of thought to its natural conclusion, one might argue for the existence of two further ages and/or narrative layers, which are however excluded from the present discussion, the first because of its rarity, and the second because of its tenuous consistency. These are, respectively, an even further past and the present day. In a few of the stories, the case Hanshichi narrates to Watashi is not one he investigated himself, but rather a second-hand narrative he had heard from others, quite often dating back to before his time as an *okappiki*. This creates a further layer, as the audience (Taishō/Shōwa) reads of Hanshichi telling a tale to Watashi (Meiji) about a tale he himself had heard (late Edo period) about a past case (earlier Edo period), bringing the total to four. However, this only happens in a very limited number of stories, so it can hardly be regarded as a distinguishing feature of the series as a whole; furthermore, the gap between these two Edo-period layers is not nearly as deep as that between the three 'main' ages, which all entail a rather drastic shift in environment and currents of thought. The other potential layer would be the one comprising all modern readers of *Hanshichi torimonochō*, those who have read it after the conclusion of the series in 1937 up to the present day. This might have a modicum of merit, as there have been several re-editions of the series aimed at modern audiences,[266] but on the whole it certainly cannot be said that such readers had an influence on the author after his death, or on the original series after its conclusion, and while it is quite probable that Kidō hoped and strived to leave a work that would be, if not immortal, at least long-lasting, it is very doubtful that he tried to imagine any particular immediate audience beyond his contemporaries.

Hanshichi torimonochō, therefore, does not squarely pertain to the Edo period, as one might be tempted to think at first glance. Despite the fact that the main action takes place in this time, it is doubly filtered to a considerable degree by the other two layers. The first filter is the Meiji era, with old Hanshichi's narration to Watashi: the former *okappiki* intrudes in his own narration by detailing many lesser-known aspects of Edo culture or making topical comments, and this even leads to discussions and exchanges of ideas between the two characters. The second filter is Watashi/Kidō himself 'touching up' the stories for final publication and, presumably, selecting which ones should be revealed to the public and which ones should be kept out of print instead. It is very easy to imagine that Watashi might have left out from his publications several of the stories he had heard from old Hanshichi, perhaps because they were too short, or too long, or too boring, because they contained too many elements that would be difficult to explain to a modern reader, or on the contrary because they were too generic and not sufficiently steeped in the atmosphere of old Edo. In Kidō's own words, in a preface to one of the earliest collections of *Hanshichi* stories, 'if there is any distinctive feature in these stories, besides the normal 'detective interest', it must be in the fact that one can glean, to a certain extent, traces of Edo, which forms the background for these stories'.[267] In presenting old Hanshichi's stories to the readers, therefore, it follows that Kidō avoided including those that could have been set in Tōkyō just as well as in Edo.[268]

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[266] A particularly noteworthy example is Okamoto and Igarashi (2015), a collection of five selected stories rewritten in modern colloquial Japanese.

The symbols of these three layers are, respectively, Hanshichi, Watashi and the reader himself. These figures, however, are not always distinctly separated: Hanshichi is at the same time a citizen of Edo and a citizen of Tōkyō, while Watashi straddles the Meiji and Taishō/Shōwa eras – both characters cover more than one narrative layer, with an overlap in the second one. Okamoto Kyōichi argues that Kidō probably wanted to enforce a clear separation between Edo and Tōkyō, by avoiding any overlap between the two periods except for Hanshichi himself: during his interactions with Watashi, his sister Okume お粂, any of his undoubtedly surviving *kobun*, or any other distinctly Edo-related elements are conspicuously absent.[269] This separation is evident enough that, while Edo and Tōkyō are two names for the same place at varying points in time, they are so different that they can arguably be considered two distinct cities.[270]

Hanshichi's Edo is not idealised: unlike *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, there is no utopia, no golden age or romantic desire for the past – not in such a brazen and uncompromising way, at least. The city of Edo is presented in a more straightforward way, with its positive and negative sides in full view of the reader, and with frequent comparisons, both direct and indirect, to modern times, which are given a fair showing as well. Rather than an extremist view such as Kodō's, we find a relativisation of these two times: to grossly oversimplify the matter, we might say that Hanshichi, belonging to the Edo period, champions the past while Watashi, belonging to the Meiji era, champions the present, each offsetting with their presence the negative sides of their respective eras. This, while it would make for a very neat classification, is unfortunately not always the case, as Kidō's characters are too nuanced for such pigeonholing. We find many overlapping areas between the two, for example when Watashi is smitten by the sign for a *rokurokubi* show and, upon being surprised by Hanshichi, feels quite embarrassed at having been caught in so un-Meiji a situation (*Yūrei no misemono* 幽霊の観世物 [The Ghost Show]),[271] or when Watashi notes that, at a time when most people – himself included – still had gas lamps, Hanshichi already had electricity in his house, being ahead of his time; and yet still having candles at the ready in preparation for black-outs or any sort of trouble (*Kin no rōsoku* 金の蝋燭 [The Golden Candle]).[272]

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[267] Okamoto Ki. (1923), p. 1.

[268] OKAMOTO Kidō. Preface to *Hanshichi torimonochō*, Shinsakusha ed., vol. 5. In: Imauchi (2010), p. 936.

[269] Okamoto Ky. (2009), p. 64.

[270] Nawata (2004), p. 15.

One could argue that the main theme of *Hanshichi torimonochō* is the passage of time and all its consequences, the changes it entails not just in day-to-day life, but in terms of habits and points of view. In fact, the series and its protagonist can be seen as a bridge between Edo and Tōkyō, something which was very much needed and sought at the time, especially after the Great Kantō earthquake of 1923, which deeply affected Kidō in particular:

> The *Shibai kinmō zui*, the *Tōto saijiki*, the world of Edo *kabuki* which can be seen in various *ukiyo-e*, however nostalgic [these things] may be, in the end they're a dream of a past dream, they're just too distant to try and approach.

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[271] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 5, pp. 190-226.
[272] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 4, pp. 183-224.

> I feel like one can't cross [this distance] without some sort of bridge. That bridge still remained, even if mouldering to the point that one might say it had all but been severed about thirty years ago. With this disaster [the Great Kantō earthquake], it seems that this bridge has relayed its sorrowful parting to the people of Tōkyō, and completely disappeared.[273]

In the absence of this bridge, *Hanshichi torimonochō* became even more important for many Tōkyōites as a substitute, a way to access the past despite its tragic and seemingly definitive disappearance. The fourth volume of the Shinsakusha edition of *Hanshichi torimonochō*, published in 1924 – which naturally contained a reference to the earthquake in its introduction – sold more, and more quickly, than any other pre-disaster edition: Nawata argues that this is nothing less than a demonstration of the readers' desire for the Edo depicted in its pages, and the newfound role of *Hanshichi torimonochō* as a new, veritable bridge between Edo and Tōkyō.[274]

The passage of time would affect the series itself: the last phase of *Hanshichi torimonochō* (which includes, as was mentioned earlier, the twelve stories published from 1934 to 1937 after a long hiatus) brought with it several changes. Watashi starts referring to his conversations with Hanshichi using the term *mukashi*,[275] and even the Meiji era seems to disappear and become more distant, more ethereal, much like old Edo. Nawata argues that this phase of the series marks a transition for the narrator, as Watashi becomes a sort of second Hanshichi, to the point where the two characters seem to fuse together in a way, with old Hanshichi still having his role of Edo 'remnant', and Watashi becoming more and more like a Meiji 'remnant', instead of being a figure of the present.[276] The identification between Hanshichi, Watashi and Kidō appears to be completed, giving *Hanshichi torimonochō* an even stronger quality as a time-bridge, now no longer just between Edo and the present, but with a connection through the Meiji era as well.

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[273] Okamoto Ki. (2002), p. 13.
[274] Nawata (2004), pp. 32-33.
[275] See the passage quoted on p. 108 for an example.
[276] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-102.

In light of all we have seen during the course of this chapter, it is clear how *Hanshichi torimonochō*, despite being the founder of the genre – or perhaps precisely because of that – is quite different from other *torimonochō* series, and especially from the classic conception of *torimonochō*, as exemplified by *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*. For the reasons cited above, and for several others which were not tackled in detail, one could hardly disagree with Nozaki's statement that Kidō is almost a 'heretic' in the field of *torimonochō*.[277] A further distinction that clearly demarcates this series from all others is that it was the only one to ever come close to obtaining a Holmes-like following. We have seen in Section 2.2 how Western detective fiction in general, and Holmes in particular, had a great influence on *torimonochō*, but the extent of the parallels with *Hanshichi torimonochō* invites a closer examination. Critics focus on Kidō's work almost to a man, and the *Hanshichi* series boasts its own encyclopaedia, *Hanshichi torimonochō jiten* 半七捕物帳事典,[278] with entries for anything that ever appears in the stories, from characters to items; a good deal of merit is also due to Kishii's *Edo ni tsuite no hanashi* 江戸に就いての話,[279] a collection of Edo-related information extracted from Kidō's works – mostly *Hanshichi torimonochō* – first published in 1955. Nothing comparable to this exists for other *torimonochō* series, but we do find the same attention being paid to Doyle's writings, most notably in the form of Bunson's *Encyclopedia Sherlockiana*,[280] but also in many other works, so numerous that one would require a separate volume just to list them. Much like Holmesians have endeavoured to glean their hero's biography through the information presented in the stories, an attempt William S. Baring-Gould most famously put into writing with his *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*,[281] the same can be done with Hanshichi – much more easily, in fact, due to Kidō's habit of precisely dating every one of his stories and to the general lack of contradictions and anachronisms. No one, as of yet, has unfortunately put to paper a novelised account of Hanshichi's life comparable to Baring-Gould's Holmes biography, but sketches and chronological records are not unheard of.

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[277] Nozaki (2010b), p. 25.
[278] Imauchi (2010).
[279] Kishii (2010).
[280] Bunson (1994).

The parallel between these two characters is probably demonstrated, more than anything else, by the fact that members of the Japanese Sherlock Holmes Club have devoted their attention to Hanshichi rather frequently, though naturally not as often as they do with Holmes himself. Japanese Holmesians have published a sketch of Hanshichi's character and abilities modelled on similar analyses conducted on Holmes;[282] a meticulous comparison of borrowed tricks, complete with tables for the frequency and type of crimes both in Holmes and *Hanshichi* stories;[283] a scrupulous account of what happened 'behind the scenes' by pairing *Hanshichi* stories with relevant entries in Kidō's diary;[284] a fictitious chat with Hanshichi, in the form of an interview on various topics;[285] and a somewhat daring comparison between the two series with recourse to depth psychology and folklore.[286] An article by Hirayama Yūichi 平山雄一 has the distinction of being one of the few English-language introductions to *torimonochō*, and it presents their protagonists as 'the Japanese rivals of Sherlock Holmes'.[287]

The strongest point of comparison between Holmes and Hanshichi, however, is in the fact that both of them really existed – or, at least, that is what many of their readers like to believe, in a more or less tongue-in-cheek way. The efforts of Holmesians to find the Master's footprints in every possible corner of history and facet of reality need not be introduced, as the books and articles on the matter number in the hundreds, if not thousands. Hanshichi, being denied the wide international audience enjoyed by Holmes, has unfortunately been the subject of considerably less attention, but the scarcity of these works is more than adequately compensated by their quality, as Imai demonstrates in his *Hanshichi wa jitsuzai shita* 半七は実在した.[288] So, did Hanshichi really exist? The fact that he has a burial mound – the *Hanshichizuka* – in the precinct of the Sensōji definitely seems to suggest this, at least; this stone was erected in 1949 by members of the Torimono sakka kurabu, including among others Edogawa Ranpo, Yokomizo Seishi, Nomura Kodō, Jō Masayuki and Yoshikawa Eiji 吉川英治 (1892-1962), and boldly proclaims that 'Hanshichi lives, inside the natural scenes of Edo, within the hearts of us younger scholars'.[289] If Watashi was real, given all the elements that lead one to believe he was Kidō himself, why should Hanshichi not be just as real? The author himself, at one point, decided to reply to this question, which people had apparently posed to him very frequently:

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[281] Baring-Gould (1995).
[282] Shimizu S. (1995).
[283] Shimizu T. (1999).
[284] Imauchi (2001) and its second part, Imauchi (2002).
[285] Imauchi (2003).
[286] Shinotsuka (2015).
[287] Hirayama (2013).

> I often run into the question of whether old Hanshichi, the protagonist of these stories, is a real person or not, but I have never given a clear answer to this. There are some who claim to have known Hanshichi, and that in the Edo period he kept a bathhouse as a side job. Some say he was one of the arresting officials who went to Takano Chōei's hideout. Some say he kept serving in the Metropolitan Police, even after the Restoration. Or that he became a watchmaker. Or that his son became a dentist. Even in the face of all these various accounts, I cannot answer clearly. I believe that [the question of]

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[288] Imai (1989).

[289] Ozaki (1969b), p. 174. The text on the stone itself is quite difficult to read due to erosion, so there are several small variants to this text, but they do not change its basic meaning.

> whether he is real or fictitious is rather more interesting if it is left to the imagination of the reader.[290]

For all his reticence on the matter, in 1936 Kidō published a small essay – though it has been debated whether it should be considered as such or rather as a fictional short story – titled *Hanshichi shōkaijō* 半七紹介状 [Letter of Introduction to Hanshichi],[291] in which he retails his meeting with an old man who had an *okappiki* friend from whom he had heard many stories, some of which he had in turn told to Kidō. This old man is purported to be the model for Hanshichi, or perhaps Hanshichi himself, presented to the public through a veil of reticence and mystification, very reminiscent of the 'literary agent hypothesis' much favoured by Holmesians. This is how Kidō concludes his essay:

> Were the old man's stories second-hand, or was he talking about himself under the guise of another person? I would imagine it was probably the latter, but he insisted to the last that they were retellings.
>
> […]
>
> I often run into the question of whether old Hanshichi, from *Hanshichi torimonochō*, is a real person or not; the reason I cannot clearly answer yes or no is that the circumstances detailed above put me in a difficult spot. As I said before, if the old man's stories were actually second-hand, then Hanshichi's model must be found elsewhere. If he was [Hanshichi] himself, then it can be said that Hanshichi was a real person. In any case, I modelled Hanshichi after that old man. I changed addresses and other [information] at my own discretion.

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[290] OKAMOTO Kidō. Preface to *Hanshichi torimonochō*, Shinsakusha ed., vol. 2. In: Imauchi (2010), p. 935.

[291] OKAMOTO Kidō. Hanshichi shōkaijō 半七紹介状. In: Imai (1989), pp. 225-229.

> However, not all [my] 'torimonochō' stories were told [to me] by that old man. There are stories I have heard from other people mixed up, too. Since I cannot introduce every single one of them, here I will limit myself to introducing the old man who became the model for Hanshichi.[292]

For all the parallels and similarities that can be found, it is still very clear that Holmes and Hanshichi are exceedingly different creatures. Holmes is a force of nature with capabilities that border on the superhuman, while Hanshichi is 'neither a great detective showing off his god-like intellect, nor a hero taking part in an exaggerated battle between good and evil. He strives, more than anything else, to be with the people of Edo.'[293]

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[292] *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.

[293] Nawata (2004), pp. 81-82.

Chapter 4 – Breaking from Tradition: New Heroes, New Edos

Having established how all *torimonochō* are popularly believed to be like, on the model of *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, and how the first *torimonochō* actually was, we are now ready to move on to the remaining three of the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*': *Umon torimonochō*, *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō*, and *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*. All three of these series introduced new elements to the formula created by Kidō, elements which also separate them from the traditional idea of a *torimonochō* as established by Kodō, offering different kinds of heroes working and living in cities that, despite ostensibly being the same Edo, appear starkly different from the ones Hanshichi or Heiji inhabited.

Once again, the works in this chapter are not introduced in strict chronological order, but rather in a way that facilitates exposition: the *Umon* and *Wakasama* series are presented first, leaving the last place for *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, to which a good deal more attention has been paid for reasons that will become apparent as the stories are discussed. It should be noted, in particular, that *Umon torimonochō* was published – and indeed almost completed – before *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, so that the former can hardly be said to have been influenced by the latter, or to have been able to diverge from it as from an established canon. Despite this, the *Heiji* series has been classified as 'traditional', while the *Umon* series is included in this chapter as one of the 'divergent' ones: this is because, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, the world of Heiji is commonly held to be representative of all *torimonochō*, in a sort of retroactive classicisation which does not account for outliers or predecessors. The two categories of 'traditional' and 'divergent' are therefore to be considered so in an *ex post facto* way, irrespective of authorial intentions at the time of composition.

4.1 – Umon's 'Stage Setting'

Umon torimonochō is usually considered one of the 'Three Great *Torimonochō*', despite some disagreements, as we have seen in Section 1.2; still, it is not as popular now as it once was, either among the public or critics. The series was written by Sasaki Mitsuzō 佐々木味津三 (1896-1934) between March 1928 and June 1932, and at a mere 38 short stories, it is on the shorter side of the genre, and by far the shortest among the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*'. It has the distinction of being the second major *torimonochō* to be published, and consequently had a certain amount of impact on how the genre evolved, as it was the first influential work to be forced to tackle the 'Hanshichi question' – what to keep, and what to change. According to Tsuzuki Michio, *Umon torimonochō* completely changed the style of the genre, effecting a transition from 'detective literature' to 'gothic historical fiction' (*kaiki jidai shōsetsu* 怪奇時代小説). He had very few kind words for this series, arguing that 'Mitsuzō probably had no ability to assemble a detective story to begin with', and comparing a few of the early stories – which he describes as 'flashy' – to Dickson Carr's works, only to say that most of them fail to provide a quality resolution, with shallow plots, unnecessary complications that no actual criminal would have gone through, deductions that would have been acceptable only in *rakugo*, and an overall quality that might have been appreciable if the series had been a nonsensical parody on the pattern of Robert L. Fish's *The Incredible Schlock Homes*.[294]

Umon torimonochō's main innovation was the introduction to the genre of the concept of the 'character novel' (*kyarakutā shōsetsu* キャラクター小説), a narrative which completely revolves around its main character. In this kind of fiction, the plot and setting become somewhat secondary to the reader's enjoyment, and the main attraction is rather represented by the main character's personality, his quirks and habits, his relationships with secondary characters who are, often enough, almost as quirky as he is. Despite having his own defined personality, Hanshichi was a very different case: as we have seen, the attractiveness lay more on the depiction of Edo, on the nostalgia towards a bygone era, on crime detection itself. The protagonist of a 'character novel' must have at least one clear, defining characteristic: in the case of *Umon torimonochō*, the protagonist Kondō Umon 近藤右門 is defined by his taciturnity, so much so that he is most commonly known as Muttsuri Umon, which might be translated as 'brooding Umon'. This is how the character is presented to the reader in the first story, *Nanban yūrei* 南蛮幽霊 [A European Ghost]:[295]

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[294] Tsuzuki (1973), pp. 277-278.

> He had just turned 26 that year, in the bloom of his youth, and while he was still a novice *dōshin*, it was an office passed through generations in his family, so even though the stipend was small, on that point he was of distinguished birth. His real name was Kondō Umon, and he had inherited the office of *dōshin* from his father on the eighth month of the previous year. […] It goes without saying that Muttsuri Umon was one of those capable individuals. However, the reason he was given the not-very-proper nickname of 'brooding Umon', in spite of his very respectable name of Kondō Umon, is that he was actually one of those rare persons of exceedingly few words. He was singularly taciturn, and since becoming *dōshin* on the eighth month of the previous year, he had not said a single word yet, so that it would have been more appropriate to call him 'dumb Umon' instead.[296]

His *kobun* Denroku 伝六 counterbalances Umon's sullenness by being extremely talkative, as exemplified by his nickname Oshaberi Denroku, 'chatterbox Denroku'. Denroku's presence is apparently what pushes Umon to talk more, considering that, left to his own devices, as we have seen, he had kept completely silent for several months, and that his taciturnity can seem more like an informed attribute than anything else, as this side of him is rarely demonstrated in the stories themselves; on the contrary, he is often quite vocal – though not to the extent of Denroku. Umon's keeping quiet for so long is initially taken as a sign of stupidity by his colleagues and superiors, but after the huge success he obtains in his first case, it becomes a symbol of his genius instead: according to Nawata, this should be ascribed to the ancient Japanese tradition of preferring silent but active people to those who can talk up a storm but end up doing half of what they say, something clearly exemplified by the expression *fugen jikkō* 不言実行, roughly equivalent to 'actions speak louder than words'.[297] Umon's defining characteristic was apparently something he shared with the author himself, according to his widow:

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[295] Sasaki Mi. (1982), vol. 1, pp. 2-26.

