The Body Economic: Japan’s Cholera Epidemic of 1858 in Popular Discourse

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Cholera was known for more than 2,000 years in South Asia, but only in the nineteenth century did it spread around the world, including to Tokugawa Japan (1600-1868). The exact epidemiology of this killer disease is still puzzling, but

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1 This article is the product of my research on the project “Cholera and Hygiene in the Nineteenth Century” funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). I thank Jennifer Guest, Ann Jannetta and the two anonymous readers for their valuable input in the various stages of this article. I would also like to express my thanks to Kate Nakai, who oversaw my MA thesis from which this piece originates. I am also indebted to Sakai Shizu 酒井シズ of Juntendo University, who allowed me to go through the Yamazaki collection with my camera.

2 The first pandemic started in 1817 in the delta regions of west and east Bengal. It may have been triggered by famine, a common explanation for epidemic outbreaks, and it is possible that British ships carried the disease to new territories. Within three months the disease spread throughout Bengal, reaching other parts of the Indian sub-continent in 1818. Subsequently, it extended south and east to Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Malacca, Singapore and the Philippines. China experienced its first epidemic in 1820, from Guangdong along the south-eastern coast up to Fujian and over to Taiwan. The first major cholera epidemic on the Korean peninsula is recorded for 1821. By 1822, cholera had reached Japan. To the west the first pandemic hit Persia and Egypt. Here, military movements were responsible for the circulation of the disease, i.e. Russian wars against Persia and Turkey. The second pandemic from 1827 to 1834 followed the same route as the first, but
some assume that the improvements in technology that created faster and easier access to global trade routes allowed the epidemic to travel great distances. Three outbreaks of cholera are recorded for Tokugawa Japan: the first in 1822, the second in 1858 and the third in 1862. This article will focus on the epidemic of 1858, which had the greatest impact and highest mortality rate of the three.

Epidemics, not unlike natural disasters, are one of those peculiar experiences that seem universal but are rarely conceptualized in a uniform way. Various explanations may be given to account for an epidemic, from the scientific to causes resulting from supernatural forces or human actions. One of my interests here is to show how the cholera epidemic of 1858 can be characterized as a social event that informs us of the conceptualization of epidemics, as well as one that releases otherwise more latent expressions and reflections of society at large.

With regard to the former, the various conceptions of disease invite a thorough investigation. The history of medicine has moved—at least with Charles Rosenberg—beyond narrow concerns of etiology and pathology, and instead views medicine within the rich currents of intellectual and social change. It is within this field that this article is situated, placing specific emphasis on epidemics and ideas. A cholera epidemic is the product of social, political and medical knowledge. The concept of disease among groups in society dictates the actions and reactions occurring during and after an epidemic. Certainly, disease is not only a social construct—a disease is a biological event that manifests symptoms—but the physician’s diagnosis of and nomenclature for the disease gives it its frame. Be it humoral imbalance, germ theory or autoimmune mechanisms, the conceptual notions of the biological event frame the disease, but at the same time, the disease frames our social world; diseases, in Rosenberg’s words, become

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3 Even fifteen years after the primary research was done for this project, research in non-Japanese languages on the Japanese experience of cholera epidemics is limited. We find brief accounts in Ann Jannetta (1987), Susan Burns (2000), and Detlef Schauwecker (1981a and 1981b). For the Meiji period, too, English literature is not too ample. Aside from Burns (2000), one recent discussion is by Ruth Rogaski (2004). A short paper by Akihito Suzuki and Mika Suzuki that discusses the “marketplace of health” I saw days before sending this article out for publication (Suzuki and Suzuki 2009). Their paper, too, approaches the disease from the perspective of social history. In Japanese, however, the list of literature is long for both the Tokugawa and Meiji periods. For the Tokugawa period, in particular Yamazaki Tasuku (1931) and Tatsukawa Shōji (1979) are most useful.

“‘actors’ in a complex network of social negotiations.” The relationships among knowledge, medical professions and social power are intimately linked to how a society deals with disease. In other words, perceptions of disease are context-specific, but also context-determining.