[296] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

> Speaking of 'Muttsuri Umon', he [Sasaki Mitsuzō] was taciturn himself. With someone he didn't like, he could stand there for even one or two hours without talking, really. I would worry and fret, but however much I tried to initiate conversations he would just cross his arms, smoke and be silent. Even normally, at home, he was a man of few words. If I spoke to him because he'd been silent too long, he'd tell me to be quiet, that he was thinking and that I shouldn't talk to him about anything. So, whenever he was silent, I'd take it he was thinking, and kept quiet. There were many occasions when he wouldn't speak, no matter how much time passed. I think it might've been from this that he came up with 'Muttsuri Umon'.[298]

The stories in *Umon torimonochō* are presented in chronological order, and they are lightly connected to each other: at the beginning, we invariably find some mention of the previous case, some brief comment on it and an expression of time that places the current episode in relation to the previous one. Under this respect, we can say that *Umon torimonochō* is a halfway point between *Hanshichi torimonochō* and *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*: like the former, the character of Umon grows older as time passes, and his adventures have a linear chronological development that can be easily traced; but this chronology is only loose, it does not have a sensible impact on the narrative itself, and on the whole we cannot trace Umon's life with as much precision and zeal as we can Hanshichi's. On the other hand, something which differentiates *Umon torimonochō* from both of these series, and instead puts it closer to *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō*, which will be discussed shortly, is the fact that the protagonist is not an *okappiki*. Umon is a *dōshin*, which means that he is an *okappiki*'s direct – if not strictly official – superior, the *okappiki* in question being Denroku; it also means that he is not a *chōnin* but a samurai, albeit of the lower ranks. This is a particularly important aspect, not just because it separates this series from most others, but also because it represents a distancing from Hanshichi's Edo, the depiction of which was always filtered through a *chōnin* perspective, and even more so from Heiji's, which would be brazenly anti-samurai, as we have seen. Umon's Edo is seen through the lens of a samurai, and, what is more, a samurai who works and lives in harmony and strict cooperation with a *chōnin*.

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[297] Nawata (2004), p. 149.

[298] Sasaki Mi. (1970), p. 464.

Umon has no family of his own: he lives and works together with his *kobun*, Denroku. Denroku is hierarchically speaking Umon's subordinate, inferior in rank and status, but, as Nozaki puts it, 'within the story he is a partner, equal to the hero'.[299] Indeed, the relationship between the two is one of both respect and 'cheek', in the best tradition of *aibō shōsetsu* 相棒小説. Denroku takes care of many of Umon's daily needs, acting as a kind of domestic, washing his clothes, preparing his food, etc., but he is also quite liberal with his 'master', in a sort of relationship that might call to mind – with all the many obvious differences – that between Jeeves and Wooster. In fact, their relationship sometimes borders on the eccentric and, to a modern reader, might also seem rather prone to double entendres: they are 'life partners', in a way, and much more so than Holmes and Watson could ever be, as neither of them ever get married, a fact which is underlined in the fourth story, *Aomayu no onna* 青眉の女 [The Woman with the Shaved Eyebrows],[300] where the author mentions that it would take the second coming of someone like Tomoe Gozen or Ono no Komachi for Umon to be involved in any sort of love scene or affair. And yet, at the end of the fifth story, *Fue no himitsu* 笛の秘密 [The Secret of the Flute],[301] we find Umon looking lovingly at Denroku, 'as if he were caressing him' with his eyes, and saying that if he were a beautiful girl, he would 'make an effort', a scene which is arguably meant to be a testament to the affection between the two and the purity of Denroku, who is described as 'innocent', but which could surely be read in a rather different way, if one were so inclined. The two are so inseparable and complementary that Nawata argues that they are both expressions of different facets of Mitsuzō's inner world.[302]

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[299] Nozaki (2010b), p. 40.

The character of the relationship between Umon and Denroku permeates the whole series, to the point that it could be said that Umon's Edo is a man's world, lacking any central, strong female figures. The *desu-masu* style used throughout the series, which Nozaki likens for its sluggishness to a slowed-down record or to the live commentary of *katsudō benshi* 活動弁士,[303] further facilitates the impression one has of this series as a gaudy sit-com with a good mix of action elements, rather than an actual detective novel. An eloquent example of this tendency, though by no means the only one, can be found in the tenth story, *Mimi no nai rōnin* 耳のない浪人 [The *Rōnin* Without Ears],[304] in a scene in which Umon, having had what could only be described as a lover's spat with Denroku, resorts to cooking himself a salted fish, in rather comedic fashion. Such silly displays are by no means exclusive to *Umon torimonochō* – we find frequent and even more extreme quarrels in *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, for example – but they are particularly notable in this series because they, and not Edo or the mystery, are the centrepiece. Mitsuzō had no particular knowledge of the Edo period, and no great propensity for devising cunning mysteries, so it should come as no surprise that he relied above all on his protagonist's appeal, on the showiness of his adventures, resulting in what Nawata describes as 'entertainment fiction steeped in fan-service'.[305] The cases Umon deals with tend to be on a grand scale, involving momentous political conspiracies, plots to assassinate the shogun or overthrow the government – no less than two of them within the first five stories – and various equally grandiose schemes and crimes. We are far indeed from Holmes, who often enough – most of the time, arguably – faced very minor problems merely because they provided an interesting puzzle. It is hard to rate *Umon torimonochō* highly on its mysteries, the solutions of which often leave much to be desired, focusing instead on the grotesque, the spectacular, the awe-inspiring; Nawata agrees with Tsuzuki in saying that 'as a mystery, it cannot be said to be first-class'.[306]

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[300] Sasaki Mi. (1982), vol. 1, pp. 92-122.

[301] *Ibid.*, pp. 122-151.

[302] Nawata (2004), pp. 152-153.

[303] Nozaki (2010b), p. 39. The *katsudō benshi* were a fixture in Japanese cinemas at the time of silent films, providing live narration, explaining the story, and even functioning as voice actors for the characters, in order to provide a fuller experience to the audience.

[304] Sasaki Mi. (1982), vol. 1, pp. 277-305.

And yet, despite this widespread criticism, both Ranpo and Kidō seemed to have a high opinion of the series. Ranpo published a very flattering comment in April 1934:

> Reading *Umon torimonochō*, more than anything else I feel like it is [a] visual, rather than auditory [experience]. Almost all *Umon* [stories] have been made into films, but the original works are even more visual than those films. Within the bold outline of entangled, flamboyant lines, we find a gorgeous colouring, with red as the dominant tone. It is a beautiful *nishiki-e*.

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[305] Nawata (2004), pp. 117.

[306] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

> The reader leafs through these bulky, overlapped *nishiki-e*, enjoying the colouring all the while. Page after page, he will certainly find that each one is an astonishing collection of pictures.
>
> Threading his way between colourful beauty and shocking wonder is the ruggedly handsome Umon, smartly walking around as he pleases. It truly is, at a glance, a collection of bizarre *nishiki-e* one cannot lay down until the very last.
>
> Among the many *torimonochō*, there are none as vividly flashy as *Umon*. Alongside *Hanshichi torimonochō*, they are the twin masters of historical detective fiction.[307]

While some have been puzzled at how the man who is almost unanimously considered the father of Japanese detective fiction could appreciate a work that so clearly lacks quality as a mystery,[308] it should probably come as no surprise that Ranpo, known for his wildly unorthodox style and taste for the grotesque, should appreciate a work that focuses on gaudiness. More surprising is Kidō's approval, expressed in these words, written in remembrance of Sasaki shortly after his death:

> Among the many authors of popular literature, someone like Sasaki was certainly a distinctive figure. As is to be expected from someone who came from pure literature, his real worth is to be found in his dignity and dearth of vulgarity. As the author of *Hanshichi torimonochō*, I have read his *Umon torimonochō* with the utmost attention, and every story is really delightful. While they indulge in the fantastical and the bizarre, the perfect order of their stages, with nothing out of place, should arguably be seen as the very model of detective fiction. Sasaki has produced a large amount of popular literature

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[307] Edogawa (2017).

[308] Nawata (2004), p. 173.

> besides *Umon torimonochō*, but I think that this work alone is more than enough to qualify him as a giant of popular literature. This is not self-serving bias on my part.[309]

Despite the assurance in the concluding sentence, it is rather hard to see in this paragraph an unbiased criticism of *Umon torimonochō*: while Kidō does concede that the series has a big part of showiness, one is loath to take his description of the series as a 'model of detective fiction' in the face of the numerous other critics. On the other hand, naturally, one could not have expected Kidō to write something less than laudatory for a collection of epitaphs personally published by Sasaki's widow. And, as much as it is often described as purely 'entertainment fiction', there are those who have tried to read more deeply into *Umon torimonochō*. Literary critic Togaeri Hajime 十返肇 (1914-1963), for example, is convinced that there are certain nihilistic tendencies latent in *Umon torimonochō*, and posits that they might be traced back to certain experiences of Sasaki's, who dabbled in anarchism in his youth.[310]

As Ranpo mentions, *Umon torimonochō* has been transposed for the cinema countless times, and arguably owes its fortune more to these film adaptations than to the original stories themselves. According to Nawata, what made these stories so easily translatable into film is the clearly defined main character with his quirks, the lovable Watson, the odious rival (all characteristics that were absent in *Hanshichi torimonochō*), and a variation of minor characters and cases that could be easily made into a pattern; in turn, these big screen renditions often fixed the problems and inconsistencies in the original works, making the final product a better detective story on the whole.[311]

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[309] Okamoto Ki. (1935).

[310] Nawata (2004), pp. 121-122.

[311] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

In the end, after a short life, initially dedicated to pure literature and subsequently, only by necessity, to popular literature, Mitsuzō is remembered almost exclusively for *Umon torimonochō* and, to a lesser extent, for another historical series, *Hatamoto taikutsu otoko* 旗本退屈男. This deeply saddened him, as he realised and feared that, after his death, *Umon torimonochō* would be considered his most important work:[312] much like Doyle, who felt that his Holmes stories distracted the public from his more serious work, and therefore hindered his literary career by diluting it with popular literature,[313] Mitsuzō was unhappy about the fact that circumstances had brought him to such a point. When Mitsuzō's elder brother died in 1926, he was laden with his brother's many debts, to the point that even by selling his own assets, he was unable to cover them; Mitsuzō therefore decided to abandon 'pure literature' and dedicate himself to popular literature to raise some money, a decision he did not take lightly or with excessive enthusiasm, and one which was deeply criticised and even ridiculed by some of his fellow writers.[314] We can find echoes of this in *Umon torimonochō*, as Umon, after his first success, incurs in the envy of his colleagues and superiors, suffering the same kind of ostracism the author had to go through, albeit for different reasons, as is made clear in a dinner scene from the story *Muramasa sōdō* 村正騒動 [The Muramasa Disturbance].[315]

> And another weird thing is, since his first success with the European Ghost, Umon's fame had soared with the force of a rising sun, his reputation had reached such a point that now, whenever one would mention Hacchōbori, the reply would be 'oh, you mean Umon'; so, perhaps with a certain dose of envy mixed in, at some point not just his *dōshin* colleagues, but also his *yoriki*

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[312] Sasaki Mi. (1970), p. 472.
[313] 'All things find their level, but I believe that if I had never touched Holmes, who has tended to obscure my higher work, my position in literature would at the present moment be a more commanding one.' (Doyle [1993], pp. 31-32)
[314] Nawata (2004), pp. 134-135.
[315] Sasaki Mi. (1982), vol. 1, pp. 183-209.

> superiors and even *meakashi* and *okappiki*, lower in rank, had started giving the two of them a wide berth without meaning to, [so] Umon and Denroku, who had been part of the group, came to be excluded from it.[316]

Amusingly enough, apparently it was Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川龍之介 (1892-1927) who directed Mitsuzō towards popular literature, or at the very least aroused his interest in its possibilities and worthiness. According to an essay written by Mitsuzō in 1932, after talking about a Strindberg play that was very much like a detective story, Akutagawa pointed out to him that new writers like him should probably go in that direction, that there was nothing shameful about it, and that future compilers of literature dictionaries would dedicate only a few lines to most authors of serious literature active at the time, but they would undoubtedly reserve several pages to writers like Nakazato Kaizan 中里介山 (1885-1944); this, in Mitsuzō's own words, was 'a hit that knocked me out'.[317]

However one might judge his work, whether a sad departure from pure literature, bad detective fiction, or a great example of popular literature, there is no doubt at all that he had a big impact in the world of *torimonochō*, big enough to deserve being counted by many among the 'Three Great *Torimonochō*' despite its small number of stories. The relationship between Umon and Denroku, the presence of a rival investigator, and the several other characteristics that have been mentioned – though explored in no great detail – in this section were all absent in *Hanshichi torimonochō*, and they were all picked up, to a greater or lesser extent and with a varying degree of innovation, by most subsequent *torimonochō*, *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* first of all.

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[316] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[317] Sasaki Mi. (1935).

What was Umon's Edo, then? What role does this city play in the narrative, compared to other series? Nawata has a very interesting opinion on the matter, using the fifth story, *Fue no himitsu*, as an example, but extending his conclusions to the series as a whole:

> At this point, we are made painfully aware that the Edo of this series is a massive stage setting to show its protagonist Umon to advantage. Umon, stepping forward at Chie Izu's call, is very much a headline actor appearing on the *hanamichi* to the enthusiastic "*matte mashita!*" from the audience – even the historical detail regarding Sannō Gongen, the explanations of the festival proceedings, the presence of the shogun and Matsudaira Izu no Kami, they are all necessary devices for the appearance of Umon as a headliner on this *hanamichi*. And, furthermore, for Mitsuzō, who was trying to make a name for his own hero through [his] touching efforts, Edo was a world apart, absolutely necessary to kill his old self, the author of 'pure literature', and be reborn as an author of popular literature.[318]

Furthermore, where the Edo/Tōkyō of *Hanshichi torimonochō* was mostly a world of nostalgia, presenting a clear demarcation between its layers and time periods (Edo, Meiji, and Taishō/Shōwa), the Edo/Tōkyō of *Umon torimonochō* is on the contrary a mélange, an overlapping construct bearing, at the same time, characteristics of the Edo period and of the Shōwa era. Umon's Edo is clearly a reflection of the modern Shōwa era, something we can observe, among other things, in the frequent references to contemporary news stories, and the inspiration Sasaki takes from them.[319] This is something Yokomizo Seishi will also occasionally do in his *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* – arguably with more success, at least regarding the solidity of his work as detective fiction.

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[318] Nawata (2004), pp. 165-166.

[319] *Ibid.*, pp. 167-172.

4.2 – Wakasama's 'Background'

Wakasama zamurai torimono techō was written by Jō Masayuki 城昌幸 (1904-1976) between 1939 and 1969; it comprises 248 short stories and 29 novels of various lengths, for a total of 277 works. The protagonist of this series has no name: he is only known as Wakasama, a generic term of address reserved for the sons of distinguished personages, and nothing is known about him besides the fact that he is a samurai of noble birth; it is obliquely hinted that he might be a member of the shogunal family in hiding for unclear reasons, but nothing is ever explicitly stated on the matter, keeping his origins and identity a mystery to the reader. Despite the noble origins of the character, Shiraishi still qualifies him among the *chōnin* heroes, with a somewhat hyperbolic line of logic:

> During the war, when bamboo spears and female volunteer corps were all the rage, he 'was drinking alcohol with a woman'.
>
> Both the author and the public leisurely drank that cup on the second floor of the Kisen. The poet Jō Masayuki's harsh criticism towards society has never shined as much as this.
>
> 'Wakasama' is a samurai of exalted birth. He dislikes the feudal world, and together with the *okappiki* Enshūya Kokichi he protects the *chōnin* class in the city. 'Wakasama' hates oppressors. He does not express it with words, but he laughs off the dim-wittedness of feudalism through a white-porcelain cup of Kenbishi [*sake*].
>
> Laughably, the censorship of the time overlooked this.[320]

In the first episodes of the series, Wakasama is a sort of armchair detective, not unlike Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe; he also has the distinction of being the very first armchair detective of old Edo. Very rare for a *torimonochō*, and completely unique among the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*', Wakasama does not hold any official position in law enforcement, and therefore conforms more literally than his colleagues to the ideals of Western detective stories, that strictly require – at least on paper – an amateur investigator. He spends his time in a *funayado*, a shipyard that caters to customers interested in transport or pleasure boats, and usually also offers some form of restoration, entertainment and/or lodgings. Lounging there with a very carefree, laid-back attitude, the cases come to him, not the other way around: usually it is an *okappiki* acquaintance of his who visits him to ask for a consultation, but sometimes the *okappiki*'s superior officer, a *yoriki*, appears in person for the same purpose. Wakasama has no wife, something which differentiates him from Hanshichi, Heiji and Sashichi; but, unlike Umon, he also has no major male figure in his life. Instead, he occupies a middle ground between all these characters: he has a somewhat ambiguous relationship with Oito お糸, the 'girl of the *funayado*', who is not his wife, but is also patently more than just a simple waitress or attendant. The relationship of the two characters is not made explicit, but their conversations suggest a degree of equality, not subordination, and she behaves rather freely around him. We can find partial similarities with all the other protagonists of the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*', but no exact correspondences: Wakasama and Oito are quite unique upon this point, once again setting this series apart from the others in striking fashion.

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[320] Shiraishi (1949), pp. 81-82.

The titles of the stories are also peculiar, as they were originally very reminiscent of the names of *kabuki* plays in their style. The titles for many of the 18 pre-war stories are written completely in *kanji*, but with some rather unintuitive readings. For example, the first story was titled *Ōgi ni shirusu nazo no utamoji* 舞扇三十一文字 [The Mysterious Characters of Poetry Written on the Fan]; the *kanji*, however, would normally be read as *Maiōgi misohitomoji* [The Thirty-one characters on the Dancing Fan], where the expression *misohitomoji* represents the number of syllables in a *tanka*. This makes them interesting, but also harder to interpret, and much more difficult to translate. Regrettably, in modern printings, the titles have been completely replaced by much simpler and more easily understandable ones: to continue the previous example, *Ōgi ni shirusu nazo no utamoji* became *Maiōgi no nazo* 舞扇の謎 [The Mystery of the Dancer's Fan].[321] Despite such impressive titles, the series was mostly light-hearted and calm, without many sudden turns or thrilling scenes. Wakasama himself often laughs and behaves in a carefree way; unlike other *torimonochō*, where *kobun* usually rush to their *oyabun* to announce, haggard and short of breath, that 'something terrible has happened', here the cases are presented in an almost understated way, with the *kobun* placidly announcing that some event or disturbance has taken place, and communicating the details to Wakasama.

Nozaki argues that, underlining all this, was no less than an entanglement, some sort of conflict between Jō and the very form of detective fiction, but he fails to clarify what he means by that.[322] What is certain is that the focus of the stories are the tricks, the mystery itself. The historical background, quite atypically for a *torimonochō*, is merely that, a background for the action, interesting in its own way, but not of major importance. Nozaki claims that Jō was an even purer example than Yokomizo of an author pouring his passion for detective novels, for mysteries, in the genre of *torimonochō*: in fact, Nozaki explains that Jō had written no detective fiction before his debut in *torimonochō*, and very little after that, a peculiarity which enabled him to focus all his creative powers there, condensing his passion for detective fiction almost exclusively in *torimonochō*.[323] Amusingly enough, before turning to *torimonochō* as detective fiction, Jō was known as a symbolist poet, though he was no major artist, and Nozaki, for one, has some trouble reconciling his city dandyism with historical literature.[324] While Wakasama's Edo is merely a background for the action, it should be noted that Jō was the only author among those of the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*', alongside Kidō himself, to have been born and raised in Tōkyō, something which undoubtedly influenced his perception and depiction of the city. Still, Nawata argues that Jō studiously depicts a chic, sophisticated world of pleasure which makes Wakasama's Edo completely different from Hanshichi's Edo.[325]

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[321] Jō (2009), vol. 1, pp. 9-36.
[322] Nozaki (2010b), p. 80.
[323] *Ibid.*, pp. 78, 83-84.
[324] *Ibid.*, pp. 78-80.

Most of the above-mentioned characteristics, however, are only applicable to the first few stories, more specifically the 18 that were written between 1939 and 1941, before the long hiatus that would last until 1946. After this pause, the series took on a wholly different character: the titles no longer call to mind *kabuki* plays – and, as we have seen above, earlier titles were modified as well in future reprintings; Wakasama stops being an armchair detective, a characteristic which Nozaki argues might have been more of a coincidence than anything else,[326] and turns into an action hero of sorts. The stories leave the realm of the detective novel and enter something more akin to cloak-and-dagger drama, or epic historical thrillers.

As we have seen from its many peculiarities, *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō* is quite atypical for a *torimonochō*, breaking in several places from the mould set by its predecessors. Nozaki argues that one of the main components of this atypicality, besides the non-*okappiki* protagonist and the relative lack of focus on the Edo atmosphere (neither of which, it should be noted, are unique to this series), is the carefree attitude that is shown throughout, which marks a distinct departure from most works of this genre, which seek consolidation through morality.[327] The status of this series as an anomaly is apparent even at its very core: since the great majority of the stories – 259 out of 277 – have been published after the end of World War II, *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō* lends itself to be classified as a post-war *torimonochō*, a classification Nozaki disputes as incorrect, reasoning that despite the small number of stories, its essence firmly lies in the pre-war period, between the detective novel and the *torimonochō*.[328]

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[325] Nawata (1995), p. 490.
[326] Nozaki (2010b), p. 84.
[327] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Despite being readily classified among the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*', critics have almost unanimously ignored this series, more than any of the other four, to the point that even finding bibliographical information on it can prove difficult, unless one relies on websites maintained by dedicated fans. Essays or treatises by critics are likewise extremely rare, a gap which no one, as of yet, seems eager to fill. The reason for this is probably best expressed by Nawata, who claims that *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō*, like all other series not included in his work, did not bring any important changes to the nature and significance of the genre, the evolution of which ideally played out in three main stages: *Hanshichi torimonochō*, *Umon torimonochō*, and *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*.[329] The present work deals with the *Wakasama* series only tangentially, so no refutation can be made upon that point. However, Nawata includes *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* among these 'lesser' works, something I would like to dispute in the course of the next section, as I believe that this series has brought much to the table, and distinctly differentiated itself from the others.