Besides conceptions of disease, the study of the social event of an epidemic allows the historian to examine broader questions of morality, government, religion and socio-economic structures. Due to the physical ferocity of cholera in particular, the human body became the intersection between knowledge, politics and popular discourse. A medical event turned into a social disaster, just as the medical body is a social body. Cholera became the catalyst and metaphor by which the notion of “the body economic” of Tokugawa society is exposed. My focus on the relation of the body to disease and its economic functions in society presents us with perceptions of city dwellers that parallel their awareness of their function in the economic world beyond the experience of the epidemic.

The Event: The Cholera Epidemic of 1858

The hitherto unknown disease with no known cure was commonly called *cholera morbus*. We now know that the infection, spread by ingestion of the bacteria via food or water, settles in the intestines, inhibiting the absorption of salts and water into the bloodstream. The main symptoms are acute diarrhoea, usually accompanied by vomiting, and since the blood ceases to circulate properly, the skin becomes bluish, the eyes sunken and the hands and feet ice-cold. The fast and severe dehydration of the patient soon led to death and the whole process could take as little as five hours, though more usually three days. Treatment options were limited. In Europe, calomel and opium, castor, antimony, mustard, bismuth, arsenic, camphor and quinine were the main drugs administered. A red-hot iron

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5 Charles Rosenberg (1992), xviii.

6 Charles Rosenberg’s classic study of cholera epidemics in the United States during the nineteenth century presents a neat account of how the conceptions of the epidemic changed from divine retribution, to the work of urban society, and finally to a social problem that could be fixed via sanitary measures. See Charles Rosenberg (1960). The links between social class and morality, expressed in public health programs and their interdependence with epidemics, have increasingly been a subject of scholarly investigation in recent years. See Pamela Gilbert (2008); Sheard and Power (2000); Pekka Hamalainen (2006); Lewis and Macpherson (2008).

7 I adapt the term from Catherine Gallagher, who uses it in her analysis of the nineteenth-century British discourse of political economy. See Catherine Gallagher (2006).

8 *Cholera morbus* indicates both the epidemic form in Europe and sporadic/endemic forms of the illness in South Asia, and has many synonyms such as *Asiatic cholera*, *cholera asiatica*, *cholera india*, and *oriental cholera*. It was not until 1883 that the comma-shaped bacterium, *vibrio cholerae*, was discovered by Robert Koch. In 1959 the toxin, which leads to the actual cause of the symptoms, was discovered.
attached to a body part was also used. Water, hot or cold, taken orally or in baths, was another recommendation. Modern therapy replaces lost water and salts intravenously, or in severe cases, antibiotic therapy is used to shorten the duration of the disease.9

When Japan was visited by this deadly disease a second time, a great human tragedy ensued. The calamity began in 1858 and lasted until 1860. It is impossible to determine the exact location and dates of the initial outbreak, however, Nagasaki appears to be the most probable location. How the disease arrived is obscure, too, although there is consensus that it came from Shanghai. The first evidence was reported by the Dutch physician J. L. C. Pompe van Meerdervoort (1829–1908). Pompe, who was medical instructor at the newly opened Western medical school in Nagasaki, mentioned the arrival of the disease and its connection to China in an official note that he sent to the Nagasaki magistrate.10

The extent of the epidemic was enormous (see Table 1). While it lasted in Nagasaki from the beginning of the sixth month (mid July in the Gregorian calendar) until the middle of the eighth month (end of September), the scourge moved east along the Tōkaidō 東海道 (the main road connecting eastern and western Japan) by the end of the sixth month (beginning of August), reaching Edo within only one month. In no time, many areas in Edo, such as Akasaka 赤坂, Reiganjima 霊岸島, Tsukiji 築地, Teppōzu 鉄砲洲, and Tsukudajima 佃島, reported victims.11 One month later, the entire region of today’s Kantō was affected, reaching its highest toll by the middle of the eighth month. By the end of the ninth month (beginning of November), the epidemic had died out.12