4.3 – Sashichi's 'Dark World'

Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō is Yokomizo Seishi's 横溝正史 (1902-1981) most prominent *torimonochō* series, and by far his longest: its 180 stories (mostly short stories, but with a few novellas and novels) were written between 1938 and 1968, with a four-year hiatus between 1942 and 1946 due to war-time complications, as we have seen in Section 1.4. Despite the fortune of this series, the author is mostly known for an even more successful one: his novels starring the detective Kindaichi Kōsuke, most famously *Honjin satsujin jiken* 本陣殺

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[328] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[329] Nawata (2004), pp. 263-264.

人事件 [Murder at the Honjin] (1946), *Gokumontō* 獄門島 [Gokumon Island] (serialised 1947-1948), and *Inugamike no ichizoku* 犬神家の一族 [The Inugami Clan] (serialised 1950-1951); his other detective Yuri Rintarō 由利麟太郎 also enjoyed success, particularly with the novel *Chōchō satsujin jiken* 蝶々殺人事件 [The Butterfly Murder] (1946).

Yokomizo Seishi is relatively unknown in the West, probably owing to the scarcity of translations of his works,[330] but he has been a household name among Japanese mystery fans since after the Second World War. Sari Kawana, possibly the Western scholar who has dedicated the most attention to Yokomizo Seishi, argues that his 'contributions to the genre have been considerable', and that his works managed to 'introduce to post-war Japanese readers a new type of murderer who could kill anyone at any time for no comprehensible reason'.[331] In an essay published in 1946, Yokomizo argued for the promotion of intellectual and rational detective literature as a way to build a better Japan,[332] in a way declaring his shift from his earlier *henkaku* (unorthodox) style, whose main appeal lied in the grotesque and the gothic, to a more *honkaku* (orthodox) approach, with a bigger focus on detection as a puzzle, a mental challenge to the reader. Dividing Yokomizo's works neatly in a pre-war *henkaku* phase and a post-war *honkaku* one is convenient, but it does not fully reflect the evolution of his style and the nuanced reality: looking more closely at his novels and stories reveals that the *henkaku* and *honkaku* elements have been present to varying degrees in most of his writing, so that one can identify shifts in focus and relative importance between the two elements, but not the complete disappearance of either.

This mix is what makes *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* unique. Nakajima Kawatarō, the most established historian of Japanese detective fiction, described this series as 'orthodox

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[330] It must be noted, however, that after the year 2000, and in the 2010s in particular, there have been several new editions of his most famous works in English, French, Spanish, and Italian.

[331] Kawana (2007), p. 119.

[332] Itō (1993), pp. 335-337.

[*honkaku*] detective literature set in the Edo period',[333] an important achievement for a *torimonochō*. Many works after *Hanshichi torimonochō* base their appeal on the uniqueness and the quirks of their characters, something which, as we have seen, was first introduced by *Umon torimonochō*; the *Sashichi* series has a peculiar protagonist too, and all the usual accoutrements of the genre, but does not rely solely on this to entertain its readers. The humour provided by the conversations of the four main characters, the many grotesque cases which call back to the old *kusazōshi*, and the many outstanding *honkaku* mysteries are the elements that draw readers to this series, according to Asai Hideaki 浅井秀明.[334]

We have seen in Section 1.2 how and why Yokomizo first turned to *torimonochō*, and that his first hero was not actually Sashichi but Shiranui Jinza, so there is no need to repeat this information. It bears mentioning, however, that Yokomizo has also written many other *torimonochō* series after the debut of Sashichi, though for only a few instalments each and with a hardly comparable level of success: the protagonists were Kiketsu Hidari Ippei 奇傑左一平 (six stories, serialised in 1939),[335] Hanafubuki no Sakon 花吹雪の左近 (a single story, published in 1940),[336] Sagisaka Sagijūrō 鷺坂鷺十郎 (five stories, serialised in 1940-1941),[337] Murasaki Jinza 紫甚左 (two stories, published in 1941),[338] Hibotan Ginji 緋牡丹銀次 (three stories, published in 1941),[339] Shiranui Jinnai 不知火甚内 (four stories, published in 1942),[340]

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[333] Sōgen Suiri Kurabu Akita Bunkakai (2000), p. 11.

[334] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[335] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2004b), which includes the first five stories, and Yokomizo (2008), which includes the sixth.

[336] First re-published in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2008).

[337] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2019b).

[338] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2004b), which only includes the second story, and Yokomizo (2019c), which includes both.

[339] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2004b).

[340] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2004b), which only includes the first story, and Yokomizo (2019c), which includes all of them.

Asagao Kinta 朝顔金太 (fourteen stories, serialised in 1944-1945),[341] Matsudaira Chōshichirō 松平長七郎 (a single story, published in 1944),[342] Chiewaka 智慧若 (three stories, serialised in 1949 and 1955),[343] Hattori Samon 服部左門 (seven stories, serialised in 1949-1950),[344] Kuromonchō Denshichi 黒門町伝七 (six stories, serialised between 1951 and 1955),[345] and finally Oyakusha Bunshichi お役者文七 (seven stories, serialised between 1957 and 1960).[346] Just as all the stories from *Shiranui torimonozōshi* were later adapted to be *Sashichi* stories, almost all these other *torimonochō* were at one point 'recycled' to feature Sashichi instead of their original protagonists, the only exceptions being the *Kiketsu Hidari Ippei* series, the *Hibotan Ginji* series, the first story of the *Shiranui Jinnai* series, and five of the *Oyakusha Bunshichi* stories. When he looked back on it, this flood of adaptations surprised even Yokomizo himself:

> These various stories [from the *Shiranui torimonozōshi* series] would never be collected in a single volume, and afterwards I would rewrite all of them as *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* stories; after that I had completely forgotten which ones I had originally written with Shiranui Jinza. So, when I recently received the above-mentioned report by Honma [on the research he'd conducted on *Shiranui torimonozōshi*], I was quite surprised with myself,

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[341] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2004b), which only includes one story, and Yokomizo (2019a), which includes all of them.

[342] First re-published in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2008).

[343] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2008).

[344] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2019b).

[345] First collected in *tankōbon* format in Yokomizo (2016), though one of the stories had been previously included in Nawata (1992). The character of Kuromonchō Denshichi is not exclusively Yokomizo's creation. The character and its stories were created as a collaborative effort by the Torimono sakka kurabu in 1951, and many of its members participated, including Yokomizo, Jinde Tatsurō, Jō Masayuki and Nomura Kodō. When the collaboration ended, Jinde Tatsurō continued the series by himself, so that now the character of Denshichi is mostly associated with him rather than with any of the other writers who contributed to his initial run. See also pp. 47-48.

[346] The first four stories had been separately published in *tankōbon* format in 1959-1960, and three of them are included in Yokomizo (2016), but the only complete collection available is Yokomizo (2002-2003).

> [remembering] that that was a Shiranui piece too, that I'd written this one with Jinza too; it was quite careless of me. I felt belatedly ashamed that one could see how irresponsibly I had scribbled [those stories] (even though I did work hard for each of them).[347]

In writing his own *torimonochō* series, Yokomizo was always very respectful of his predecessors, Okamoto Kidō in particular, and, as was his wont, he worked many references and small tributes in his work. The most obvious is probably the name of Ningyō Sashichi himself: Yokomizo explains how he got the 'Sa' from a film adaptation of *Saheiji torimonochō* 佐平次捕物帳 he had watched in his youth, adding to it Hanshichi's 'Shichi', as he'd been an avid reader of *Hanshichi torimonochō* since his youth, and finally taking the nickname 'Ningyō' from Ningyō Tsune 人形常, an *okappiki* who makes an appearance in *Tsunokuniya* 津の国屋,[348] a *Hanshichi* story, with the intention to ideally represent Sashichi as Hanshichi's inferior or apprentice, in a way.[349] The fact that Sashichi's wife, Okume, bears the same name as Hanshichi's younger sister is naturally no coincidence either. Smaller scale tributes can be found in numerous stories, and while an exhaustive list would be rather cumbersome, some examples will better illustrate Yokomizo's habit of borrowing from and referencing those he considers his masters in any way, as a form of respect.

The characters of Gonza 権三 and Sukejū 助十 make appearances in five *Sashichi* stories, though they are never the same characters in-universe, the only common point to each appearance being their names (though in one instance they are modified to Gonta 権太 and Sukezō 助三, perhaps due to copyright concerns) and their profession as palanquin bearers. These characters do not usually have a prominent role in the plot, and their presence is never explained or questioned; but in *Ushi no toki mairi* 丑の時参り [The Night Visit] (96)[350] – a story in which, ironically, the two characters do not appear – Sashichi solves the case by taking inspiration from *Komamonoya Hikobē* [Hikobē the Haberdasher], one of the better-known stories from *Ōoka seidan*, and the one in which Gonza and Sukejū originally appeared. Yokomizo is undoubtedly also paying homage to *Ōoka seidan*, but the specific plot referred to is not that of the original story, but that of the 1926 Kidō adaptation *Gonza to Sukejū*, which dispenses with the role of Judge Ōoka entirely to focus on the characters of the palanquin bearers and introduces a slight twist to the plot,[351] which Sashichi specifically references and makes use of for his own investigation, creating an anachronism – as Sashichi could obviously never reference a play written a hundred years after his time – but making it plain enough that the version being paid homage to is Kidō's. Another probable theatrical homage to Kidō is to be found in *Yūrei shimai* 幽霊姉妹 [The Ghost Sisters] (29)[352] and *Chiyashiki* 血屋敷 [The Blood Mansion] (40),[353] which contain extensive references to the play *Banchō sarayashiki* 番町皿屋敷 [The Dish Mansion at Banchō], which was famously adapted by Kidō in 1916, with a shift in focus from a horror story to a deeper character study.

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[347] Yokomizo (1972), p. 82.
[348] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 2, pp. 48-112.
[349] Yokomizo (1979), pp. 109-110.

Moreover, both the *Hanshichi* and *Sashichi* series have stories titled *Yūrei no misemono* 幽霊の見せ物 [The Ghost Show] (169)[354] and *Mikawa manzai* 三河万歳 (172);[355] and the *Sashichi* story *Tako no yukue* 凧のゆくえ [The Kite's Whereabouts] (76)[356] inevitably calls to mind the *Hanshichi* story *Taka no yukue* 鷹のゆくえ [The Hawk's Whereabouts].[357] These parallel titles can hardly be coincidental, and should more likely be interpreted as the literary equivalent of a nod of acknowledgment: the plots of the stories themselves share themes, as is to be expected, but bear no more than a passing resemblance to each other, so that this nod does not cross into plagiarism of any kind. Various other, more indirect references are, for example, the mention of the name Seia 青蛙 in the story *Otamagaike* お玉が池 (68);[358] the repetition of the exclamation 'Iwafuji has come' in *Katakiuchi ningyō banashi* 敵討ち人形噺 [A Story of Vengeful Puppets] (21),[359] which is a clear parallel to 'Ofumi has come' from the first *Hanshichi* story, *Ofumi no tamashii*;[360] the use Yokomizo makes of two poems in *Tanuki bayashi* 狸ばやし [The *Tanuki*'s Drum] (90)[361] and *Kanzashi kuji* かんざし籤 [The Hairpin Lottery] (93),[362] which closely parallel the use of the same poems in similar situations in the *Hanshichi* stories *Zūfura kaidan* ズウフラ怪談 [Ghost Story of a Megaphone][363] and *Matsutake* 松茸,[364] respectively.

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[350] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 9, pp. 340-360. The number enclosed in round brackets after the title refers to its progressive number within the series; see the Appendix for more information.

[351] See pp. 63-65.

[352] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 8, pp. 216-247.

[353] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 7, pp. 50-93.

[354] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 3, pp. 128-158; Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 5, pp. 190-226. While the reading and meaning of the title is identical, the *Hanshichi* story uses the *kanji* 幽霊の観世物.

[355] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 5, pp. 46-76; Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 2, pp. 113-144.

[356] Yokomizo (2004a), pp. 5-25.

[357] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 2, pp. 7-47.

Yokomizo's reverence towards his 'masters' is, of course, not limited to Kidō. He recognised Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's work as the epitome of detective fiction, to the point that he described the Sherlock Holmes stories as 'something like a Bible, an eternal hometown for the heart', and he always recommended to aspiring authors of detective fiction that they should read the entire Holmes canon over and over again as an exercise to learn the trick to writing good detective stories.[365] So, as one might expect, the *Sashichi* series is also full of references and tributes to Doyle, the most direct of which are occasional uses by Sashichi of Holmes's method, to varying degrees of success: to quote only a few examples, in *Yūrei no misemono* he deduces a killer's height and position by the angle of the thrown knife stuck in his victim's bosom, only to realise at the end that he had got the whole thing wrong because the victim was leaning forward, a factor he had not properly taken into account; in *Noroi no tatamibari* 呪いの畳針 [The Cursed Tatami Needle] (162),[366] he deduces an individual's profession just by seeing his fingerprints in wax, and later delivers a very Holmes-like explanation on the key importance of a needle's rustiness, only to later reveal to his *kobun* that he was making it up on the spot to try and bluff his way to a confession; in *Sannin irowakashu* 三人色若衆 [The Three Alluring Youths] (167),[367] Sashichi deduces a dead man's profession by observing his elbow and thumb. Several tricks have likewise been borrowed from Holmes: in *Nimai tanzaku* 二枚短冊 [The Two *Tanzaku*] (15),[368] Sashichi fakes a fire to induce an antagonist to reveal the hiding place of an important document, a trope that closely resembles what Holmes does to Irene Adler in *A Scandal in Bohemia*; *Tonosama kojiki* 殿様乞食 [The Beggar Lord] (74)[369] centres around a samurai using elaborate make-up to disguise himself as a beggar and spy on his enemies, a premise which immediately calls to mind *The Man with the Twisted Lip*, though the purpose of Neville St Clair for posing as a beggar was quite different; *Akazu no ma* 開かずの間 [The Closed Room] (130)[370] closely resembles a shortened version of *A Study in Scarlet* under several respects, being the first adventure (according to in-universe chronology) to feature the pair of Sashichi and his *kobun* Tatsu, much like *A Study in Scarlet* is the first adventure Holmes and Watson share, and also adopting Jefferson Hope's idea of delivering poison to his victims in a way that leaves the outcome to chance, though with an interesting twist on the actual method and the motivations of the characters; *Musha ningyō no kubi* 武者人形の首 [The Heads of the Warrior Puppets] (80)[371] is almost an Edo-period adaptation of *The Six Napoleons*, though again Yokomizo masterfully tailors the story to his own specifications; *Yōkenden* 妖犬伝 [The Chronicles of the Spectral Dog] (119)[372] features what initially seems to be the ghost of a dog, which later turns out to have been a very normal dog made to glow in the dark through the application of a chemical substance, a clear call-back to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, though the plot itself is completely different.

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[358] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 10, pp. 346-380. The specific choice of *kanji* for the pseudonym Seia (usually written as 井蛙), as remarked by the narrator in the story, is somewhat rare, and its association with Kidō can be easily surmised by the name of the publishing house Seiabō 青蛙房, founded by Kidō's heir Okamoto Kyōichi and mostly dedicated to Kidō-related books and collections.
[359] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 3, pp. 396-428.
[360] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 1, pp. 7-38.
[361] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 10, pp. 320-344.
[362] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 13, pp. 248-283.
[363] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 4, pp. 225-258.
[364] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 3, pp. 285-318.
[365] YOKOMIZO Seishi. "Katei hitsubi no sho" 家庭必備の書. In: Yokomizo (2008), p. 618.

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[366] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 4, pp. 72-103.
[367] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 8, pp. 276-368.
[368] Yokomizo Seishi (1973-1975), vol. 13, pp. 142-177.
[369] Yokomizo Seishi (2003), pp. 339-357.
[370] Yokomizo Seishi (1973-1975), vol. 1, pp. 28-62.

4.3.1 – Sashichi and Relationships

The main characteristic of Sashichi, comparable to Umon's quietness, is that he is a very attractive playboy, though we rarely see him actually committing any 'improper' acts in this sense. A comprehensive physical description can be found in *Itsutsume no Shōki* 五つ目の鍾馗 [The Fifth Zhong Kui] (165):[373]

> I, the author, have until now described Sashichi only as a man as good-looking as a doll, as handsome as an actor; if that, my dear reader, has led you to imagine him as the stereotype of a playboy with no money or strength, you have committed a serious mistake.
>
> Leaving aside the question of money, how could he ever become the top *goyōkiki* in Edo if he hadn't had strength?[374] It is only natural that he should possess strength and technique, having been repeatedly exposed to mortal

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[371] Yokomizo Seishi (1973-1975), vol. 7, pp. 132-156.

[372] Yokomizo Seishi (1973-1975), vol. 12, pp. 164-202.

[373] Yokomizo Seishi (1973-1975), vol. 2, pp. 156-200.

[374] *Goyōkiki* is another term for *okappiki*. See also Section 1.1 and p. 102.

> danger by now, and looking at him naked like this [revealed that] he had a very fine physique.
>
> It appears he was the type to look thinner when dressed, so that when he was wearing clothes he presented a slender figure, but looking at him bare-chested, the bulging muscles of his shoulders, his full chest, his sturdy arms, his enticing form, naturally forged through his numerous experiences as an officer had the excellence of a masterfully crafted wooden Niō.[375]

Whereas a telling account of his bad habit is offered in *Sashichi no seishun* 佐七の青春 [Sashichi's Prime] (27):[376]

> Ningyō Sashichi from Otamagaike, Kanda, hailed as a master detective from the Bunka to the Bunsei era was an all-round *goyōkiki*, manly, bold, magnanimous and compassionate; his only flaw was that he had always been something of a womanizer.
>
> Despite having his loving wife Okume, perhaps too good for him, at home, this fool of a man had the bad habit of promptly feeling the need to make a pass at any good-looking woman he saw, as if arguing that the main course and a snack are two different things.[377]

This is a big departure from all the previous *torimonochō* heroes. Hanshichi was also a family man, but he was never described as particularly interested in women or sex, or as unfaithful; moreover, his wife Osen お仙 rarely comes into the picture, appearing in only 17 cases in total and having any influence at all on the plot only in two of them; in *Oteru no chichi* お照の父 [Oteru's Father],[378] Hanshichi even explicitly admonishes her not to meddle in his investigation, when she offers a suggestion. Umon is almost a polar opposite, living as he does in a man's world with no space for romance of any kind. Heiji is a married man, and his wife Oshizu has a heavier role in the narrative than Hanshichi's Osen, but the family dynamic is completely different from Sashichi's: Heiji is the ideal husband, faithful and serious, with a perfect marriage and an impeccable standing, in line with Kodō's ideas of morality. Nozaki argues that 'his [Yokomizo's] intention, of not wanting to make Sashichi someone with a strong sense of morality like Heiji, is clear',[379] and indeed the two characters' relations with their wives could not be more different. Sashichi's 'waywardness' can at times feel like an informed attribute, as in the stories we rarely see him go beyond the level of very light flirting, and he never outright cheats on Okume, not even after any of their many furious fights; Okume's strong jealousy, however, aptly complements her husband's tendencies, making his flirtatiousness seem much more extreme than it actually is. Their respective jealousy and the subsequent fights are usually played for laughs, though a certain dose of drama is often present, and in a few cases the whole thing is treated very seriously, to the point of hinting at a break-up. There is, however, a definite double standard: male characters in the Sashichi universe tend to have their flings more or less condoned by default, or at least viewed in a relatively benevolent light; female characters having affairs, however, tend to be dealt with much more harshly, not only by other characters – which would arguably be consistent with the times – but also in the narrative itself, apparently prodding the reader towards the same feelings.

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[375] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[376] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 1, pp. 164-186.

[377] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[378] Okamoto Ki. (2001), vol. 2, pp. 176-207.

An example of characters' reactions to this sort of thing can be found in *Torimono mitsudomoe* 捕物三つ巴 [A Three-Way Arrest] (42),[380] a story which shows Okume apparently cheating on Sashichi. While Sashichi and his *kobun* are staking out a place, they witness Okume confessing her feelings for another man, and admitting to having lain with him:

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[379] Nozaki (2010b), p. 64.

[380] Yokomizo Seishi (1973-1975), vol. 9, pp. 292-338.

when Okume comes home, Sashichi – who has got drunk in the meantime – throws her to the ground and stomps on her, accusing her of having tainted his honour and calling her promiscuous; he gets to the point of tears, and when a few seconds later he discovers a young man hidden in the wardrobe he assumes it is the one Okume was sleeping with, and begins to savagely punch her. Only when the young man steps forwards and reveals he is actually a girl does Sashichi's fury abate. It turns out that Okume's 'affair' was merely a ruse to help Sashichi succeed, and the girl in question was a potential victim which turns out to be the key to solving the case. At no time does Sashichi ever apologise for his behaviour or thank his wife for her efforts, despite Okume explicitly saying that his violence was so sudden and extreme that she thought he would kill her; on the other hand, it is Okume who apologises for her secrecy, and immediately has to explain her misleading behaviour. One of her objectives was to make Sashichi jealous, to repay him for all the times he has done the same, and she even announces that she is completely satisfied with the result, leaving Sashichi slightly embarrassed but satisfied himself. After this scene, there is no further mention of Okume's injuries, and her contribution to the case is only mentioned as a joke at the very end of the story, by Sashichi's superior Kanzaki Jingorō 神崎甚五郎.

How the narrative itself seems to be structured around this double standard is evident in *Bōzukiri Sadamune* 坊主斬り貞宗 [The Monk-Cutting Sadamune] (56):[381] being a novella, the plot would be too long to summarise, but the characters of Hayato 隼人 and his wife Onui お縫 are emblematic. Hayato is treated throughout as a good man, a positive character, but part of his story is that, during a two-year permanence in Kōfu 甲府 away from his wife, he has had an adulterous relationship with his maid, leaving her pregnant: this is not treated as a big deal either by the characters or the narrator, it is hardly mentioned and never commented upon as something particularly unusual or morally ambiguous. On the other hand, while Onui's character is initially presented with some amount of empathy, with pity being expressed for her forced two-year separation from her husband and understanding being shown for her jealousy in light of Hayato's relationship with the maid, her cheating on him is unequivocally shown as a wicked and perverse act. While never explicitly stated, it is easy to see all the horrible events that happen around Onui as a karmic consequence of her affair, and at the end of it all she is naturally humiliated and punished without a chance to speak or explain her position in any way. While the characters' positions towards all this can arguably be seen as a reflection of the times, the same cannot be said for the structure of the story itself: the fact that the worst criticisms of Onui are voiced by the narrator, for example, or the fact that she is given no chance of presenting her side of the story or any form of justification cannot be seen as historical details, and must reflect a specific choice by the author, though not necessarily his actual thoughts on adultery, of course.

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[381] Yokomizo Seishi (1973-1975), vol. 6, pp. 204-295.

Another characteristic of Sashichi is that he has two *kobun*: Tatsugorō 辰五郎 and Mameroku 豆六, usually called Tatsu and Mame for short. They are very distinct, each with their own peculiarities, quirks, even speech patterns (Mame speaks with a mild Kansai accent, while Tatsu is very much an Edokko in this respect), and their relationship with Sashichi is much more than a simple master-servant or teacher-pupil relationship: they live on the second floor of Sashichi and Okume's house, they interact with him daily, and, on the whole, they feel much more like Sashichi's younger brothers than his subordinates. This once again differentiates him from the heroes who came before: Hanshichi had many *kobun* – ten, some appearing only once or twice throughout the series – but no especially close relationship with any of them, making them seem relatively interchangeable, and painting him as a fundamentally solitary hero. Umon had only one *kobun*, Denroku, and his role is so big that it eclipses most other presences in Umon's life, with the two almost living in symbiosis.[382] Heiji is definitely closest to Sashichi in this respect – in fact, Yokomizo undoubtedly took inspiration from Kodō to build his 'team' – but he only has one *kobun*.

It should be noted that Yokomizo did not immediately decide that Sashichi would have two *kobun*: in fact, for the first 17 stories, Mame was not part of the team. This might seem very strange to today's readers, as they will find Mame appearing as early as the second story: this is a result of later modifications by the author, as Yokomizo loved going back to his older stories to tweak them.

> I have the habit of repeatedly modifying my *torimonochō*; in the story of the same name [*Toso kigen meoto torimono* 屠蘇機嫌女夫捕物 (10)][383] contained in *Teihon Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō zenshū* Mameroku appears, but in truth at that point there was no Mameroku yet. Mameroku's first appearance was in *Hotaru yashiki* 螢屋敷 (18),[384] published in the August issue [of *Kōdan zasshi*] of the same year [1939],[385] but, since he proved popular, I also modified many earlier works to add him as a character.[386]

Sashichi also has a collaborative relationship with a recurring character by the name of Hyōan-sensei 瓢庵先生, a down-to-earth doctor with a taste for cheap liquor. This character was actually created by Mizutani Jun 水谷準, author of detective fiction and friend of Yokomizo's, who published his own *torimonochō* series, *Hyōan-sensei torimonochō* 瓢庵先生捕物帖, beginning in October 1949. Hyōan's stories often featured Sashichi as a 'guest star', to the point that in one of them the narrator himself argued that there might be people wondering why Hyōan in turn never appeared in *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*; perhaps in response to this, Yokomizo started featuring Hyōan in several of his stories, though his name was invariably changed to Ryōan 良庵 for the Shun'yōdō shobō *zenshū*.[387]

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[382] There is, among several recurring roles, a second *kobun*, but his role does not even come near to having Denroku's depth or importance. He appears for the first time in the fourteenth instalment and, perhaps due to a lack of popularity with the public, dies in action during Umon's twentieth case.

[383] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 2, pp. 2-50.

[384] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 1, pp. 128-161.

[385] The story was actually published in September, not August.

[386] Yokomizo (2002), p. 221.

Leaving aside his family and acquaintances, Sashichi's relationship towards samurai is also worth mentioning. Hanshichi has a relatively 'balanced' and realistic relationship with the upper classes, Umon is a samurai himself, and Heiji is a clear-cut paladin of the *chōnin*, always defending them against the abuses of the warrior class and soundly defeating the latter at every turn. One could probably place Sashichi at a halfway point between Hanshichi and Umon: he often confronts criminal samurai or *rōnin*, and usually defeats them, but only through his wits, never in actual physical combat. In *Koi no tōshiya* 恋の通し矢 [The Archery Contest of Love] (107),[388] Sashichi finds himself facing a samurai who suddenly attacks him; he is only saved through the intervention of another samurai, who strikes so quickly that Sashichi's reaction is not even a factor in the exchange of blows.[389] There are sporadic cases when Sashichi manages to physically subdue samurai opponents, but he is invariably not alone, and has at least his two *kobun* with him, making it a three-on-one fight. His attitude towards the warrior class is anything but deferential, however: a particularly notable example is *Nisshoku goten* 日食御殿 [The Eclipse Palace] (54),[390] which sees Sashichi being summoned by the shogun for a very delicate espionage mission. On the whole, it seems more akin to a spy story than a detective one, but the most telling part is the ending. After behaving more or less deferentially to the shogun for the whole story, the ending scene has Sashichi showing off his solution in a very theatrical way – to great personal risk, as both his and his superior Jingorō's life are at stake in the matter. Having impressed the shogun with his acumen, Sashichi brazenly asks for his reward, in itself an impudence for which Jingorō rebukes him: he requests the sealed document which he was sent to recover, so that the shogun should not read it. The demand horrifies everyone present, and Sashichi proceeds to give unsolicited and rather critical advice on how to correctly deal with the political matter at hand. The shogun reacts with extreme ire, but in so doing he tears up the document in question, thereby fulfilling Sashichi's request; the reader is led to believe that he is only pretending to be angry, and is actually impressed by Sashichi's wisdom and resourcefulness, so much so that he ends up following his political advice.

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[387] Mizutani (2010), pp. 453-454.

[388] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 4, pp. 312-340.

[389] In the 2016 TV adaptation of this story the scene plays out quite differently. There is no friendly samurai, and Sashichi single-handedly defends himself and defeats his opponent, probably in the interest of providing a nice action scene for the audience.

[390] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-42.

4.3.2 – A Darker Edo

Sashichi's Edo is a very peculiar place. Yokomizo inserts many references to Edo-period history and geography, occasionally even some descriptions which seem to be taken directly from *Edo meisho zue*, as is the case for a description of Otamagaike in the eponymous story, the description of Unemegahara in *Tako no yukue*, or the appearance of the book itself in a story aptly titled *Edo meisho zue* (179).[391] One can also find the occasional appearance of historical people as characters, often with slightly modified names, like the *gesakusha* Kūrai Sanjin 空来山人 (a doubtless reference to Fūrai Sanjin 風来山人, a pseudonym of the famous *gesakusha* Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内) in *Fūryū rokkasen* 風流六歌仙 [The Six Masters of Elegance] (31),[392] the astronomer Takahashi Sakuzaemon 高橋作左衛門 in *Hyōryū kitan* 漂流奇譚 [Strange Stories of a Drifter] (33),[393] or Tōyama Kagemoto in *Tōrima* 通り魔 [The Street Killer] (146).[394] What makes Sashichi's Edo different from Hanshichi's, in this sense, is that these historical details, though generally accurate, are often marred by small imprecisions or anachronisms, so that they cannot really be used as a source of information in the way Kidō's descriptions can; moreover, these details are always limited to what is functional to the story, so that the historical explanations are always tailored to the plot, never the other way around.

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[391] Yokomizo (2004a), pp. 357-373.

[392] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 6, pp. 298-334.

[393] Yokomizo (2003), pp. 195-215.

[394] Yokomizo (2004a), pp. 220-245.

According to Ozawa Nobuo, *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* was part of the 'good old days' line of *torimonochō*,[395] but the difference with the world Heiji lives in could not be starker. Sashichi's Edo is full of heinous and grisly crimes, usually coupled with very graphic descriptions that clearly differentiate Yokomizo's style from that of the other *torimonochō* writers. This Edo is also full of many kinds of perversion, most prominently sexual perversions, a reflection of the author's Grand-Guignol style: 'Since about 1931, Yokomizo Seishi gradually converted his style, [going] from his earlier light and urban one towards a completely opposite direction, to a dark, eerie, *kusazōshi*-like world full of mysteries,' argues detective fiction critic Gonda Manji.[396] Describing another Yokomizo story, *Kura no naka* 蔵の中 [Inside the Warehouse], Gonda says that 'it incarnates the world of Edo-period *kusazōshi* and *yomihon* unique to Yokomizo Seishi'.[397] These statements, though they do not refer to *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, could arguably be just as fitting if applied to it: while some amount of difference is unavoidable between his *torimonochō* and his other works, the darkness of Sashichi's world stands on the background of the general propriety of other *torimonochō* like a shadow against the moon.

As a merely geographical example, it should not be a surprise that a couple of *Sashichi* stories feature the Yotsumeya 四つ目屋, a real Edo-period shop that specialised in aphrodisiacs and sex toys, and which never appears in *Hanshichi torimonochō* or *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*; or that the *Sashichi* series is replete with lengthy detailed descriptions of sexual intercourse, even when it has little relevance to the plot as a whole. Crimes of passion, or felonies in otherwise close connection to sex and perversion are probably the most frequent in *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, and neatly separate it from the other works in this genre. *Kakushi nenbutsu* 隠し念仏 [The Hidden *Nenbutsu*] (158),[398] for example, involves a heretical Buddhist sect, severely forbidden by the shogunate for their practices, which include orgiastic ceremonies; all the crimes in the story revolve around members of this sect trying to silence witnesses to their orgies, while the main sub-plot, in turn, revolves around a jilted lover.

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[395] Ozawa (2001), p. 80.
[396] Gonda (1996), p. 94.
[397] *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

In *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* one often finds a very specific pattern of women who are violated through some unfortunate occurrence and, though initially disgusted or reluctant, eventually come to enjoy the act, at least physically, if not psychologically, becoming in some way dependent on their rapist. This happens in at least ten stories (four of which are part of the pre-war run of the series), which, considering the high specificity of this pattern, is not a negligible sample size out of the 180 stories the series consists of. The reaction of these women can vary from helpless resignation, as is the case for Oshimo お霜 in *Futari Kamenosuke* 二人亀之助 [The Two Kamenosukes] (30),[399] to a deep disgust with oneself and a desire for vengeance, as is the case for Oshizu お静 in *Iroha kōdan* いろは巷談 [The ABC Rumours] (43),[400] but the basic concept is always the same: the women in question have no real control over the situation, and they must accept this dependence on sex like an incurable disease that inevitably spreads from the body to the mind. Oshizu is the strongest female figure among this bunch, so it is very telling that despite her strength and the complete success of her revenge plan, she ends up committing suicide, confessing the following to Sashichi just before jumping from a cliff:

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[398] Yokomizo (2004a), pp. 246-267.
[399] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 12, pp. 242-287.
[400] Yokomizo (2003), pp. 254-281.

> Women are mysterious creatures. When I was being held by their arms, even if in my heart I despised them, at some point my body came to depend on it. What's more, despite acting like thugs on the outside, the six members of the ABC Gang were actually simple people, enough to be led by the nose by a single woman such as myself. I felt the danger that, in time, my body's dependence could become a dependence of the heart. If that had happened, I would have truly become a common wife. That's why I decided to hasten my actions.[401]

This never seems to happen to men, in any of the stories; women are therefore consistently portrayed as the weaker sex, more prone to emotions – a depiction unfortunately common to the West as well – but also to their baser physical impulses, to the enticement of the sexual act itself, whether it be voluntary or forced. They are usually not evil to begin with: as is the case with Oshizu, who becomes a murderess as a result of reiterated rape and abuse, the female antagonists in *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* are often led from the path of probity by some unfortunate accident, often enough in the form of awful sexual experiences. This is arguably something that the *Sashichi* stories have in common with the traditional depictions of *dokufu*, the 'poison women' whose corruption is often traced back to some triggering event, sometimes even as a form of 'inherited evil' due to the act of a parent or relative. The narrator himself tends towards attributing negative characteristics to women, as is perhaps most evident in this passage from *Kichi-sama mairu* 吉様まいる [To Kichi-sama] (87):[402]

> All women, to a greater or lesser extent, possess a devil's spirit at the bottom of their hearts.
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> Okume, in toying with Kichinojō in this way, was wholeheartedly dedicated to helping her beloved husband Sashichi to succeed, but, if we took a closer

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[401] *Ibid.*, p. 281.
[402] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 8, pp. 110-135.

> look at the bottom of her heart, wouldn't we find women's intrinsic devil relishing the pleasure of teasing men?[403]

By contrast, the theme of homosexuality has a very different treatment. Female homosexuality is only mentioned twice, and in neither case does it have positive connotations: in *Jōhari no kagami* 浄玻璃の鏡 [The Infernal Mirror] (103),[404] the relationship between two female characters is described as 'odd',[405] and both in this story and in *Kurochō jubaku* 黒蝶呪縛 [The Spell of the Black Butterfly] (19),[406] the lesbian relationship is presented as a fundamentally unhappy one, dominated by jealousy and with a clear partner inequality. Of the four women in question, three turn out to be criminals; the only innocent one has been subjected to physical and psychological abuse by her domineering partner. Male homosexuality is mentioned much more often, and is usually presented in a much more positive, or at least tolerant, light: in *Kitsune no saiban* 狐の裁判 [The Fox's Trial] (141),[407] for example, the narrator comments that a relationship which today would be described not merely as homosexual but as paedophilia was very normal for the society of the time, and even an indispensable part of training for an *oyama* (a male actor specialising in female roles). Statements of this kind are the norm when it comes to treating male homosexuality in *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, both by characters and by the narrator, with one glaring exception to be found in *Sannin irowakashu*. In this story, while the narrator remains somewhat neutral on the topic, most characters express themselves rather strongly against male homosexuality, calling it improper, saying that gay people are more jealous than women, and generally treating Minosuke's 巳之介 – the character the story revolves around – homosexuality as something he ought to be cured of. It must be said, however, that the narrator mentions that Minosuke's behaviour exceeded the commonly accepted societal norms, as he was quite perverted, always surrounded by young men, and openly lived together with one as he would have with a wife, which might explain other characters' opinion of him.

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[403] *Ibid.*, p. 127.
[404] *Ibid.*, pp. 250-273.
[405] *Ibid.*, p. 270.
[406] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 5, pp. 360-390.
[407] *Ibid.*, pp. 292-324.

This treatment of women and sexuality might possibly be an extension of the above-mentioned influence that *kusazōshi* and *yomihon* had on Yokomizo's style, and it is also worth noting that similar patterns are definitely not exclusive to this series, being present in many forms of Japanese literature from the Taishō era onwards. Still, in the world of pre-war *torimonochō*, this is a unique occurrence which clearly distinguishes *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* from all other contemporary works of the genre. Crime and sexuality have always been closely linked – Jō Masayuki himself has stated that there can only be three major reasons behind a detective story: love, money or vengeance, as only these three motives can call for murder,[408] though it is a very broad classification – but no classic *torimonochō* presents such a close connection between the two, nor such a graphic depiction of crimes and perversion.

Where Hanshichi's Edo clearly demarcated its various layers, allowing for almost no overlap between them, Sashichi's Edo is for the most part the Edo of old, but with the introduction of many modern ingredients.

Among the many elements that call back to old Edo, the most central one is undoubtedly the preponderance of the *kabuki* and *jōruri* theatres, which are constant companions to Sashichi's adventures, just like they were a daily part of life for the citizens of Edo. Minor instances can be as simple as mentioning famous plays or using them for comparisons, such as the constant reference to the character of Rikiya 力弥 from *Chūshingura* 忠臣蔵 as a paragon of young male beauty, or Sashichi comparing an absurd and convoluted conspiracy theory to the plot of *Yotsuya kaidan* 四谷怪談 in *Fue o fuku rōnin* 笛を吹く浪人 [The *Rōnin* Flutist]

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[408] NOMURA Kodō *et al*. "Torimonochō no sekai" 捕物帖の世界. In: Nomura (1979), p. 242.

(52).[409] Other frequently referenced plays are *Yoshitsune senbon zakura* 義経千本桜 and *Kagamiyama kokyō no nishikie* 鏡山旧錦絵, but there are innumerable other plays, minor and major, which the characters depend on to colour their statements. Sashichi himself is frequently compared by the narrator to the actor Bandō Mitsugorō 坂東三津五郎 for his beauty, and when he and his *kobun* have to go undercover in *Nisshoku goten*, they take on the assumed names of Nakamura Kumenosuke 中村粂之助, Arashi Tatsugorō 嵐辰五郎 and Onoe Mameroku 尾上豆六, with their surnames clearly calling back to the stage names of famous actors; in another occasion, Tatsu and Mame compare themselves to the Soga 曽我 brothers, placing Sashichi's rival *okappiki* in the role of Kudō Suketsune 工藤祐経. Many plots, moreover, take inspiration from famous plays, or even revolve around certain plays which serve a key role in the plot: the clearest example is probably *Katakiuchi ningyō banashi*, a case which seems to be patterned after the events of *Kagamiyama*, with the appropriate puppets coming to life and attacking each other, so much so that everyone assumes events in real life to play out in exactly the same way – only for the expectations to be reversed, as the woman who was thought to correspond to the victim in the play turns out to be the villain, and vice versa. There are numerous similar examples of stories which reference more or less heavily some theatrical plot, such as *Kiyohime no obi* 清姫の帯 [Kiyohime's Belt] (44),[410] the very title of which calls back to the story of *Dōjōji* 道成寺; the story *Ogura hyakunin isshu* 小倉百人一首 (60),[411] in which the name of Omiwa お三輪, a character from the play *Imoseyama onna teikin*, is the central clue for Sashichi to solve a puzzle; or the parallels between *Kōshoku imorizake* 好色いもり酒 [The Love Potion] (116)[412] and the Chikamatsu Monzaemon play *Yari no Gonza kasane katabira* 鑓

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[409] Yokomizo (2003), pp. 316-338.

[410] *Ibid.*, pp. 282-315.

[411] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 10, pp. 2-49.

[412] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 4, pp. 240-273.

の権三重帷子, and between *Oni no men* 鬼の面 [The Demon Mask] (124)[413] and the play *Sesshū Gappō ga tsuji* 摂州合邦辻, just to cite a few examples in no particular order.

Another frequent concession to classical tropes is the role played by traditional folklore and superstition, the appearance of mythical creatures such as *kitsune* and *tanuki*, even if they invariably end up being exposed as frauds or deceptions. The narrator reminds the reader with a certain frequency that people in the Edo period tended to believe in things that we, today, would dismiss out of hand as nonsense, remarking that when Edo became Tōkyō all these things quickly disappeared: but, since the stories take place in the Edo period, it is anything but rare to find plots that seem to begin as horror stories, before the mystery is explained. Such is the case for *Inari musume* いなり娘 [The Inari Girl] (24),[414] with the *kobun* suggesting to Sashichi that they got lost because of a fox's illusion; *Honjo nanafushigi* 本所七不思議 [The Seven Wonders of Honjo] (35),[415] the whole plot of which revolves around seven mysterious occurrences and their investigation by our heroes; or the appearance of the custom of *hyaku monogatari* 百物語 [416] in the tales *Kōmori yashiki* 蝙蝠屋敷 [The Bat Mansion] (51)[417] and *Hyaku monogatari no yoru* 百物語の夜 [The Night of the Hundred Tales] (69).[418]

References to the literature and poetry of the time are also countless, again ranging from mere quotes of poets like Yosa Buson 与謝蕪村 (1716-1783) or Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694), to suggestive titles such as *Ogura hyakunin isshu* (calling back to the famous *waka* anthology), *Yōkenden* (a clear reference to Kyokutei Bakin's *Nansō Satomi hakkenden*

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[413] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 14, pp. 34-75.
[414] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 13, pp. 36-69.
[415] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 6, pp. 370-342.
[416] A nightly gathering of people telling a hundred ghost stories in front of a hundred candles, extinguishing one for each story told; when the hundredth light is blown out, and the participants are plunged in complete darkness, monsters are supposed to appear.
[417] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 9, pp. 200-254.
[418] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 12, pp. 204-240.

南総里見八犬伝), or *Jasei no in* 蛇性の淫 [Lust of the White Serpent] (151)[419] (a homage to Ueda Akinari's 上田秋成 [1734-1809] *Ugetsu monogatari* 雨月物語). In the case of *Ikite iru Jiraiya* 生きている自来也 [Jiraiya Lives] (32),[420] the criminal himself imitates the legendary thief Jiraiya in signing his crimes. In several cases, Yokomizo took inspiration from actual Edo-period crimes, though the references can occasionally overlap with the theatrical and literary ones, as many of these episodes were fictionalised soon after they happened. So, for example, the theft of 4,000 *ryō* from the shogunal reserves mentioned in *Inari musume* really happened – though it did so in 1855, making it an anachronism; *Karakusa Gonta* 唐草権太 (58)[421] has its starting point in the story of the thief Kirishitan Ochō 切支丹お蝶, just like *Nihon Zaemon* 日本左衛門 (73)[422] picks up from the adventures of the eighteenth-century eponymous Robin Hood-like figure. All these details serve to firmly set the *Sashichi* series in the past, building a web of references around its characters and events that help to put the reader in the appropriate mindset.