Sources inform us that cholera covered all of Tokugawa Japan, from Kyushu to Hokkaido, although the lack of statistical accounts of that period, i.e. population and number of fatalities, impedes the verification process. With an assumed population of thirty million, Tatsukawa Shōji estimates that around 200,000 people died as a result of the cholera epidemic.13 Cities and economically advanced regions were most affected.14 Cholera broke out again in the following year of Ansei 安政 6 (1859), between the end of the seventh and the ninth

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10 The note claims that the U.S.S. Mississippi was responsible, though there is still debate about this. Of interest to us is the fact that a foreign ship brought the disease from Shanghai, where the epidemic was raging ferociously. See Pompe van Meerdervoort (1970), p. 90.
12 Dates are given according to the lunar calendar if not otherwise indicated.
month; this time the Kansai region around Osaka 大阪 was hit hardest. For 1860 there are a few incidents of the disease reported, but none for 1861.\textsuperscript{15}

Table 1: Number of deaths in Edo during the epidemic of 1858\textsuperscript{16}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number of deaths among warrior class</th>
<th>Number of deaths among townspeople</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Other numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitsūō nenpu\textsuperscript{17}</td>
<td>22,554</td>
<td>18,680</td>
<td>41,234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaei Meiji nenkanroku\textsuperscript{18}</td>
<td>12,593 in mid-eighth month</td>
<td>30,000 (between 7/20-9/10)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukō nenpyō\textsuperscript{19}</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>9,900 cremated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekidoku yobōsetsu\textsuperscript{20}</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,421</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korori ryūkōki\textsuperscript{21}</td>
<td>12,492 within the eighth month;\textsuperscript{22} 18,737 not registered\textsuperscript{23}</td>
<td>31,229</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{16} For a discussion of various data and their liability, see Tatsukawa Shōji (1979), pp. 191-202.

\textsuperscript{17} Kitsūō nenpu 橘年譜 (Chronological Personal History of Kitsūō; 1870), is the biography of the practitioner Asada Sōhaku 浅田宗伯 (1815-1894). Cited by Tatsukawa Shōji (1979), p. 194.

\textsuperscript{18} Kaei Meiji nenkanroku 嘉永明治年間録 (Annual Records of the Eras Kaei and Meiji; compiled in 1869), next to reports about political affairs, includes orders and regulations by the Shogunate. Cited by Tatsukawa Shōji (1979), p. 194.


\textsuperscript{21} Kinton Dōjin 金屯達人, Ansei korori ryūkōki 安政箇流行記 (Reports about the Cholera Epidemic, in the Fall of 1858), pp. 15 verso (back) and 16 recto (front).
The population estimates for Edo during 1855 were approximately 564,544 commoners, and about 500,000 warriors. Therefore the mortality rate due to cholera in Edo was between 20,000 and 40,000 people out of a population of about one million (2%–4%). Compared to European cities—in 1830 London, Berlin, and Vienna lost 0.6% of their citizens, Paris 2.2%, St. Petersburg 4.0%, and Stockholm 4.3%—Edo was in neither a better nor worse situation. Nagasaki’s mortality rate was the highest, with about 8.3% (2,000 to 2,500 victims out of a population of 30,000). This was probably an exception when we consider that Osaka, with an estimated population of about 314,370, had a mortality rate of 3.17%.

Describing the Social Tragedy

The cholera outbreak took its highest toll in Edo. Thus, it is not surprising that the majority of extant sources are from and about Edo. The city’s population of over one million multiplied the severity of the scourge, which in response prompted the publishing industry to print information and comments as quickly as possible to accommodate the demands of its audience. The format in which the cholera epidemic is described in contemporary sources underpins the idea of viewing the epidemic as a social event. The descriptions address a broad spectrum of concerns related to the disease, such as etiology, therapy, prevention and protection. They also highlight the social consequences of the calamity, such as the difficulty of disposing of the bodies that filled the crematoria, the festival atmosphere designed to get rid of the epidemic, but which disrupted public order, or the various financial ramifications of the outbreak. It is necessary though to point out that the following examination of the social event is limited to only half of Edo’s population, excluding the upper warrior society, since the descriptions of the social disaster are by commoners for commoners.