But the *Sashichi* stories are also filled with elements that seem rather discordant with its setting, and more in line with a modern one. The simplest and most evident of these characteristics is the occasional use of distinctly modern words, not just by the narrator but by the characters themselves, who – especially in later stories – occasionally use English terms such as 'spy' and 'agitation', or employ distinctly inappropriate expressions for the time, such as 'freedom of speech', 'alibi', 'defamation', 'invasion of privacy' or 'democratic'. In *Akuma no tomikuji* 悪魔の富籤 [The Devil's Lottery] (161),[423] after a character uses the word 'alibi', the narrator explains that 'a word such as alibi surely didn't exist in those times',[424] implicitly stating that the dialogues in the stories are not to be taken as literal transcriptions of what the characters would have said, but as modern translations, in a way, to facilitate the reader's comprehension; a similar explanation can be found in *Jonan kennan* 女難剣難 [Women Troubles, Sword Troubles] (128).[425] This lexical use is very different from what we find in *Hanshichi torimonochō*: Kidō uses old words – such as the word *torimonochō* itself – in their appropriate setting to introduce them to a modern audience, plunging them into the Edo-period atmosphere, whereas Yokomizo, in addition to this, has both his narrator and his characters occasionally using modern words in an old setting, creating a rather anachronistic effect, but facilitating the reader's approach to Edo, easing them into an unfamiliar environment through familiar concepts and expressions. This is also done through relatively frequent parallels between old and new customs, such as comparing the *kawaraban* 瓦版 to modern newspapers (or even radio and television, due to their entertainment aspect), describing *deai jaya* 出会茶屋 as the equivalent of modern love hotels,[426] translating the role of *kagema* 陰間 with the English expression 'gay boys', explaining supernatural phenomena in the stories through the more modern concepts of mediums or hypnosis, referring to a beauty contest as a sort of 'miss Edo', and numerous other examples of this kind. A similar – though less explicitly modern – technique was used in *Hanshichi torimonochō*, with the distinction that Hanshichi was explaining things to Watashi, while the unnamed narrator in *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, who might arguably coincide with the author, is offering his explanations directly to the reader, sometimes explicitly so.

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[419] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 5, pp. 188-224.
[420] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 8, pp. 370-401.
[421] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 11, pp. 296-332.
[422] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 13, pp. 98-140.
[423] Yokomizo (2004a), pp. 268-288.
[424] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

The modern elements within *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* can also be traced, perhaps in a less patently obvious fashion, in the behaviours and ways of thought displayed by the characters. Sashichi, for example, tends not to believe in supernatural occurrences, or at least to try and exhaust all possible alternatives before resorting to similar explanations; he also conducts his investigations very humanely and thoughtfully, to the point that in *Kaminari no yado* 雷の宿 [The Thunder Inn] (177)[427] he is described as a rationalist, in contrast to his rival's violent and blustering work – which would have been the standard in the Edo period. This modern twist occasionally extends to supporting characters or even antagonists, as in *Funayūrei* 舟幽霊 [The Boat Spirit] (154),[428] which begins as a traditional revenge story, but ends with a twist, as the supposedly vengeful character reveals he has no intention of avenging the father he hated: something which seems reasonable now, but that does not completely square with the traditions of the Edo period, which – in theory – imposed this sort of vengeance regardless of one's relationship to one's father.

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[425] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 5, pp. 116-149.

[426] More specifically, Yokomizo uses the term *onsen māku* 温泉マーク, which literally refers to the symbol used to mark hot springs on maps; however, at the time the term was also colloquially used to refer to love hotels, for their habit of exhibiting this symbol in their signs.

A connection with modern times is also achieved through the – rather rare – mention of contemporary people, such as the oblique references to Mitamura Engyo in *Hanbun Tsurunosuke* 半分鶴之助 [Half Tsurunosuke] (64)[429] and *Bikuni yado* 比丘尼宿 [The Priestess' Inn] (101),[430] and more evidently in Yokomizo's occasional borrowings from contemporary crime news. *Iwami ginzan* 石見銀山 [The Rat Poison] (99)[431] draws inspiration from the Teigin jiken 帝銀事件, a crime committed on 26 January 1948 by a man who entered a branch of the Imperial Bank and managed to trick all the present into drinking potassium cyanide and subsequently stole 160,000 yen. The events of *Iwami ginzan* naturally differ in their details from those of the real-life crime, but the parallel is explicitly drawn by the narrator, and since the story was published in May 1948, it is plausible that Yokomizo wrote *Iwami ginzan* in response to the Teigin jiken, rather than coincidentally adapting an appropriate story he had already sketched out to include a topical reference.

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[427] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 7, pp. 234-277.
[428] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 9, pp. 256-290.
[429] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 11, pp. 218-261.
[430] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 8, pp. 168-214.
[431] Yokomizo (1973-1975), vol. 1, pp. 326-258.

This mixture of old and new, historical and anachronistic, helps flesh out Sashichi's Edo, as the good facets of the Edo period are balanced by the bad ones of modernity, and the good sides of Yokomizo's contemporary Japan smooth out some of the rough edges of the shogunate. The world of *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* is not lacking in balance: for all the wickedness and perversions, at the end of the story, justice is usually served, and happy endings are not rare. On the whole, Sashichi's Edo is a dark place, much darker than any other classical *torimonochō*, but it is still presented as altogether acceptable to a modern reader.

In light of these considerations, it is hard to agree with Nawata when he excludes *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* from his ideal three-stage evolution of the genre:[432] this series represents a step in a direction that none of the other four works examined during the last two chapters have attempted, introducing a new kind of hero for a new kind of Edo, a fallible detective doing his best to bring some light in a dark world of murder and depravity, where no one is above suspicion, and everyone has a tragic story to tell.

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[432] See p. 136.

Conclusions

In these four chapters, we have examined the world of *torimonochō* and the various forms of their hybridity.

Chapter One has examined their context, and we have seen how, during their varied history, *torimonochō* have shown to possess a shifting nature, being variously considered detective fiction or historical literature depending on their surroundings, rather than on how they dealt with their subject matter, and yet never completely falling into either category. We have also explored the changing trends and vogues within the genre, with a brief look at the main representatives of each one.

Chapter Two has considered the origins of *torimonochō*, and how multiple literary currents have intersected to form a new entity that is anything but pure and monolithic in its composition. This genre, as created by Okamoto Kidō, is demonstrably built of multiple layers, which cannot be neatly separated from each other once combined, but rather form a condensed unity which owes its existence to all of its constituent parts.

Chapters Three and Four have studied the content of the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*', with a thematic division between 'traditional' and 'divergent' works respectively, specifically focusing on how each author gave a different representation of the city of Edo. In the case of 'traditional' *torimonochō*, considered in Chapter Three, we have seen how *Hanshichi torimonochō* presents a more-or-less realistic Edo, albeit with a nostalgic tint, while *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae* offers an idealistic utopia where injustice is promptly punished. 'Divergent' *torimonochō*, the subject matter of Chapter Four, depict other Edos entirely: in *Umon torimonochō*, the city is nothing less than the elaborate stage upon which the main character shows off his qualities; in *Wakasama zamurai torimono techō*, Edo is purely a background for the action, playing no major role in particular, but rather acting as a mere framework for the plot; and in *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, it is a much darker place than in any of the other works examined, a world of crime and depravity which heavily contrasts with the classical depictions associated with series such as *Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*, and which indubitably grants *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* a fundamental place in the history of the genre, even if it does not neatly fall within the process of evolution described by Nawata.

All these layers contribute to sketching a portrait of *torimonochō* that is starkly different from the monothematic block they are usually seen as, revealing a more flexible and nuanced composite of multiple interactive ingredients instead, certainly more difficult to define, pinpoint, or enclose within a simple, restrictive definition, but truer to the multifarious reality of this genre.

The usual presentation of *torimonochō* as a 'quintessentially Japanese' form of literature belies the fundamental foreign influences which have made them possible in the first place. The Japanese-ness of *torimonochō* is undoubtedly their most apparent characteristic, and possibly the one most likely to interest readers, but the fact that Chinese and Western detective fiction – once properly absorbed and metabolised through Japanese culture – had a deep impact on the creation of this genre cannot be disregarded. In this sense, *torimonochō* can be said to be simultaneously foreign-born and purely Japanese, in a state of kaleidoscopic hybridity. Part of this kaleidoscope is Edo itself – or rather, the numerous Edos which host the adventures of their respective heroes. While this city, being historically fixed in time and space as a matter of course, might seem to be merely an anchor of sorts, a common point for (almost) all *torimonochō* to use as a shared platform, it turns out to be a major separating factor at the same time. Each series has its own version of Edo: if a reader were to try and form a complete picture of the city through his readings of all the various *torimonochō*, he would find himself looking at a collage, rather than a painting, as each author filters Edo through his own point of view, his imagination and outlook, frequently taking leave of historical accuracy in favour of fictitious elements more appropriate for his narrative purposes.

The changing nature of *torimonochō* is perhaps most readily apparent in their own definition and perception by authors, critics, readers, and the authorities themselves: in a figurative limbo between detective and historical fiction, their identity has always been discussed and, even in the best of cases, hybrid. Some preferred to consider it a form of *tantei shōsetsu*, others – including many supercilious authors of detective fiction – insisted on it being a type of *jidai shōsetsu* instead. To draw a rather fanciful comparison, the state of *torimonochō* might be likened to Schrödinger's cat, in the thought experiment devised by physicist Erwin Schrödinger to illustrate the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum physics, which dictates that systems do not have definite properties until they are measured. Just like the cat is both alive and dead at the same time until one opens the box and looks inside, collapsing reality into only one of the two possible states, *torimonochō* are simultaneously detective literature and historical literature, until a critic, an authority figure, or even a simple reader dares to open the book and settle for himself the question of which one it should be. The varying answers that have been given to this question, and the varying treatment the genre has received, clearly show that, just like in Schrödinger's experiment, there is no single, unambiguous answer, not until the experimenter settles the matter by forcing reality to collapse into one of the two possibilities. So it was that *torimonochō* managed to be considered a form of historical novel under militarist rule, when detective fiction was undergoing a complete recession, and then seamlessly shift to being considered a form of detective fiction under the American occupation, when the historical novel had become the targeted literary form: all this without any discernible major change in the writing or composition of the works themselves.

As a result of all these observations, I would argue that *torimonochō* are best viewed as a somewhat nebulous and shifting cloud, able to accommodate in turn a wide range of contrasting realities, rather than the uncompromising box or Procrustean bed envisioned by critics like Nozaki.[433] This does not imply that *torimonochō* should merely remain a vague or ambiguous concept which can be infinitely stretched and applied to anything at all, as that would serve the opposite purpose, depriving it of all meaning. On the contrary, a certain degree of flexibility in its definition allows for the presence of outliers, such as *Meiji kaika: Ango torimonochō*, while simultaneously – and paradoxically, perhaps – better preserving a genre identity which would only be hampered by excessively rigid descriptions, more focused on formal quibbles than the actual content and spirit of the works.

In his 1901 essay *A Defence of Detective Stories*, G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936) defends detective fiction as a legitimate form of art, and argues that the city, as depicted in this genre, is itself poetic, more so than the countryside: author and Holmesian David Stuart Davies rightly interprets this as meaning that, in Chesterton's view, 'the detective-story writer should be regarded as the poet of the city'.[434] Both Chesterton and Davies were referring to modern cities, and to London specifically, but I would argue that a similar sentiment can be extended to *torimonochō* writers, themselves poets of the city, albeit an utterly different kind of city than the one the creator of Father Brown had in mind. As a matter of fact, in light of the proposed view of *torimonochō* as an ever-changing construct, perhaps these authors should rather be considered poets of the *cities* – or poets of the Edos. Only two of the authors of the 'Five Great *Torimonochō*' – Okamoto Kidō and Jō Masayuki – were actually true 'sons of Edo', inheritors of what remained of that great city; the other three did not have such a privilege, which in turn enabled them to turn their Edos into vessels for their own tastes and aspirations. This disparity, accompanied by the fact that Kidō's and Jō's Edos are thoroughly different regardless of their pedigree,[435] does nothing but make all these cities, if possible, all the more poetic.

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[433] Nozaki (2010b), pp. 3-5.

[434] Davies (2006), p. 10. Chesterton's essay itself can be found in Chesterton (2012).

[435] Nawata (1995), pp. 489-490.

Appendix 1 – Reference Table

	Hanshichi torimonochō	*Umon torimonochō*	*Zenigata Heiji torimono hikae*	***Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō***	*Wakasama zamurai torimono techō*
Author	Okamoto Kidō	Sasaki Mitsuzō	Nomura Kodō	Yokomizo Seishi	Jō Masayuki
Place of Birth	Tōkyō	Aichi Prefecture	Iwate Prefecture	Kōbe (Hyōgo Prefecture)	Tōkyō
Number of Stories	69	38	383	180	277
Original Run	1917-1937	1928-1932	1931-1957	1938-1968	1939-1969
Protagonist	Mikawachō no Hanshichi	Kondō 'Muttsuri' Umon	Zenigata Heiji	Ningyō Sashichi	Wakasama
Rank	*Okappiki*	*Dōshin*	*Okappiki*	*Okappiki*	Samurai
Characteristics of the Protagonist	Rough and pragmatic	Silent and celibate	Heroic and a family man	Flirtatious and good-looking	Genial and laid-back
Main Supporting Characters	Many *kobun*	Denroku	Hachigorō and Oshizu	Tatsugorō, Mameroku, and Okume	Oito
Relationship with Protagonist	Subordinates, no excessive familiarity	Life partners	Tight-knit, perfect family	Together with *kobun* and wife, they form a tight-knit family, frequently quarrelling or making fun of each other	Close but unspecified relationship
Main Appeal of the Series	Nostalgia	Cinematic action	Sense of justice	Morbidity and sexuality	Light puzzles
Atmosphere and Environment	Realistic and grounded	A stage to set off its protagonist	A utopia where justice is always served	A dark world of depravity	Unobtrusive background for the plots and tricks

Appendix 2 – A Comprehensive List of *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* Stories

This appendix lists all the stories from Yokomizo Seishi's *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō*, along with some basic bibliographical information and a brief synopsis. Some conventions and abbreviations are used to facilitate the reading of the table, which is divided as follows:

The first column, marked with the pound sign #, contains a sequential numbering for the stories. Listing them by order of publication would be the most logical approach, but this is made unfeasible by the uncertainty as to the first appearance of several stories, coupled with some disagreement between critics on the dating of others. In compiling this appendix, I have followed the numbering established in Yokomizo (2004a), which includes the most complete and authoritative listing of stories, adhering to chronological order as closely as possible.

The second column, marked **Title**, contains the established Japanese title for that story, an English translation of that title, and, when applicable, alternative titles that the story has been published under. Every Japanese title is presented in *rōmaji* transcription first, followed by *kanji*; no English translation has been provided for the alternative titles. When a title is enclosed in square brackets, it is the one used at the time of first publication, while titles enclosed in round brackets are ones which have been used at some time in the past, but are not considered 'official'. Taking story no. 16 as an example, the title under which it is commonly known today is *Rikonbyō*; when it was first published, however, it was titled *Sashichi rikonbyō*, and before settling on the present title, it had been variously re-published as *Futari Sashichi*, *Maboroshi no Sashichi*, *Sashichi futari*, and *Futatsu omokage*.

The third column, marked **Publication**, contains three important sets of information: the date of first publication, together with the title of the magazine or book the story appeared in; whether the story is original, or whether Yokomizo adapted it from one of his other works; and where the story can be found within the modern edition of the series adopted as reference. The bibliographical information for the stories' first appearance has been somewhat abbreviated, as shown in the alphabetically-ordered legend preceding the table: in the case of books, the title has been always transcribed in *rōmaji*, while *kanji* and further bibliographical information can be found in the legend; in the case of magazines, ones which only appear in a single entry are listed in *rōmaji* followed by *kanji*, while ones which appear in multiple entries are listed in *rōmaji* only, with *kanji* to be found in the legend. An asterisk before the date and book/magazine name indicates that the first publication is unknown; the data presented refer to that story's first appearance in *tankōbon* format instead. Bibliographical information has been collected from Sōgen Suiri Kurabu Akita Bunkakai (2000), Yokomizo (2003), and Yokomizo (2004a). Entries for stories which have been adapted from other series also include the initial(s) of the series they were adapted from, enclosed in round brackets; explanations for the abbreviations can be found in the legend, and further information on the *torimonochō* series mentioned can be found in Section 4.3. When a story is marked in this way, the bibliographical information for its first publication refers to the first time it has appeared as one of Sashichi's adventures, not to its original form; entries which are not marked are *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* originals. Story no. 35, for example, had been written as a *Sashichi* story from the beginning, while story no. 37 had been originally published as part of the *Shiranui torimonozōshi* series, and only subsequently adapted and re-published as a *Sashichi* story in June 1941. Lastly, I have indicated the placement of the story within the modern editions adopted as reference:[436] the circled number or symbol refers to the volume number, followed by page numbers. Numbers ① to ⑭ refer to one of the fourteen volumes of Yokomizo (1973-1975), ㊤ refers to Yokomizo (2003), and ㊦ refers to Yokomizo (2004a). Story no. 2, for example, can be found in vol. 12 of Yokomizo (1973-1975), pp. 64-97.

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[436] There is no single work which includes all 180 stories. Yokomizo (1973-1975) is commonly adopted by critics as the main reference edition, but it only contains 150 stories. This is complemented by Yokomizo (2003) and Yokomizo (2004a), which collect the remaining 30.

The fourth and last column, marked **Synopsis**, intuitively contains a brief summary of the story's premise, conclusion, and/or particular points worthy of comment. Readers interested in enjoying these stories for themselves should be aware that this section frequently contains unmarked spoilers.

Legend

Adaptation abbreviations

(B) → Oyakusha Bunshichi

(D) → Kuromonchō Denshichi

(H) → Hanafubuki no Sakon

(J) → Shiranui Jinnai

(K) → Asagao Kinta

(M) → Murasaki Jinza

(O) → Other detective stories (non-*torimonochō*)

(Sag) → Sagisaka Sagijūrō

(Sam) → Hattori Samon

(Sh) → Shiranui Jinza

First publication books/magazines

Bessatsu hōseki 別冊宝石

Bessatsu kōdan kurabu 別冊講談倶楽部

Binan komusō → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1954). *Binan komusō* 美男虚無僧. Tōkyō: Tōhōsha 東方社. Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō 人形佐七捕物帳.

Gin no kanzashi → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1947). *Gin no kanzashi hoka rokuhen* 銀の簪 他六編. Tōkyō: Sugiyama shoten 杉山書店. Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 1.

Hibotan kyōjo → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1968). *Hibotan kyōjo hoka kyūhen* 緋牡丹狂女 他九編. Tōkyō: Kinreisha 金鈴社. Shinpen Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 新編人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 9.

Hōseki 宝石

Jonan kennan → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1968). *Jonan kennan hoka jūnihen* 女難剣難 他十二編. Tōkyō: Kinreisha 金鈴社. Shinpen Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 新編人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 6.

Kakubējishi → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1947). *Kakubējishi hoka rokuhen* 角兵衛獅子 他六編. Tōkyō: Sugiyama shoten 杉山書店. Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 3.

Kingu キング

Kōdan kurabu 講談倶楽部

Kōdan zasshi 講談雑誌

Kōshoku zukin → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1952). *Kōshoku zukin* 好色頭巾. Tōkyō: Bungei tosho shuppansha 文芸図書出版社. Jidai shōsetsu shinsaku zenshū 時代小説新作全集, vol. 5.

Neko yashiki → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1952). *Neko yashiki* 猫屋敷. Tōkyō: Tōhōsha 東方社. Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō 人形佐七捕物帖.

Omoshiro kurabu 面白倶楽部

Onna komusō → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1951). *Onna komusō* 女虚無僧. Tōkyō: Tōhōsha 東方社. Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō 人形佐七捕物帖.

Sannin irowakashu → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1968). *Sannin irowakashu hoka jūhen* 三人色若衆 他十編. Tōkyō: Kinreisha 金鈴社. Shinpen Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 新編人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 5.

Shinseinen 新青年

Shōsetsu kurabu 小説倶楽部

Shōsetsu no izumi 小説の泉

Shunshoku mayukakushi → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1947). *Shunshoku mayukakushi hoka rokuhen* 春色眉かくし 他六篇. Tōkyō: Sugiyama shoten 杉山書店. Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 4.

Shun'yōdō 1-5 → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1941). *Ningyō Sashichi torimonochō* 人形佐七捕物帳. Tōkyō: Shun'yōdō shoten 春陽堂書店. 5 vols.

Sugiyama 1 → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1942). *Ningyō Sashichi torimono hyakuwa – 1: Nisshoku goten hoka nanahen* 人形佐七捕物百話・一　日食御殿 他七編. Tōkyō: Sugiyama shoten 杉山書店.

Sugiyama 2 → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1942). *Ningyō Sashichi torimono hyakuwa – 2: Hōzuki daijin hoka nanahen* 人形佐七捕物百話・二　ほおずき大尽 他七編. Tōkyō: Sugiyama shoten 杉山書店.

Sugiyama 3 → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1942). *Ningyō Sashichi torimono hyakuwa – 3: Tsuzumi kyōgen hoka rokuhen* 人形佐七捕物百話・三　鼓狂言 他六編. Tōkyō: Hakkōsha Sugiyama shoten 八紘社杉山書店.