Reports of natural disasters have a long history dating back to the Nihon shoki 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan; 720). Independently published disaster reports, however, become more prevalent for the nineteenth century, reaching a peak in the 1850s owing the succession of large-scale devastations that hit Edo in particular. In 1855, writer (and later Meiji journalist) Kanagaki Rō bun 仮名垣鲁

22 The number of the registered townspeople (warriors, doctors and clerics not included) comes from the city magistrate’s (machibugyō 町奉行) office, which requested the survey.
23 The number of people who were not registered is either speculation or information gathered from the various wards.
Rōbun (1829-1894) compiled *Ansei kenmonshi* (Record of Things Seen and Heard in the Period of Ansei) about the earthquake in Edo. In 1856 he published *Ansei fū bunshū* (Collection about Things Heard Regarding the Storm during the Ansei period) about, as its title suggests, the devastating storm and resulting floods in Edo and its environs. Then, in 1858 he came out with *Ansei korori ryūki* (Reports about the Cholera Epidemic, in the Fall of 1858; one volume) that depicts the cholera epidemic. The author was one of the originators of the new genre of “disaster descriptions”, a summary of a catastrophe consisting of text and illustrations. The “social event” as described by Rōbun follows two narratives: one that reports on the brief period of immediate disorder, and one on the processes of response and recovery in the aftermath.

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27 See Kanagaki Rōbun (1855). For a German translation, see Stephan Köhn (2002). For a recent discussion of the great Ansei earthquake in popular culture, see Gregory Smits (2006). Also, see his article in this issue. For various copies of the text, see, for instance, Waseda University Library’s collection of Japanese and Chinese Classics (*Waseda Kotenseki sōgō dēta-bēsu* 早稲田古典総合データベース), No. フ (wo) 01 03754, No. フ 01 03766, and No. フ 01 04209. The database is from now on abbreviated as *Kotenseki database*.

28 For two copies of the text, see *Kotenseki database*, No. ニ (ni) 08 00996, フ (wo) 01.03959.

29 Many manuscripts are extant. I used the copy in *Kotenseki database*, No. 文庫 (bunko) 08 c0383. A full German translation is available, by Detlef Schauwecker (1981a and 1981b).

30 The visual frame of the *kawaraban* allowed the expression of a variety of easily recognizable information on one page, such as the arrival of foreigners on black ships, the Great Earthquake of 1855, measles epidemics, and floods. For a good display of this genre, see the exhibition catalogue *Nyūsu no tanjō* ニュースの誕生 (Naoyuki Kinoshi 1999). See also Susanne Formanek and Sepp Linhart (2005) for examples of the measles epidemics. For a discussion of the genre, see Gerald Groemer (1994), in particular, pp. 235-236.

31 See Stephan Köhn (2002) and his genre analysis of Rōbun’s *Ansei kenmonshi*. 
Figure 1. Kinton Dōjin 金屯道人, Ansei korori ryūkō ki 安政箇勞痢流行記 (Reports about the Cholera Epidemic, in the Fall of 1858), pp. 2 verso, 3 recto. Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

The combination of documentary and illustrative literature—termed by Stephan Köhn a “disaster collage”—offered the reader of the Ansei korori ryūkō ki both “facts”, in the form of official announcements, as well as the word on the street in the reproduction of popular broadsheets that related rumour, gossip and miscellaneous entertainment.32 The text includes, next to the report of how the epidemic spread in the Kantō region, the advisory letter by Pompe to the city magistrate of Nagasaki, a table that lists the amounts of relief provided to the poor, a table of daily death counts in the eighth month and a list of celebrity victims. What gives the text a tabloidesque character are the many illustrations that frame the tales of individual tragedies, the humorous verses, the “interview” with a temple priest, and accounts of strange occurrences including the appearance of a comet. Rōbun, even though he may have simply assembled circulating accounts, constructed himself as the narrator and commentator Kinton Dōjin 金屯道人.33

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32 On classification in the genre of disaster descriptions, see Stephan Köhn (2002). The collage is created out of reports of the damage, illustrations and panoramas, broadsheets, narratives of rumors and official announcements. See also Köhn’s English article from where I borrow the term “disaster collage”. See Stephan Köhn (2005), p. 288.

33 Rōbun also used the same penname Kinton Dōjin for Ansei fū bunshū, but gives no name in his earthquake account.
A source that depicts the social event more narrowly is Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi 末代話掃寄草紙 (Latter Days’ Stories Swept Together; 1858), compiled by an unknown author,\(^{34}\) (see Fig. 2). The content of the three volumes is basically a collection of various broadsheets and leaflets that were circulating at the time of the calamity. As in Rōbun’s Ansei korori ryūkōki, the playful texts of funny poems, crosswords and parodies of popular plays were not the editor’s own creations, yet unlike the former, Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi does not include any official orders, numbers of victims, or similar “factual” information.

Their common interest was surely wide distribution and high sales. Although censorship should have been a problem, since the texts refer to current events, the producers demonstrated considerable cunning.\(^{35}\) Rōbun’s report downplays any implicit criticism by navigating carefully through official announcements and accounts of the people’s plight, as well as using humor, which is Matsudaiba-
shi hakiyosezōshi’s sole focus. Certainly neither displays open criticism of the Shogunate, but it does not take much imagination on the part of the reader to see that the texts took issue with the current social disorder. That this type of literature sold well is evident from its high popularity. Most of the pieces chosen, such as the mitate banzuke 見立番付 (parodies of sumō wrestling rankings) and sanjūrokkasen 三十六歌仙 (36 Poetic Sages), were popular but non-exclusive models for visualizations of “disasters” and were disseminated independently. Thus, Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi and Rō bun’s account serve as excellent examples of commercial productions surrounding the social event.

Dealing with the Epidemic: Prevention and Therapy

The battle with cholera was not just a private matter. It quickly became a public, though not necessarily official, affair not unlike natural disasters. Physicians immediately began discussing the mysterious disease and suggestions for treatment were manifold. Intent on informing his readers about all circumstances of the epidemic, Rō bun, alias Kinton Dōjin, includes the most common therapies.36

The earliest therapy was by Dutch physician J. L. C. Pompe van Meerdervoort (1829–1908), who was teaching at the naval academy in Nagasaki. Pompe, on hearing about a cholera outbreak in Shanghai, stopped his lessons for a couple of days to learn more about the disease, since he had a sense that soon Japan, too, would be visited by this vicious malady. After he had given oral instructions to his student Matsumoto Jun 松本順 (1832-1907), the latter put together a booklet for circulation among his colleagues.37 In the instructions, in which Pompe describes the disease’s symptoms,38 he mentions that successful therapy requires the administering of opium and quinine.39 This treatment was however geared to

36 See Kinton Dōjin, p. 4 verso. Since Rō bun chose to sign the booklet on cholera with “Kinton Dōjin”, I will refer to him under this alias.


38 The text describes “sudden stomach pain, diarrhea and white moss on the tongue. The diarrhea looks mostly white and a little sticky. A blue liquid comes out with bile. Once an acute patient starts vomiting and has diarrhea, the extremities will cool down and become stiff; the infected will have cold sweats and continual symptoms until he dies.” See Pompe van Meerdervoort (1970), p. 91.