Tanuki goten → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1947). *Tanuki goten hoka rokuhen* 狸御殿 他六篇. Tōkyō: Sugiyama shoten 杉山書店. Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 2.

Torimono kurabu 捕物倶楽部

Ukiyoeshi → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1968). *Ukiyoeshi hoka kyūhen* 浮世絵師 他九編. Tōkyō: Kinreisha 金鈴社. Shinpen Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 新編人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 7.

Umewaka mizuagechō → YOKOMIZO Seishi 横溝正史 (1968). *Umewaka mizuagechō hoka kyūhen* 梅若水揚帳 他九編. Tōkyō: Kinreisha 金鈴社. Shinpen Ningyō Sashichi torimono bunko 新編人形佐七捕物文庫, vol. 10.

Yomikiri shōsetsu shū 読切小説集

Yomimonokai 読物界

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
1	*Hagoita musume* 羽子板娘 The Battledore Girls [*Hagoita sannin musume* 羽子板三人娘]	January 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ① 1-25	Two young girls celebrated for their beauty die under suspicious circumstances, leading people to believe it is the work of a serial killer. The killer, in truth, was only interested in murdering a third girl, using the deaths of the first two as a blind.
2	*Nazo bōzu* 謎坊主 The Riddle Monk (*Nimai no ema* 二枚の絵馬)	February 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑫ 64-97	A young, blind monk renowned for his ability to quickly solve riddles is falsely accused of murder when a painter and his wife are found dead. Sashichi discovers that the painter is alive and responsible for the crime, having killed his brother and taken his identity.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
3	*Nageki no yūjo* 嘆きの遊女 The Sorrowful Courtesan	March 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ① 64-88	During a *hanami*, Sashichi looks on as a group of people surrounds a man and a woman, and when they disperse, the man is found murdered. Sashichi investigates and falls in love with the woman, Okume, clearing up a series of family intrigues. When Okume, distraught, expresses her intention to become a Buddhist priestess, Sashichi declares his love for her, and the two soon marry.
4	*Yamagara kuyō* 山雀供養 Memorial for a Tit	April 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 5-23	The city has recently been plagued by thefts committed by a mysterious woman wearing a purple cowl. Sashichi knows who she is, but the latest theft he is about to arrest her for suddenly turns into a murder case. When Sashichi discovers the real murderer and closes the case, he forgives the thief.
5	*Yamagataya sōdō* 山形屋騒動 The Yamagataya Disturbance	May 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 24-48	An anonymous letter informs Sashichi of a murder about to be committed, and he thus manages to save a girl from drowning, only to find her father murdered. Further investigations reveal that the girl herself, together with her lover, had orchestrated the incident as a blind.
6	*Hinin no adauchi* 非人の仇討 The Pariah's Revenge (*Mizuiro zukin* 水色頭巾)	June 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑪ 184-216	Sashichi is consulted by a *kabuki* actor who claims to have been drugged so that someone could impersonate him on stage. Later, the head of his troupe is murdered, and another actor is found drugged with an identical story. The murderer is revealed to be the actor who consulted Sashichi, who did so to establish an alibi for his colleague.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
7	*Sanbon no ya* 三本の矢 The Three Arrows	July/August 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 49-81	A samurai and his three disciples, who are competing for the hand of their master’s daughter, are slowly picked off one by one, apparently by an escaped convict, who had been a fellow disciple. Sashichi reveals that the real murderer is the girl’s mother, who was thought to be dead.
8	*Inu musume* 犬娘 The Dog Girl [*Nazo no ikisōrei* 謎の生葬礼]	September/October 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 82-114	A series of suspicious deaths are all linked by the victims supposedly having been torn apart by a wolf. Sashichi fails to prevent further deaths, but uncovers the culprits and the paw-shaped hook they used.
9	*Yūrei yamabushi* 幽霊山伏 The Phantom Hermit [*Yamabushi Yūrei* 山伏幽霊]	November/December 1938 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 115-147	Many young girls have been found dead, killed with a single spear-stab, and the culprit is rumoured to be a spectral hermit. Sashichi acts as bait, and when he is himself kidnapped, he discovers that the murderer is a painter who has taken to using human blood in his work.
10	*Toso kigen meoto torimono* 屠蘇機嫌女夫捕物 A Case of Couples and Drunkenness (*Nazo no orizuru* 謎の折鶴, *Kiiro no orizuru* 黄色の折鶴)	January 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* (*Edo torimonochō* 江戸捕物帳 supplement) ② 2-50	Spurred by jealousy, Okume leaves to confront Sashichi’s apparent mistress, but runs into a poisoned boy who dies in her arms, entrusting her with a red *origami* crane. Later, a doctor and his mistress are found murdered. Sashichi discovers that the murdered woman and her purported brother were actually a couple, who had been committing crimes for a long time.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
11	*Kamen no wakatono* 仮面の若殿 The Masked Young Lord [*Kamen no shūjin* 仮面の囚人]	February 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑨ 362-397	When the same scene of street disturbance, involving the same three people, is repeated multiple times, Sashichi suspects it to be a diversion of some kind. He soon finds himself investigating two deaths by pufferfish poisoning and the disappearance of a young nobleman, all linked by what appears to be a hereditary dispute.
12	*Zatō no suzu* 座頭の鈴 The Blind Man's Bell	March 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑫ 386-426	A rich merchant relates his meeting with a dying blind man, who entrusted him with a bell. The spirit of the blind man appears to come back to retrieve the bell, but Sashichi discovers its real importance: it used to contain the severed finger of the blind man's murderer, which could be used to identify him.
13	*Hanami no kamen* 花見の仮面 The Mask at the *Hanami* [*Echigoya sōdō* 越後屋騒動]	April 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑭ 78-105	Sashichi and Okume are at a *hanami* again, reminiscing about their meeting, when they see a masked man running from a tent. Inside the tent, a merchant is dying, apparently poisoned by the masked man. Sashichi, with Okume's help, investigates the murder, which turns out to be connected to a strange religious sect.
14	*Otowa no neko* 音羽の猫 The Cat of Otowa (*Kin'iro no neko* 金色の猫, *Kin'iro no tsume* 金色の爪)	May 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ① 90-125	Intrigued by a cat's clipped nails, which seem to shine with a strangely golden hue, Sashichi brings to justice a band of counterfeiters who, in order to cover their tracks, have committed a double murder, pinning it on Tatsu, who is temporarily arrested until the matter is cleared up.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
15	*Nimai tanzaku* 二枚短冊 The Two *Tanzaku*	June 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑬ 142-177	A *rōnin* friend of Sashichi 'gifts' him the severed arm of a girl who had tried to rob and murder him the previous night. Sashichi tracks her down, and eventually helps her thwart a long-standing blackmail scheme and avenge her family.
16	*Rikonbyō* 離魂病 The *Doppelgänger* [*Sashichi rikonbyō* 佐七離魂病] (*Futari Sashichi* 二人佐七, *Maboroshi no Sashichi* 幻の佐七, *Sashichi futari* 佐七ふたり, *Futatsu omokage* ふたつ面影)	July 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑥ 128-163	Sashichi appears to be affected by *rikonbyō*, a mythical illness in which the soul separates from the body to form a second, independent individual. His double allegedly commits a murder, for which Sashichi is arrested. He finds out he has a look-alike who, in collusion with an enemy Sashichi had made in a previous case, conspires to disgrace him.
17	*Meigetsu ichiya kyogen* 名月一夜狂言 A Harvest-Moon Night Drama [*Ichiya kyōgen* 一夜狂言]	August 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 148-168	Sashichi is invited to one of the many eccentric parties held by a retired *hatamoto*. Once there, he meets the other invitees, and as one of them is found dead, Sashichi takes charge of the investigation: the culprit can only be one of the guests.
18	*Hotaru yashiki* 螢屋敷 The Firefly Mansion (*Koban yashiki* 小判屋敷)	September 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ① 128-161	Mameroku makes his first appearance in the series, as the Sashichi family investigates the murder of a young woman stuffed in a wicker chest, surrounded by fireflies.
19	*Kurochō jubaku* 黒蝶呪縛 The Spell of the Black Butterfly [*Kochō Gozen* 胡蝶御前]	October 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑤ 360-390	A newly-wedded bride disappears, in what is initially assumed to be a case of kidnapping. The person responsible turns out to be an older woman of high standing, who is desirous of having a homosexual relationship with the girl.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
20	*Chigo Jizō* 稚児地蔵 The Infant Jizō	November 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ① 290-324	A statue of Jizō found outside a samurai mansion is rumoured to be possessed, as it repeatedly rotates to face backwards during the night, and is at one point found to be dressed and made-up to resemble a child. The case takes a dark turn when a murder is committed, and Sashichi unearths a massive conspiracy surrounding an inheritance.
21	*Katakiuchi ningyō banashi* 敵討ち人形噺 A Story of Vengeful Puppets (*Fūryū ningyō banashi* 風流人形噺, *Aizō ningyō goroshi* 愛憎人形殺し)	December 1939 *Kōdan zasshi* ③ 396-428	Tatsu and Mame are eating *soba* by the riverfront when they see a *jōruri* puppet pass by in a boat. Astounded, they tell Sashichi everything, prompting his investigation in a series of increasingly baffling events which seem to be a real-life reconstruction of the events of the *jōruri* play *Kagamiyama*.
22	*On'ai no tako* 恩愛の凧 Love's Kite	January 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ③ 2-31	A *hinin* mistakenly hits a young *hatamoto* with the kite he was flying, prompting the ire of his attendants. This leads to a series of incidents and murders involving a recently-escaped convict, and to one of Sashichi's rare investigative bungles.
23	*Maboroshi yakusha* まぼろし役者 The Phantom Actor	February 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑨ 162-198	After recovering from an illness, Sashichi turns his attention to the disappearance of a famous actor, three years earlier, which appear to be connected with a series of murders in the present day. Sashichi is deceived by a beautiful woman, who turns out to be responsible for everything.
24	*Inari musume* いなり娘 The Inari Girl	March 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑬ 36-69	Sashichi, Tatsu, and Mame briefly meet a mysterious girl looking for a fox, only to later find her murdered, an old fox jumping in to defend her body. Sashichi's investigations lead him to connect this crime with a 4,000 *ryō* theft committed the previous year.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
25	*Kukurizaru no himitsu* 括り猿の秘密 The Secret of the Bound Monkey	April 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑩ 160-196	Tatsu arrests a pick-pocket, forcing him to give the bundle he had stolen back to its owner. Sashichi, however, notes that the bundle contains a human head and a talisman of a bound monkey. Sashichi investigates the murder and an attempted murder, connected by the same monkey talisman and by the curse of an old hunch-backed woman.
26	*Gesaku jigoku* 戯作地獄 A *Gesaku* Hell	May 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑭ 150-181	Sashichi receives a warning letter about a murder that will be committed the following day in Yoshiwara. Unsure whether it is just a prank, Sashichi goes but is unable to prevent the murder of a young courtesan. Sashichi keeps receiving warning letters, as other murders are committed, apparently following the plot of a *kusazōshi*.
27	*Sashichi no seishun* 佐七の青春 Sashichi's Prime	June 1940 *Shinseinen* ① 164-186	After a quarrel with Okume, Sashichi storms out of the house and is seduced by a young girl. He wakes up in a boat, drunk and without his personal effects. When they are found on a murder victim, Sashichi is accused of the crime.
28	*Furisode Gennojō* 振袖幻之丞 *Furisode* Gennojō	June 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 169-194	The news is given of what appears to be a strange lovers' double-suicide, the man being dressed as a woman, and vice versa. Sashichi is investigating the matter, which appears even stranger when the man, who survived, turns out to be incapable of either walking or speaking, despite being a fully-grown individual. The only way he can communicate is by writing the three characters which make up his name, Gennojō.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
29	*Yūrei shimai* 幽霊姉妹 The Ghost Sisters	July 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑧ 216-247	A young woman, disappeared and presumed to be drowned in a boating accident, appears to come back as a ghost at a festivity in her honour, leading to the disappearance of her sister, and the deaths of her step-mother and of the head clerk of the family shop, in what is presumed to be a posthumous revenge killing.
30	*Futari Kamenosuke* 二人亀之助 The Two Kamenosukes	August 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑫ 242-287	Kamenosuke, a man who had been allegedly 'stolen' by an eagle as a child, turns up again to claim the hand of his fiancé, but at the same time another man claiming to be Kamenosuke appears as well. The two quarrel endlessly, accusing the other of being an impostor, as Sashichi unveils the truth behind this deception.
31	*Fūryū rokkasen* 風流六歌仙 The Six Masters of Elegance	September 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑥ 298-334	Six artists, who have a *de facto* monopoly over the literary and artistic world of Edo, are convinced by their patron to participate in a treasure hunt. One by one, however, they turn up dead, their portraits pinned to the bodies, the survivors becoming increasingly paranoid as they assume the culprit to be one of them.
32	*Ikite iru Jiraiya* 生きている自来也 Jiraiya Lives	October 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑧ 370-401	After a seven-year hiatus, a thief who signed himself as 'Jiraiya' seems to resume his activities. This time, however, he also commits murder – something he never did before – and only steals worthless objects.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
33	*Hyōryū kitan* 漂流奇譚 Strange Stories of a Drifter (*Chizome byōshi* 血染め表紙)	November 1940 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 195-215	Sashichi stumbles on a man trying to dispose of a body; he fails to stop him, but he does recover a blood-stained book about foreign travels, banned by the shogunate, from the corpse. He then uncovers a series of grisly crimes which lead back to a Portuguese immigrant who is plotting an invasion of Japan.
34	*Kaidan goshiki neko* 怪談五色猫 The Cat of Five Colours, A Ghost Story	April 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 2 (Sag) ⑬ 180-214	A playwright, struggling to finish a work bearing the same title as the story itself, is suddenly found murdered. Both his play and his death seem to be related in some way to a cat and a mysterious court lady, which leads many to postulate supernatural circumstances.
35	*Honjo nanafushigi* 本所七不思議 The Seven Wonders of Honjo	June 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 5 ⑥ 370-432	The neighbourhood of Honjo is beset by a series of seven strange and inexplicable phenomena, of seemingly supernatural origin. Sashichi investigates, finding them to be part of an elaborate treasure hunt which a band of thieves left for their children.
36	*Kōbai yashiki* 紅梅屋敷 The Red Plum Mansion [*Yagasuri no onna* 矢がすりの女]	June 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 5 (O) ⑩ 52-110	A love letter allegedly sent by Sashichi to a servant in a *hatamoto* mansion ignites Okume's jealousy, despite Sashichi's denial, and leads to the discovery of a corpse. Sashichi unearths an extortion ring dating back to a murder committed three years earlier.
37	*Karakuri goten* からくり御殿 The Trick Palace	June 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 5 (Sh) ㊤ 216-234	Sashichi and Tatsu are out fishing, when they recover a corpse inside a wicker basket. They follow clues leading to a recently-emerged religious movement, which turns out to be a front for a Western conspiracy to raze Edo to the ground.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
38	*Obake koshō* お化小姓 The Ghost Page	June 1941 *Shun’yōdō* 5 (Sh) ㊤ 235-253	Thanks to a clue given to him by a gambler, Sashichi begins tracking down a thief who has been running wild in Edo recently, eventually discovering that he poses as a *kappa* for a freak show during the day.
39	*Arashi no shugenja* 嵐の修験者 The Ascetic in the Storm	June 1941 *Shun’yōdō* 5 (O) ⑪ 264-294	A *shugenja*, a mountain ascetic, is seen dragging away a corpse during a stormy night; this turns out to be connected to a thirteen-year-old family feud which Sashichi attempts to shed light on.
40	*Chiyashiki* 血屋敷 The Blood Mansion [*Shin sarayashiki* 新皿屋敷] (*Ogin kyōran* お銀狂乱, *Yōsetsu chiyashiki* 妖説血屋敷)	June 1941 *Shun’yōdō* 5 (O) ⑦ 50-93	The appearance of a ghost seems to cast a curse on the Hishikawa family, leading to a series of grisly murders and one suicide. The pool of possible culprits is gradually reduced, until Sashichi finds out that the murderer did everything unconsciously, in a form of somnambulism.
41	*Katakiuchi sōmatō* 敵討ち走馬灯 The Revolving Lantern Revenge	June 1941 *Shun’yōdō* 3 (Sag) ④ 276-309	A *hatamoto* confesses a murder he committed seven years earlier, killing a *hinin* to get his hands on his sword. After this confession, he is repeatedly assaulted, leading everyone to believe that one of the listeners is trying to avenge the *hinin*.
42	*Torimono mitsudomoe* 捕物三つ巴 A Three-Way Arrest	June 1941 *Shun’yōdō* 3 (Sh) ⑨ 292-338	After a furious quarrel with Sashichi, Okume leaves and stumbles into a corpse. This leads to an investigation into the death of a pair of twins – who later turn out to be triplets – and to an outright competition between the Edo and Nagasaki *bugyōsho*.
43	*Iroha Kōdan* いろは巷談 The ABC Rumours [*Iroha seidan* いろは政談]	June 1941 *Shun’yōdō* 3 (Sag) ㊤ 254-281	Sashichi receives a mysterious letter containing seven *iroha garuta*; following this clue leads him to the first of a series of murders, as the so-called ‘ABC gang’ is decimated, in a very elaborate personal revenge.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
44	*Kiyohime no obi* 清姫の帯 Kiyohime's Belt	June 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 3 (Sh) ㊤ 282-315	An ascetic has started selling 'belts of Kiyohime', which are purported to ensure a safe birth, and a successful love life. The women who have bought them, however, are murdered one by one, and the belts build a reputation as cursed items. Sashichi eventually discovers that the murderer was the ascetic himself, who was trying to recover stolen items he had mistakenly hidden in the belts.
45	*Torioi Ningyō* 鳥追い人形 The Scarecrow Puppet	June 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 3 (Sag) ① 250-288	During a parade, one of the floats is inadvertently hit by a boat: the puppet it was carrying falls and breaks, revealing a corpse inside. This grisly event is only the prelude to a series of murders, and the culprit is eventually revealed to be the man who had been thought to be the first victim.
46	*Maboroshi Komachi* まぼろし小町 The Phantom Komachi (*Nazo no nishikie* 謎の錦絵)	July 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 4 (H) ⑤ 152-186	A mysterious individual delivers three defaced *nishiki-e* to Sashichi, challenging him to solve their mystery. The series of murders which follows turns out to be the product of an artist's morbid imagination.
47	*Migawari Sennojō* 身代わり千之丞 The Substitute Sennojō	July 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 4 (Sh) ⑭ 108-147	When a rising actor is arrested on the charge of being an escaped convict, his lover begs Sashichi to clear up what she feels can only be a mistake. Sashichi eventually finds out that the actor had been hired to play the role of a *hatamoto*'s son who had always exhibited a deviant personality, and had recently gone completely mad.
48	*Shusse kurabe sannin tabi* 出世競べ三人旅 The Travels of Three Persons Competing for Success	July 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 4 (Sag) ⑪ 372-404	Two strange letters, and a funeral ceremony for someone who was still alive are only the prelude of a murder case going back twenty years, to a promise exchanged between three young and hopeful men.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
49	*Kaidan neya no oshidori* 怪談閨の鴛鴦 Mandarin Ducks in the Bedchamber, a Ghost Story (*Hanaōgi ningyō* 花扇人形)	July 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 4 (Sh) ③ 220-251	The ghost story told in a newly-published *kusazōshi* seems to come to life, as a series of crimes – including one murder – are committed in accordance with the contents of the book. Sashichi's investigations reveal that the crimes are connected to a seven-year-old revenge plot.
50	*Jinmensō wakashu* 人面瘡若衆 The Two-Faced Young Man [*Jinmensō kitan* 人面瘡奇譚]	July 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 4 (Sh) ⑪ 142-182	Okume tells Sashichi about a 'freak competition', which was won by a young man with a *jinmensō*, a malignant growth resembling a human face. This leads to the discovery of a series of murders, which is in turn connected to a band of pirates active 16 years earlier, a case which had been worked on by Sashichi's father.
51	*Kōmori yashiki* 蝙蝠屋敷 The Bat Mansion	July 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 4 (O) ⑨ 200-254	During a test of courage, a young girl discovers a headless corpse. In the following weeks, she seems to be persecuted by a hunch-backed man, and is eventually the target of several attempted murders perpetrated by her own family.
52	*Fue o fuku rōnin* 笛を吹く浪人 The *Rōnin* Flutist	July 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 4 (Sh) ㊤ 316-338	A young man is wary of a mysterious flute-playing *rōnin* hanging around the house of his fiancé, who has recently refused to be seen by him. One night, he finds her murdered and, uncovering her once-beautiful face, discovers it has been disfigured by leprosy. Sashichi becomes involved in the case, and the *rōnin* turns out to be the girl's biological father, himself sick with leprosy – thought to be a hereditary illness at the time. When he found out that his daughter had started showing symptoms, he murdered her out of pity.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
53	*Ōkami zamurai* 狼侍 The Wolf Samurai [*Mekura ōkami* めくら狼]	July 1941 *Shun'yōdō* 4 (O) ⑬ 286-322	A government official is found dead, apparently bitten to death by his own dog. Sashichi investigates, only to find that the man has faked his own death to cover up a counterfeiting operation.
54	*Nisshoku goten* 日食御殿 The Eclipse Palace	February 1942 *Sugiyama* 1 ④ 2-42	Sashichi is summoned by Shogun Ienari himself, and asked to investigate the death of one of his spies. Sashichi goes undercover to solve the case, and his daring request to the shogun also earns his admiration.
55	*Yukidaruma no kai* 雪達磨の怪 The Mystery of the Snowman	February 1942 *Sugiyama* 1 ⑤ 392-429	A series of young girls murdered near snowmen has the city baffled, until Sashichi finds out it is a mother avenging her daughter, driven to suicide by bullying.
56	*Bōzukiri Sadamune* 坊主斬り貞宗 The Monk-Cutting Sadamune	February 1942 *Sugiyama* 1 ⑥ 204-295	A cursed sword torments a *hatamoto*, nearly driving him to complete madness. Sashichi unveils a plot by his wife and cousin, who were planning to kill him and steal his fortune.
57	*Suppon seidan* すっぽん政談 Tale of a *Suppon* (*Koi no ganso sabaki* 恋の元祖裁き)	February 1942 *Sugiyama* 1 ② 116-153	Sashichi becomes interested when he hears of a young girl having her finger bitten off by a *suppon*. When he investigates, he uncovers a complex plot to seize the assets of two wealthy families.
58	*Karakusa Gonta* 唐草権太 Karakusa Gonta	February 1942 *Sugiyama* 1 ⑪ 296-332	A series of odd thefts of ornamental hairpins leads to the murder of a young girl. The two crimes turn out to be unrelated, the murder being committed because of jealousy, while the thefts were an indirect attempt by a son to find his father, who he thought had abandoned him.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
59	*Hōzuki daijin* ほおずき大尽 The *Hōzuki* Millionaire	March 1942 *Sugiyama* 2 ① 188-248	A millionaire in 'forced retirement' has apparently gone mad, and started murdering members of his own family. Sashichi discovers that the murders were actually committed by an impersonator intent on vengeance.
60	*Ogura hyakunin isshu* 小倉百人一首 *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* [*Nazo no hyakunin isshu* 謎の百人一首]	March 1942 *Sugiyama* 2 ⑩ 2-49	An actor calls on Sashichi to ask for help in solving a series of riddles, which would lead him to recover some sensitive letters he had been blackmailed with. He is found dead the following day, and Sashichi's investigations eventually show that he had mixed lies and truth in telling his story, and had been the villain of the whole plot, rather than the victim.
61	*Futaba shogi* 双葉将棋 Youth *Shōgi*	March 1942 *Sugiyama* 2 ① 360-399	A young *shōgi* prodigy is kidnapped, and found murdered the following day. His rival family are the immediate suspects, but Sashichi discovers that the crime had been specifically orchestrated by the boy's mother to frame them.
62	*Myōhōmaru* 妙法丸 Myōhōmaru	March 1942 *Sugiyama* 2 ④ 372-421	A plot to steal a sword leads to a murder, closely followed by a second one. Sashichi uncovers a tangle of love and vengeance, and determines that the first supposed murder had actually been an accident.
63	*Tsuru no senban* 鶴の千番 The Lottery Ticket	March 1942 *Sugiyama* 2 ⑦ 280-321	After winning a considerable amount of money in a lottery, a group of friends begin dying one by one, in a series of convenient accidents. Sashichi realises that the culprit is a member of the group, who went as far as faking his own death.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
64	*Hanbun Tsurunosuke* 半分鶴之助 Half Tsurunosuke	March 1942 *Sugiyama* 2 ⑪ 218-261	Young Tsurunosuke does his best to appease the two women who both claim to be his mother, not knowing the truth, but being a pious son. One day he starts disappearing, and things seem to escalate when, on one occasion, he comes back wounded. At the end, he finds out that neither woman is his real mother: he is the son of the concubine of a rich *hatamoto*'s, who adopts him.
65	*Oshun zange* お俊ざんげ Oshun's Repentance	March 1942 *Sugiyama* 2 (O) ⑧ 138-166	Sashichi solves a curious case of pick-pocketing, and the culprit, Oshun, promises to refrain from further crimes. A month later, however, Oshun's lover is accused of murder, and it is only thanks to Sashichi's intervention that he is shown to be innocent, the victim of a framing job intended to disgrace the couple.
66	*Shichinin bikuni* 七人比丘尼 The Seven Priestesses	March 1942 *Sugiyama* 2 ③ 296-331	A series of priestesses, whose real identity is mysterious, are murdered. Sashichi finds out that these crimes are connected to a revenge enacted by seven priestesses against the lord of their feudal domain.
67	*Tsuzumi kyogen* 鼓狂言 A Drum Drama (*Nyogogashima* 女護ケ島)	September 1942 *Sugiyama* 3 ⑪ 58-139	Sashichi is once again called upon by the shogun, this time to solve a series of incidents in his inner rooms. For the duration of the investigation, Sashichi, Tatsu, and Mame are even elevated to the rank of samurai.
68	*Otamagaike* お玉が池 Otamagaike	September 1942 *Sugiyama* 3 ⑩ 346-380	When a *haiku* master moves in the neighbourhood, the Sashichi family gets into a *haiku* craze, until the master is viciously attacked. By solving poetry-themed riddles, Sashichi uncovers a year-old plot, connected to several thefts and murders.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
69	*Hyaku monogatari no yoru* 百物語の夜 The Night of the Hundred Tales (*Hyaku monogatari* 百物語)	September 1942 *Sugiyama* 3 ⑫ 204-240	Sashichi is invited to a *hyaku monogatari*, when a ‘locked-room’ murder is committed, and Sashichi needs to find the culprit among the present guests. The crime turns out to have been motivated by revenge.
70	*Nemuri Suzunosuke* 睡り鈴之助 Sleeping Suzunosuke	September 1942 *Sugiyama* 3 ⑩ 198-233	When a *hinin* is struck, he seems to go mad and believe himself to be a samurai. After investigating the matter, Sashichi discovers that he actually *was* a samurai, and had been the victim of an inheritance-related scheme.
71	*Danjūrō biiki* 団十郎びいき Danjūrō’s Fans	September 1942 *Sugiyama* 3 ⑦ 404-436	Two wealthy *chōnin* bitterly fight over the spot their respective favourite actors should occupy in the billing. When the rivalry escalates, Sashichi intervenes to defuse the situation.
72	*Kappa no torimono* 河童の捕り物 The Case of the *Kappa* [*Kappa no adauchi* 河童の仇討] (*Kappa no koibito* 河童の恋人)	September 1942 *Sugiyama* 3 ⑧ 404-436	Ogen, Tatsu’s aunt, tells Sashichi about the recent appearance of a mysterious *kappa*. Sashichi decides to probe further, unveiling a tangle of vendettas.
73	*Nihon Zaemon* 日本左衛門 Nihon Zaemon	September 1942 *Sugiyama* 3 ⑬ 98-140	Sashichi is challenged by a mysterious thief, calling himself Nihon Zaemon II. He is thoroughly defeated by him twice, before realising that he does not actually exist.
74	*Tonosama kojiki* 殿様乞食 The Beggar Lord	September 1942 *Sugiyama* 3 ㊤ 339-357	Tatsu and Mame discover the body of a beggar inside an abandoned house, and they call Sashichi. They find out that he was a disguised samurai, looking to avenge his father.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
75	*Tanuki gote* 狸御殿 The *Tanuki* Palace	*February 1947 **Tanuki goten* ⑦ 158-204	A residence appears to be haunted by two *tanuki* that use their transformation abilities to bewitch people. When a dead body turns up, Sashichi steps up his investigations, uncovering a sequence of deceit and family grudges.
76	*Tako no yukue* 凧のゆくえ The Kite’s Whereabouts	*February 1947 **Tanuki goten* ㊦ 5-25	A kite contest leads to one of the children being seriously injured. Shortly thereafter, another one of them disappears, and an important document is stolen. Sashichi is called to find out how all these events are connected.
77	*Yuki jōrō* 雪女郎 The Snow Woman	*February 1947 **Tanuki goten* ② 400-431	A murder is initially attributed to a *yuki onna*, a ‘snow woman’, accompanied by a bear, and later on it appears to have been the work of a ghost, until Sashichi reveals it to be related to family intrigues.
78	*Hina no noroi* 雛の呪い The Doll’s Curse	*February 1947 **Tanuki goten* ② 84-114	Tatsu and Mame are accosted by a woman who leads them to believe that something will happen at the *hinamatsuri*. As predicted, she, her cousin, and her uncle are poisoned, and Sashichi is left to unravel the mystery.
79	*Junreizuka yurai* 巡礼塚由来 The Origin of the Pilgrim’s Hill	*February 1947 **Tanuki goten* ⑬ 72-96	A pilgrim beaten up during a theft, a young girl tragically killed by lightning, and a band of counterfeiters all figure in Sashichi’s investigations into the founder of a religious sect.
80	*Musha ningyō no kubi* 武者人形の首 The Heads of the Warrior Puppets	*December 1947 **Shunshoku mayukakushi* ⑦ 132-156	The curious theft of a *gogatsu ningyō* is only the beginning, as Sashichi discovers it is part of a conspiracy within a long-standing feud between two factions, fighting over the nomination of a feudal lord’s heir.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
81	*Gin no kanzashi* 銀の簪 The Silver Hairpin (*Ginkanzashi tsumi ari* 銀簪罪あり)	February 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑥ 2-39	Sashichi has just come back after a three-year hiatus, brought about by some changes within the government which had led him to relinquish his position, leave Edo, and dismiss Tatsu and Mame. His *kobun* still being absent, he can only rely on himself and Okume to solve his first case since his return, a murder committed with a silver hairpin.
82	*Yume no ukihashi* 夢の浮橋 The Floating Bridge of Dreams	April 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑥ 42-68	Tatsu comes back to Edo, bringing with him the belt of a murdered woman. He and Sashichi investigate, still without Mame, and find out that the girl had been brought to suicide, but they are unable to bring the person responsible to justice, as he has not technically committed a crime.
83	*Wara Ningyō* 藁人形 The Straw Doll (*Noroi no wara ningyō* 呪いの藁人形)	May 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑥ 70-96	A *geisha* calls on Sashichi to investigate the death of her young brother, an aspiring actor. Mame comes back just in time to participate in this adventure, finally reuniting the Sashichi family.
84	*Shunshoku mayukakushi* 春色眉かくし Colours of Spring: The Hidden Eyebrows	June 1946 *Hōseki* ③ 106-126	Sashichi appears to have fallen victim to the charms of a voluptuous shoplifter, protecting her and provoking Okume's jealousy. As the story unfolds, this turns out to have been part of Sashichi's plan to unmask a smuggling operation, and the shoplifter was actually a male actor in disguise.
85	*Yogoto kuru otoko* 夜毎来る男 The Men Who Visit Every Night	June 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑥ 98-125	When a young woman disappears under mysterious circumstances, Sashichi discovers that the teahouse she works in is regularly frequented by the same three persons, and he is led to re-open a case of arson committed several months earlier.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
86	*Bakemono yashiki* 化け物屋敷 The Monster Mansion	July 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑦ 206-231	A young man's dead lover apparently comes back to life, only to extort money from him. As Sashichi investigates, he discovers that one of the criminals behind this plot is Otane, a woman who had previously escaped arrest, as seen in *Gin no kanzashi* (81), and who manages to elude him a second time.
87	*Kichi-sama mairu* 吉様まいる To Kichi-sama	August 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑧ 110-135	A merchant calls on Sashichi for help: three men have come forward as the supposed lover of his deceased daughter, and he needs to find out who is telling the truth. Accepting the case, Sashichi eventually determines that all three of them are actually impostors.
88	*Onna ekisha* 女易者 The Female Fortune-Teller	September 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ③ 334-360	A mysterious fortune-teller, sporting a marked Kyōto accent, abruptly appears in Edo, and then disappears just as suddenly. Sashichi, taking an interest, realises that the woman had eloped to Edo, and inadvertently disrupted the plots of a gang of criminals.
89	*Domori oshō* どもり和尚 The Stuttering Head-Monk	October 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ② 372-397	When a monk suddenly begins stuttering, Sashichi connects it with the murder of a girl committed in the previous month. Eventually, it all turns out to be the result of a mother's machinations, motivated by her warped love for one of her sons.
90	*Tanuki bayashi* 狸ばやし The *Tanuki*'s Drum (*Mononoke ihen* もののけ異変)	November 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑩ 320-344	*Tanuki* have apparently been spotted in the countryside of Edo, their ghostly drum-beating frightening the locals. When this leads to a murder, Sashichi begins his investigation, solving both cases and helping another officer disband a counterfeiting operation.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
91	*Obake shūgen* お化祝言 The Eerie Wedding [*Takebora* 竹法螺]	December 1946 *Kōdan zasshi* ㊤ 358-377	Sashichi is watching a prisoner boarding the boat which will lead him to his exile, as Tatsu and Mame tell him about a strange wedding they were roped into spectating. Sashichi soon determines the exiled convict to be innocent, and unveils a plot to seize the assets of a wealthy family.
92	*Shōchikubai sannin musume* 松竹梅三人娘 The Three Beauties [*Shōchikubai* 松竹梅] (*Harusugata shōchikubai* 春姿松竹梅)	January 1947 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑭ 2-31	The organisers of the ninth edition of a beauty contest try to maintain its relevance by announcing that there will be three winners instead of one, as the girls are named after the three auspicious trees: pine, bamboo, and plum. Things take a turn for the dark, however, when the winner of the first edition, now fallen on hard times, kidnaps the three girls to disfigure them.
93	*Kanzashi kuji* かんざし籤 The Hairpin Lottery	March 1947 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑬ 248-283	Tatsu and Mame save a girl from suicide, but a murder is committed on the same night. Sashichi realises that the two events are connected by a clandestine lottery, devised by a disfigured woman intent on indiscriminate revenge against all beautiful girls.
94	*Mōsōchiku* 孟宗竹 The Moso Bamboo	March 1947 *Gin no kanzashi* (K) ⑪ 34-55	A corpse found on the street appears to turn into a *tanuki*. Sashichi investigates the matter, and helps a *shitappiki* solve what turns out to be a case of impersonation.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
95	*Shiraha no ya* 白羽の矢 The White Arrow (*Kieta Komachi* 消えた小町)	April 1947 *Hōseki* ② 242-266	Recently, several families have found white arrows stuck in the doors of their houses. Whenever this happens, the daughters are soon kidnapped, only to be given back to their families a few days later, together with the kidnapper's apologies and a gift. Perplexed by this series of events, Sashichi looks into the case, finding that behind it all is a *daimyō*'s son, trying to recover a fan.
96	*Ushi no toki mairi* 丑の時参り The Night Visit	May 1947 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑨ 340-360	A woman, supposed to be dead, is actually seen out and about, and presumed to be a ghost. Sashichi proposes a test of skill to Tatsu and Mame, challenging them to solve the case themselves. This turns out to be a deception, and Sashichi eventually reveals that he had already been exploring the matter for some time.
97	*Kakubējishi* 角兵衛獅子 *Kakubējishi*	August 1947 *Kakubējishi* (K) ④ 44-70	Sashichi is called to investigate the recent appearance of the ghosts of two children dressed as *kakubējishi*. His investigation leads him to look into a rich family of tobacco merchants, embroiled in a case of blackmail and illegal passage through a barrier station.
98	*Tanuki no Chōbē* 狸の長兵衛 *Tanuki* Chōbē	January 1948 *Bessatsu hōseki* ③ 362-393	The engraver Chōbē is found decapitated, and his young servant Momiji mysteriously disappears, in a case in which nothing is as it seems: in the end, Sashichi discovers that no crime has been committed at all.
99	*Iwami ginzan* 石見銀山 The Rat Poison	May 1948 *Tōkyō* 東京 ① 326-358	An entire troupe of actresses is murdered by poison, leading Sashichi to look into the matter. He finds out that one of the actresses had planned the whole thing to take revenge on her colleagues.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
100	*Hikanoko musume* 緋鹿の子娘 The Girl in Red [*Hikanoko no kyōjo* 緋鹿子の狂女]	May 1948 *Yomimonokai* ⑥ 336-368	A man and a woman are found dead. The culprit is initially thought to be a madwoman, and the guilt then shifts to her lover, an escaped convict. In the end, the two murder victims turn out to have killed each other during a heated quarrel.
101	*Bikuni yado* 比丘尼宿 The Priestess' Inn [*Kaidan bikuni yado* 怪談比丘尼宿] (*Iro bikuni* 色比丘尼, *Yōsetsu iro bikuni* 妖説色比丘尼)	June 1948 *Yomimonokai* ⑧ 168-214	Sashichi is repeatedly warned by a *bikuni* (a priestess-prostitute) about a series of attempted murders on a wealthy merchant, but when he confronts her on a separate occasion she seems surprised, having no recollection of ever having done anything of the sort. While also juggling this *doppelgänger* mystery, Sashichi manages to thwart these attempts, and unveils the sinister plot behind them.
102	*Yatsume unagi* 八つ目鰻 The Lamprey	July 1948 *Tengu* 天狗 ③ 254-294	A murder case is rapidly closed by Sashichi's rival Moheiji, but it is re-opened a month later, and assigned to Sashichi. Naturally, Sashichi manages to get to the bottom of the matter, besting his rival.
103	*Jōhari no kagami* 浄玻璃の鏡 The Infernal Mirror (*Jōhari no tegami* 浄玻璃の手紙)	August 1948 *Yomimonokai* ⑧ 250-273	Sashichi is called on to find the real identity of a 'serial peeper', whose meddling in other people's affairs and revealing their secrets has led to ruined weddings and relationships. Sashichi discovers that this 'serial peeper' is actually a lesbian couple, rather than a single individual.
104	*Hebi o tsukau onna* 蛇を使う女 The Female Snake Charmer	September 1948 *Yomimonokai* ⑬ 216-245	The steward of a *hatamoto* calls on Sashichi to solve the attempted murder of his master's son, bitten by a viper. Sashichi discovers that it was an attempted lovers' suicide, rather than murder, and that the intended victim was a samurai who had impersonated the young man.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
105	*Neko yashiki* 猫屋敷 The Cat Mansion [*Neko zamurai* 猫侍]	October 1948 *Asahi* 朝日 ⑤ 226-260	A newly-wedded groom seems to be the victim of a cat's curse, and his brother-in-law tasks Sashichi with looking into the matter. Sashichi uncovers a plot, hatched by the man's wife and her lover, to drive him mad and kill him.
106	*Kitsune no Sōtan* きつねの宗丹 Sōtan the Fox	November 1948 *Junkan nyūsu* 旬間ニュース (special issue) (K) ⑫ 290-319	A doctor is reported to have been murdered, and rumoured to have turned into a fox at the moment of his death. Sashichi realises that it is just a trick devised by the doctor himself, who was unfortunately hoist by his own petard, and ended up being actually killed.
107	*Koi no tōshiya* 恋の通し矢 The Archery Contest of Love	January 1949 *Riberaru* りべらる (K) ④ 312-340	Sashichi receives a letter, warning him that the following day a murder will be committed at an archery contest. This proves to be true, as one of the contestants is poisoned, and Sashichi ultimately reveals that the murderer is the victim's disciple.
108	*Okoso zukin no onna* お高祖頭巾の女 The Cowled Woman	January 1949 *Goraku sekai* 娯楽世界 (K) ㊦ 26-41	A woman masked in a cowl commits a murder as she is caught shoplifting, and Sashichi must discover her identity. Elements of this story would later be re-used for *Manbiki musume* (140), and some critics consider them as a single entity. Nonetheless, there is sufficient variation to justify a separate listing.
109	*Hakuchi musume* 白痴娘 The Demented Girl [*Oshi musume* 唖娘]	January 1949 *Daiichi yomimono* 第一読物 (special issue) ⑨ 400-431	Sashichi stumbles upon the corpse of a naked woman hidden inside a snowman. While investigating the matter, he uncovers a family intrigue, but his tardiness in acting means he is unable to prevent further tragedies.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
110	*Hibotan kyōjo* 緋牡丹狂女 The Madwoman of the Red Peony	May 1949 *Shōsetsu no izumi* ⑭ 184-276	Sashichi becomes involved in a long and complicated case of family intrigue, shogunal spies, feudal domains heavily involved in smuggling, and depraved monks.
111	*Onna komusō* 女虚無僧 The Female *Komusō*	January 1950 *Kōdan zasshi* ⑦ 96-130	When Okume is erroneously kidnapped, Sashichi is at his wits' end trying to find her. This crosses with a case of identity theft by a girl Okume had been helping.