39 The text goes: “Because cholera has not been a common illness, methods for therapy and the works on them are limited. Recently, an effective medicine was introduced so that the disease became treatable. It is necessary to get quinine and opium as quickly as possible. If you take a portion of quinine and opium every hour, it can have a continuous effect.” See Pompe van Meerdervoort (1970), p. 91.
the professional, and thus Pompe also gave general advice on how to deal with the epidemic. He considered it the responsibility of the magistrate to inform and support the populace during times of epidemics, which was readily conceded. The advice was translated and circulated widely. Kinton Dōjin, too, reproduced the list of preventive measures and food best avoided in case of the occurrence of cholera (1858/6/3):

Deshima, 13th of July 1858
[...] In case of an actual cholera epidemic the link to food that causes this sickness is clearly established. We prohibit these foodstuffs and also declare measures of prevention of health:
1. cucumbers
2. melons
3. plums, apricots, peaches
The first two items should not be eaten due to their extreme danger. Fruits listed under item three seem to be harmful because they are consumed in Japan while still unripe. In Europe and other countries foodstuffs with poisonous effects are made known to the public as a preventive measure...; the prohibition of the sale of those articles is obviously necessary.

This is followed by a list of preventive measures that emphasise moderation in food, drink (including alcohol) and exposure to cold and heat.

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40 These are typical items of summer produce that are known for their difficulty of digestion, and are considered as yin food. A Chinese newspaper of 1895 warned against summer yin foods, such as cucumber, watermelon and crabs, which caused or triggered the cholera pathogen to enter the body. See Ruth Rogaski (2006), pp. 161-162.
41 Kinton Dōjin, pp. 5 recto through 6 verso.
42 Kinton Dōjin, p. 6 verso.
In Edo, where cholera had spread its terror since the beginning of the seventh month and more violently since the middle of the eighth month, the Shogunate made its first announcement to its citizens. Based on advice from the French, who had landed in Shinagawa 品川, Edo, in 1858/8/19, the magistrate announced preventive and self-treatment measures to the public (see Fig. 3 for an abridged version depicted in *Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi* and Fig. 4 for the announcement as reproduced in a kawaraban):

There are different methods of therapy that could be administered for the present epidemic of diarrhea, but for the amateur, the following procedures are recommended: For prevention, avoid cooling your body by covering your stomach with cotton, be discreet with drink and food, and absolutely avoid food that is hard to digest. If symptoms similar to the disease appear, go to bed quickly, do not eat or drink, keep your body warm, and take the medicine *hōkōsan* 芳香散, described below. Not a few have recovered by these methods. Also, if vomiting is severe, and the body temperature lowers, warm 180-360 ml of distilled liquor (shōchū 焼酎) mixed with 3.75 to 7.5 g of Malay camphor or a similar camphor, soak cotton in the mixture and rub softly the stomach, hands and

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feet. Apply the mustard mud paste described below on the stomach, hands and feet. It should be changed hourly.  

_Hōkōsan_ [aromatic powder]:
High quality laurel (small portion), black cardamom (same), ginger (same). Mix and drink from time to time.

Mustard mud paste:
Mix the mustard paste equally with wheat flour and knead with hot vinegar; put on cotton strips to apply on your body. If there is no time it is sufficient to use only the mustard paste mixed with hot water.

Other Methods:
Hot tea to which has been added 1/3 of _shōchū_ with a little sugar. Keep your room closed and use strips of woollen cloth soaked in _shōchū_ to wipe your entire body.44

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44 1858/8/22. Kinton Dōjin made a copy of the announcement (_furegaki_), pp. 7 recto through 8 recto. Further, Dōjin, p. 9 recto, has a shorter _furegaki_, which he claims was pinned onto a cherry tree. The pronouncement is also reproduced in _Zoku Tokugawa jikki_, vol. 3, pp. 533-534, and in _Bakumatsu ofuregaki shōsei_ (1994), pp. 354-355, where the date is given as 1858/8/22. An identical order can be found in the records of the city elders’ office (_machitoshiyori yakusho_), which had received the order from the city magistrate. _Edomachibure_, No. 16140 (1858/8/23), in _Edomachibure shōsei_ (2002), pp. 279-280.
The emphasis in the shogunal order was now more on therapy than on prevention, which can be explained by the rapid and indiscriminate ferocity with which the disease spread. Issued by the newly installed senior councilor Manabe Akikatsu 間部詮勝 (1804-1884), the easy-to-understand recommendations were circulated to all major cities.\(^{45}\)