112	*Suishō no juzu* 水晶の珠数 The Crystal Rosary (*Suishōdama no nazo* 水晶珠の謎, *Juzu no horimono* 珠数の彫物)	October 1950 *Shōsetsu no izumi* (special issue) (K) ㊦ 42-62	Sashichi is investigating a series of deaths linked by the presence of crystal rosaries, eventually finding a connection with the re-formation of a family that had been disgraced seventy years earlier.
113	*Karakuri kago* からくり駕籠 The Trick Palanquin	October 1950 *Hōseki* (K) ⑭ 308-335	Two palanquin bearers call on Sashichi to submit to his attention the strange case of one of their clients, a man who apparently later transformed into a young girl. Intrigued, Sashichi begins investigating the case, which turns out to hinge upon a *hannya* mask and the Kanze *iemoto*.
114	*Ensetsu tōmegane* 艶説遠眼鏡 Sensual Tale of a Telescope [*Fūryū tōmegane* 風流遠眼鏡]	February 1951 *Kōdan kurabu* ④ 138-170	A young merchant disappears after witnessing a murder. Sashichi realises that the murder the merchant saw had initially been no more than a staged performance, but it was subsequently carried out in earnest.
115	*Manzai kazoeuta* 万歳かぞえ唄 The *Manzai* Counting Rhyme [*Otori manzai* 囮り万歳] (*Fūryū kazoeuta* 風流かぞえ唄)	February 1951 *Omoshiro kurabu* (K) ⑧ 2-76	Sashichi saves a young man from an attempted murder, only to find that he has lost his memory, and the only thing he remembers is a counting rhyme. From this trifling clue, Sashichi casts light on a case of corruption in Fushimi.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
116	*Kōshoku imorizake* 好色いもり酒 The Love Potion	July 1951 *Kōdan kurabu* ④ 240-273	Two murder cases arouse Sashichi's curiosity, as they seem to have been committed by mixing a poison into an aphrodisiac. Investigating them, Sashichi unveils a series of love and financial tangles.
117	*Futari goke* ふたり後家 The Two Widows	September 1951 *Sandē mainichi* サンデー毎日 (special edition) ⑩ 236-275	Two widows embroiled in a bitter rivalry are the victims of a vicious murderer, and only one of them survives the ordeal. The murderer is readily identified as an actor, who was also the widows' lover, but Sashichi realises that the surviving woman had killed the actor and impersonated him to take out her rival.
118	*Kageemon* 影右衛門 Kageemon	November 1951 *Jitsuwa to yomimono* 実話と読物 (K) ㊦ 63-87	A mysterious Robin Hood-like thief has been running rampant all over Edo, and Sashichi has been completely unable to do anything to stop him. That is, until he finds out that the thief never existed in the first place.
119	*Yōkenden* 妖犬伝 The Chronicles of the Spectral Dog	*December 1951 *Onna komusō* ⑫ 164-202	Drawn in by rumours of a mysterious spectral dog, Sashichi, Tatsu, and Mame cast light on a complicated case of elopement, betrayal, and revenge.
120	*Ningyo no horimono* 人魚の彫物 The Mermaid Tattoo	January 1952 *Jinsei kurabu* 人生倶楽部 ㊦ 88-111	Sashichi investigates the murder of a 'prodigal son' who had just returned to his family, discovering that the dead man was not who he seemed.
121	*Sumō no adauchi* 相撲の仇討 The Sumo Wrestler's Revenge	January 1952 *Bessatsu hōseki* (K) ㊦ 112-138	Sashichi investigates the disappearance of a sumo wrestler, and then his apparent murder. He realises, however, that the wrestler is safe and sound, and had gone into voluntary hiding out of filial piety.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
122	*Yamabuki yakushi* 山吹薬師 Yamabuki Yakushi	January/February 1952 *Kōbe shinbun* 神戸新聞 ㊦ 139-204	A letter warns Sashichi of the imminent murder of one of four acrobat sisters. Before Sashichi can find out who the sender and the culprit are, the four sisters are killed one by one.
123	*Shunshō tontonton* 春宵とんとんとん Three Knocks on a Spring Evening	February 1952 *Kōdan kurabu* ⑤ 2-44	A criminal is found murdered, but the hour of his death and the witness statements are contradictory, driving Sashichi to think twice about his theories.
124	*Oni no men* 鬼の面 The Demon Mask	*April 1954 **Binan komusō* ⑭ 34-75	Tatsu and Mame discover a corpse inside a moving palanquin, and further investigations lead Sashichi to unveil an elaborate case of revenge and family grudges.
125	*Mizugei san shimai* 水芸三姉妹 The Three Acrobat Sisters	*March 1952 **Kōshoku zukin* (Sam) ④ 172-208	A samurai is found dead after a vicious quarrel, holding in his hand proof of his murderer's identity. This turns out to be a mise-en-scène, however, as three sisters, part of an acrobats' troupe, are drawn into the matter.
126	*Horimonoshi no musume* 彫物師の娘 The Tattoo Artist's Daughter [*Irezumishi no musume* 刺青師の娘]	*March 1952 **Kōshoku zukin* (Sam) ⑩ 112-158	A wealthy family searching for a long-lost grand-daughter is baffled when two of them turn up, with no apparent way of determining which one is an impostor. Sashichi takes it upon himself to solve this case, which soon reveals to also be connected with a murder.
127	*Karakasa enoki* からかさ榎 The Umbrella *Enoki* [*Bakemono nagaya* 化け物長屋]	*April 1952 **Neko yashiki* (K) ⑨ 94-120	Sashichi investigates a disappearance and an alleged murder, only to find out that both incidents had been staged, and no crime has actually been committed. Tatsu and Mame disobey his orders, attempting a rash and ill-advised arrest.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
128	*Jonan kennan* 女難剣難 Women Troubles, Sword Troubles	May 1952 *Omoshiro kurabu* ⑤ 116-149	A friend of Sashichi's is accused of a double murder, and despite his confession, Sashichi has residual doubts. He eventually discovers that he is innocent, and gave a false confession to protect a girl.
129	*Chō gassen* 蝶合戦 The Battle of the Butterflies	June 1952 *Bessatsu hōseki* ⑤ 78-113	Sashichi, Tatsu, and Mame go out to see the 'battle of the butterflies', an odd phenomenon which has baffled all Edo. While there, they meet a madwoman, who turns up dead the very next day. By investigating this crime, Sashichi and his *kobun* rout a counterfeiting ring.
130	*Akazu no ma* 開かずの間 The Closed Room	June 1952 *Bessatsu shōsetsu shinchō* 別冊小説新潮 ① 28-62	This story details how Tatsu came to be Sashichi's *kobun*. Tatsu is a childhood friend of Sashichi's, now working as a boatman. Tatsu brings Sashichi the case of a poisoning inside a 'closed room', and the two investigate it together, for the first time. At the end of the story, Tatsu abandons his work as a boatman to join Sashichi in crime-fighting.
131	*Kage bōshi* 影法師 The Silhouette	June 1952 *Fuji* 富士 (special issue) ⑭ 278-306	Sashichi is called to shed light on the murder of an entertainer. When he realises that the murder victim had committed a rape for revenge, however, Sashichi decides not to pursue the murderer.
132	*Jigoku no hanayome* 地獄の花嫁 The Infernal Bride (*Hanayome satsujinma* 花嫁殺人魔)	August/September 1952 *Shōsetsu kurabu* ③ 160-217	A fisherman discovers a letter, the sender of which is planning a murder, inside a mullet, and events apparently unfold just as described in the missive. Sashichi, however, discovers that the letter is a fake, intended to disgrace a family.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
133	*Kurage daijin* くらげ大尽 The Jellyfish Millionaire	October/November 1952 *Shōsetsu kurabu* ⑫ 322-384	A deformed millionaire weds two women at the same time, as strange events and murders start happening around him. Sashichi eventually realises that the millionaire is not a single person, but two twin brothers.
134	*Tanuki jiru* たぬき汁 *Tanuki* Soup	November 1952 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* ② 302-333	Two poisoning cases within a brief span of time arouse Sashichi's curiosity. Looking into the matter, he finds that the culprit was none other than the victim of the second poisoning.
135	*Ukare bōzu* うかれ坊主 The Carefree Monk	November 1952 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* (special issue) ① 402-432	A former monk dies, but seemingly comes back from the dead, as another man turns up inside his coffin. Sashichi investigates his disappearance, uncovering an intricate tangle of love and money.
136	*Kurayami muko* くらやみ婿 The Groom in the Dark	January 1953 *Shōsetsu kurabu* ⑦ 324-401	Sashichi is tasked with finding out who got a merchant's daughter pregnant. This is only the beginning, as he discovers more and more frauds and deceptions.
137	*Nekohime-sama* 猫姫様 The Cat Lady	January 1953 *Bessatsu hōseki* (K) ② 268-300	A man struck by lightning, a dead cat, and an abandoned belt are the curious starting points for this case, which involves family intrigue and counterfeiting operations.
138	*Onna irezumishi* 女刺青師 The Female Tattoo Artist (*Koshimoto irezumi shi bijin* 腰元刺青死美人)	February 1953 *Shōsetsu kurabu* ⑨ 2-92	One by one, all the women who have had a tattoo done by a certain tattoo artist start turning up dead under mysterious circumstances, and people begin whispering of a curse. Sashichi beats his rival Moheiji, solving a long and complicated case of love, money, and politics.
139	*Kamikakushi ni atta onna* 神隠しにあった女 The Woman Who Was Spirited Away	March 1953 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* ③ 68-103	A girl who was thought to have disappeared into thin air is found working as a prostitute. Sashichi realises that this is all a plot hatched by her vindictive step-mother.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
140	*Manbiki musume* 万引き娘 The Shoplifting Girl	See *Okoso zukin no onna* (108) ④ 342-369	A serial shoplifter commits a murder, then escapes. Sashichi finds out that the murderess was only taking advantage of the shoplifter's crimes, which the latter had been committing in an effort to postpone a wedding.
141	*Kitsune no saiban* 狐の裁判 The Trial of the Fox	June 1953 *Bessatsu hōseki* (Sam) ⑤ 292-324	The mother of a child actor calls on Sashichi, afraid that something might happen to her step-son, but it is his brother that ends up being murdered, instead. Sashichi investigates, uncovering a series of betrayals and a counterfeiting operation.
142	*Fūryū onnazumō* 風流女相撲 The Elegance of Female Sumo	July 1953 *Shōsetsu kurabu* (Sam) ⑥ 166-201	A female sumo wrestler is found murdered, with three different and apparently distinct murder weapons at the same time. Perplexed, Sashichi realises that she has indeed been the victim of three separate murderers.
143	*Mikazuki Osen* 三日月おせん Mikazuki Osen	September 1953 *Bessatsu hōseki* (J) ⑩ 278-318	The murder of a young girl spurs Sashichi to investigate a tangle of love and death going back twenty years.
144	*Hairyō no chagama* 拝領の茶釜 The Lord's Tea Kettle	November 1953 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* (special issue) ㊦ 205-219	During a snowman-smashing spree, a *rōnin* is blackmailing a pawn shop, because the tea kettle he had pawned to them has been stolen. Sashichi discovers that the two cases have a curious connection.
145	*Atariya* 当たり矢 The True Arrow	January/February 1954 *Torimono kurabu* (double issue) ⑫ 134-161	An arrow is used to commit a murder at a party, right under Sashichi's nose. Sashichi eventually finds out that the murderer was a man who had been standing right next to him, using him as an alibi.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
146	*Tōrima* 通り魔 The Street Killer	January 1954 *Bessatsu hōseki* (K) ㊦ 220-245	A mysterious thief strikes twice, with a baffling modus operandi: he seems to be able to appear and disappear at will, and does not actually steal anything. Everything changes when it looks like he has committed a murder.
147	*Binan komusō* 美男虚無僧 The Handsome *Komusō*	February 1954 *Kōdan kurabu* (special issue) ⑬ 2-33	A staged murder turns to tragedy, as it is revealed to have been committed in earnest, shocking the organiser. Sashichi, who was present at the time, takes charge and uncovers multiple layers of schemes and betrayals.
148	*Yoaruki musume* 夜歩き娘 The Sleep-Walking Girl [*Yoaruki shimai* 夜歩き姉妹]	April 1954 *Bessatsu hōseki* (Sam) ⑪ 334-370	A sleep-walking girl is arrested on the charge of having murdered her father. Sashichi is called on to clear the matter up, and realises that the girl is innocent, determining the true culprit.
149	*Otokei kenjō* お時計献上 The Gift of the Clock	May 1954 *Torimono kurabu* (K) ⑫ 100-131	A clock-maker is found dead inside his laboratory, which is locked from the inside. Sashichi investigates this death, casting light on the romantic intrigue and professional rivalry which led to it.
150	*Futari ichiko* ふたり市子 The Two Mediums	August 1954 *Kingu* ③ 34-65	Two people are killed during a storm, shortly after one another, but without any apparent connection. Sashichi manages to find a link between the two cases, and a culprit who is much younger than anyone could have imagined.
151	*Jasei no in* 蛇性の淫 Lust of the White Serpent [*Jasei no hada* 蛇性の肌]	August 1954 *Shōsetsu kurabu* ⑤ 188-224	A mysterious page boy appears to be connected to the disappearance of several young girls, and people start believing him to be the reincarnation of a demonic snake.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
152	*Hebitsukai rōnin* 蛇使い浪人 The *Rōnin* Snake Charmer	August 1954 *Kōdan kurabu* (special issue) ⑤ 262-290	Sashichi runs into a snake charmer, who is carrying a wicker basket containing the corpse of a woman. The case appears self-evident, but further investigations lead Sashichi to believe that not everything is as it seems.
153	*Iro hakke* 色八卦 Sensual Divination [*Shikiyoku hakke* 色欲八卦]	September 1954 *Shōsetsu kurabu* ⑨ 122-159	The murder of a beautiful fortune-teller turns out to be connected to the theft of a winning lottery ticket. This apparently clear-cut case is turned on its head when the alleged culprit's decomposing body is discovered.
154	*Funayūrei* 舟幽霊 The Boat Spirit [*Funayūrei* 船幽霊]	September 1954 *Bessatsu hōseki* (D) ⑨ 256-290	Sashichi is invited to attend a party, during which the corpse of a guest is found inside the pond of the residence. Sashichi discovers that the corpse had been tied to the bottom of the boat he himself had taken.
155	*Tanuki jorō* たぬき女郎 The *Tanuki* Courtesan	October 1954 *Kingu* ④ 210-237	A courtesan is suddenly possessed by a *tanuki*, and this phenomenon appears to be connected to a theft committed by her lover. In a trance, however, the courtesan reveals that her lover has been strangled, and Sashichi has to renew his efforts to solve this complication.
156	*Dokuro shūgen* どくろ祝言 Wedding with a Skull	October 1954 *Shōsetsu kurabu* ⑤ 326-357	A woman gives birth to a deformed child and locks herself up, determined to starve to death. Sashichi, with the help of a veteran *okappiki*, unveils the sinister plot hatched by the girl's uncle.
157	*Neko to onna gyōja* 猫と女行者 The Cats and the Female Ascetic	November 1954 *Shōsetsu kurabu* ⑭ 380-419	An ascetic has been murdered, and the culprit appears to be a *rōnin* who had rejected her advances, and who refuses to say where he was that night. Sashichi eventually realises that the *rōnin* has been framed.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
158	*Kakushi nenbutsu* かくし念仏 The Hidden *Nenbutsu*	December 1954 *Kingu* ㊦ 246-267	A mysterious palanquin appears every day in Ryōgoku. As Sashichi decides to look into the matter, the woman who employed it is found dead, in what turns out to be a cult-related murder.
159	*Harusugata shichifukujin* 春姿七福神 The Seven Deities of Good Fortune in Spring Attire [*Takarabune satsujin jiken* 宝船殺人事件]	January 1955 *Bessatsu hōseki* (Sam) ⑦ 2-48	An actor is the victim of repeated attempts on his life, and is eventually successfully murdered. Sashichi finds out that no less than six people were actively trying to kill him, but sympathising with their plight, he pins the murder on only one of them, a man who has by then committed suicide.
160	*Shoshun warai gusuri* 初春笑い薬 Laughing Drugs in Early Spring [*Warai gusuri* 笑い薬] (*Warai take* 笑い茸)	January 1955 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* ⑪ 2-32	During a party, all the guests suddenly burst out laughing, with the exception of one girl, who dies, poisoned. Sashichi eventually realises that the two events are surprisingly not connected, but is unable to prevent a further murder-suicide.
161	*Akuma no tomikuji* 悪魔の富籤 The Devil's Lottery	February 1955 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* (M) ㊦ 268-288	The five co-winners of a lottery are killed one after the other, in what appear to be murders motivated by vengeance, connected to a *kabuki* play all five victims had been involved with.
162	*Noroi no tatamibari* 呪いの畳針 The Cursed Tatami Needle	March 1955 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* ④ 72-103	Two seemingly natural deaths turn out to be murders. Sashichi discovers that the second one was indeed a murder, but the first one was only a case of the culprit planting false evidence on the corpse.
163	*Wakashu katsura* 若衆かつら A Young Man's Wig	March 1955 *Kingu* ⑩ 382-424	A woman is found dead in a large pool of blood, but with no wounds on her. The case is complicated further when her body disappears during the night.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
164	*Hanami no adauchi* 花見の仇討ち Revenge at the *Hanami*	April 1955 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* ④ 106-136	A murder is committed at a *hanami*, using a farcical play as cover. Due to a case of mistaken identity, however, the victim is not the intended target.
165	*Itsutsume no Shōki* 五つ目の鍾馗 The Fifth Zhong Kui [*Itsutsu no Shōki* 五つの鍾馗]	May 1955 *Yomikiri shōsetsu shū* ② 156-200	A samurai calls on Sashichi, asking him to retrieve some precious stolen jewels, which had been set into the eyes of a doll of Zhong Kui, and to solve the murder of the doll-maker.
166	*Tōmegane no tono-sama* 遠眼鏡の殿様 The Lord of the Telescope	June 1955 *Kingu* ② 202-240	Sashichi is invited by a *hatamoto* friend of his, and, while looking through his telescope, witnesses a murder.
167	*Sannin irowakashu* 三人色若衆 The Three Alluring Youths [*Higan no doku* 彼岸の毒]	November 1955 *Bessatsu kōdan kurabu* ⑧ 276-368	A series of poisoning cases lead Sashichi to investigate a supposed ‘holy man’, and a homosexual childhood friend of his, unveiling a complex tangle of love and crime.
168	*Fukuwarai no yoru* 福笑いの夜 The Night of the *Fukuwarai*	February 1956 *Bessatsu kōdan kurabu* ② 52-81	During a game of *fukuwarai*, an ascetic is murdered, and only her head is left, the body being nowhere to be found.
169	*Yūrei no misemono* 幽霊の見せ物 The Ghost Show [*Yūrei no shi* 幽霊の死]	August 1956 *Bessatsu kingu* 別冊キング (D) ③ 128-158	Sashichi is persuaded by Tatsu and Mame to attend a ghost show. Things take a turn for the dark, however, when the alleged ghost is murdered right in front of them.
170	*Onna kitōshi* 女祈祷師 The Female Shaman	November 1956 *Shōsetsu shinchō* 小説新潮 ㊦ 289-311	When a shaman’s corpse is discovered, and her disciple is nowhere to be found, the latter is presumed to be the murderess. The matter complicates, however, when the disciple is found dead as well.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
171	*Kamikakushi bayari* 神隠しばやり A Disappearance Wave [*Kieru hanayome* 消える花嫁]	January 1957 *Kōdan kurabu* ⑧ 78-107	An odd string of disappearances has been on everyone's lips recently, as many brides-to-be have been supposedly spirited away on the day before their weddings. Things escalate, as one of them turns up dead.
172	*Mikawa manzai* 三河万歳 *Mikawa Manzai*	August 1957 *Kōdan kurabu* ⑤ 46-76	Sashichi investigates the murder of a *rōnin* who has been found stabbed and naked from the waist down.
173	*Bantarō goroshi* 番太郎殺し The *Bantarō*'s Murder	October 1957 *Bessatsu shūkan Sankei* 別冊週刊サンケイ ㊦ 312-332	Ogen, Tatsu's aunt, informs Sashichi of the curious death of a *bantarō*. His interest piqued, Sashichi decides to investigate, discovering that the death had not in fact been natural, but a case of poisoning.
174	*Kuma no misemono* 熊の見世物 The Bear Show	May 1959 *Shūkan Asahi bessatsu* 週刊朝日別冊 ㊦ 333-356	Sashichi stumbles into a woman locked in a cage, set upon a precarious raft drifting away on the river. He rescues the girl, who turns out to be a bear trainer, and is led to the corpse of a poisoned man.
175	*Rokurokubi no onna* ろくろ首の女 The Long-Necked Woman [*Rokurokubi no musume* ろくろ首の娘]	January 1960 *Shūkan Taishū* 週刊大衆 ⑭ 338-378	Sashichi receives a request for help against a blackmailer. On the same night, however, the blackmailed man is murdered, together with his lover.
176	*Kankonsōsai* 冠婚葬祭 Ceremonial Occasions [*Konrei to sōshiki* 婚礼と葬式]	*April 1968 **Sannin irowakashu* ② 336-370	A wedding and a funeral are organised to take place simultaneously. During the wedding ceremony, the bride disappears, only to be replaced by the corpse from the funeral.
177	*Kaminari no yado* 雷の宿 The Thunder Inn	April 1968 *Jonan kennan* (D) ⑦ 234-277	During a storm, Tatsu, being deathly afraid of lightning, seeks refuge inside a house, finding a corpse within. He goes to warn Sashichi, and they come back together, only to find no trace of the body.

#	Title	Publication	Synopsis
178	*Ukiyoeshi* 浮世絵師 The *Ukiyo-e* Artist	July 1968 *Ukiyoeshi* (B) ⑬ 324-424	A mysterious author of pornographic *ukiyo-e* appears in Edo, and begins killing the women he employs as models, after having them raped in front of him, so that he can paint them.
179	*Edo meishozue* 江戸名所図会 *Edo meishozue*	October 1968 *Hibotan kyōjo* (D) ㊦ 357-373	A young page boy attempts suicide, but is saved by Tatsu and Mame. He claims that a bird has stolen an important holy text from him. Tatsu and Mame relate the story to Sashichi, who immediately suspects that the page has not been quite truthful.
180	*Umewaka mizuagechō* 梅若水揚帳 Umewaka's Daybook	October 1968 *Umewaka mizuagechō* (B) ⑫ 2-62	A series of women are found strangled and stuffed within snowmen, leading Sashichi, Tatsu, and Mame to postulate a connection with a similar case, which had occurred one year earlier, of a young boy murdered in the same way.

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