**Social Problems: Etiology and Susceptibility**

Neither the physicians nor the Shogunate knew what had caused the current epidemic, thus no explanation was provided in their regulations. Even the terminology for the current epidemic was chosen cautiously, avoiding the foreign term “cholera” (“korera コレラ”), using instead bōshabyō 暴寫病 or niwaka yamai 暴病 (both gastrointestinal disease), or even the more general ryūkōbyō 流行病 (epidemic disease), with the intention to prevent any greater panic or anti-foreign sentiment by not being too transparent about the disease’s foreign origin.

The concern certainly was not without grounds. Against the backdrop of the very recent ratification of the foreign trade treaties,\(^{46}\) rumors were flying around.\(^{47}\) A broadsheet, for instance, shows how the affected parties felt about the disease’s origin, referring directly to foreigners as being the cause of the current scourge. This witty publication depicts a document of agreement concerning the eviction of a certain Korori-ya Ikisuke ころりやいき介 (an allusion to

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\(^{45}\) For instance the Osaka city magistrate publicized similar advice. Cited by Yamamoto Shun’ichi (1982), p. 670. Or see Fig. 4, which carries the same text. Ellen Gardner Nakamura cites from the diary of a village physician in today’s Gunma who recorded the official note from Edo. See Nakamura (2005), p. 150. The announcement was also reproduced by the compiler of Matsudaibashashi hakiyosezōshi. A part of it can also be found in Matsudaibashashi hakiyosezōshi, pp. 2 verso and 3 recto. See Fig. 3.

\(^{46}\) The first treaty, Treaty of Amity and Commerce (Nichihei shūkō tsūshō jōyaku 日米修好通商條約), was ratified with the U.S.A. (1858/6/19; July 29), then with Holland (7/10), Russia (7/11), Britain (7/18), and two months later France.

\(^{47}\) Rumors spread, in particular those of a political nature, indirectly blaming the newly signed trade treaties for the current cholera outbreak. Katsu Kaishū 喜海舟 (1823–1899), a member of the Nagasaki Naval Training Center (Kaigundenshūjo 海軍伝習所) in 1858, also indicated why people were suspicious of foreigners and their link to causing the epidemic: “When the English sailors land, they look for a well and check the quality of the water. The people from that area spread the wild rumor that the Englishmen are poisoning wells.” Quoted by Tatsukawa Shōji (1979), p. 183. Since the symptoms resembled those of poisoning, it did not take too much imagination to come up with this link. After all, foreigners taking residence close to Edo were now officially sanctioned with the new treaties. Another rumor had it that foreign ships poisoned the sea and fish. Fish shops were negatively affected. Sardines were particularly denigrated, and their price went down to a tenth of their former value. On the other hand, the price of vegetables and chicken went up. See Minami Kazuo (1980), p. 80.
cholera), co-signed by Tokoage-ya Medetarō 床上や目出太郎 (celebrated recovery) and Nagabiki-ya Naoshirō 長引や直代郎 (recovery from a long-lasting illness). The document describes all the negative consequences resulting from Korori-ya’s deeds: he was responsible for doctors always having to rush; for pharmacists and masseurs making too much profit; for incense sticks always being sold out; for cremators being secretly pleased; and for a sixteen-year-old girl “getting laid” due to a sudden passion, which put her parents in deep grief. So, to keep Korori-ya from pestering the people any further, they decided to evict him to Commodore Perry’s America in the eighth month of 1858 (see Fig. 5). It was the wish of the writer to send the disease back to where he believed it came from.48

![Figure 5: Expulsion of Mr. Korori. Courtesy of Historiographical Institute, Tokyo University.](image)

Another concern for both authorities and the populace was the social divide in being at risk of contracting the disease. The relation between social status and contagion is mentioned in the official notice (Edomachibure 江戸町触):

People of low rank (genin 下人) are more prone to fall ill to the disease than nobles (shōnin 上人). In particular the rate among people working in the fish or shipping business is high.49

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48 Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi, p. 9 verso. For the independently circulating broadsheet, see Fig. 5.
The order also explains that geographic locality mattered: places close to water were more afflicted than hilly areas, implying that the neighbourhoods of the warriors were therefore safer.\(^{50}\) Intriguingly, Kinton Dōjin divided social groups differently. He mentioned that the long-sleeved (doctors and priests) and landlords had better chances of escaping infection.\(^{51}\) His social rankings was according to economic standing in a segment of society, that of rich and poor commoners. These commoners were his audience and his resource for material. When he included in his set of data of reported deaths (which must be based on the same source as that used by the magistrate) the numbers of non-registered residents \((ninbetsu nashi no mono 人 別 な し の 者)\), he did so because the 12,492 victims were part of his community of urban dwellers, whereas in the records of the magistrate they were in this context non-existent.\(^{52}\)

Another social crisis during the epidemic that caused additional anguish and suffering among Dōjin’s populace was a logistic consequence of the epidemic. What to do with the sudden high number of those who fell victim to cholera? Dōjin depicts the predicament of the disposal of the bodies (see Fig. 6):


\(^{51}\) His account also includes children under the age of three. See Kinton Dōjin, p. 13 recto. Priests and doctors (long sleeves \([nagasode 長 袖]\)) are in theory not part of the social order, in reality, however, they are commoners unless promoted to warrior rank.

\(^{52}\) See Kinton Dōjin, p. 16 recto. The social group without registered residence was, of course, not unknown to officials and its members were acknowledged in relief measures. During the epidemic, an official of the machikaisho 町 会 所 (Town Block Association) reported that many people, presumably the unregistered in particular, had come daily to seek assistance from this community institution. In response rice was offered. The machikaisho in Asakusa 浅 草 was a self-governing association established as part of the Kansai reforms under Matsudaira Sadanobu 松 平 定 信 (1758-1829). Commoners were responsible for filling a warehouse through a kind of tax system, so that in times of need it could be handed out as relief. For instance, in 1861 fire and an earthquake required the machikaisho to provide relief for four months to the poor. See Saijō Gesshin, vol. 2, p. 183. During the cholera epidemic, according to Dōjin, 60,000 bales of rice were distributed to 442,124 people. See Kinton Dōjin, p. 13 recto. The population of Edo at the time was between 1.1 and 1.2 million. There were about 565,000 commoners in Edo, of which only the poor received support. We can assume that some people received several rations of relief rice. See also Edomachibure, No. 16176, in Edomachibure shūsei (2002), pp. 300-301, which states that from 1858/8/28 until 11/14 367,603 people received about 136,913 koku of rice. In the records of the Mori family (Mori nendai ki 森 年 代 記), the household head in Shizuoka 静 岡 recorded for the middle of the tenth month of 1858 that due to the epidemic and fire, relief rice \((otasukemai 御 た す け 米)\) was handed out in Edo. Thus, these relief measures by the Shogunate were known even outside of Edo. An order for relief rice was also issued once in the ninth month and once in the eleventh month. Cited by Takahashi Satoshi (2005), p. 36. See ibid., pp. 198-199, for the numbers.
From the first to the second ten-day period of the eighth month [the epidemic] became stronger; in one quarter of the city as many as one hundred people died; in another at least fifty. Along the big streets and small paths the coffins for the funerals, which took place without end day and night, stood in a line. The markets in front of the uncountable temples in Edo were busy, and the coffins at the crematoria were piled up on each other to the last space, building mountains. The cremator (おんぼ葬坊) who does his work at night, himself went up in smoke in the morning. The makers of stone lanterns had already written their own names on the stones.53

![Figure 6: Crematorium. Kinton Dōjin. Ansei korori ryūkōki, pp. 12 verso, 13 recto. Courtesy of Waseda University Library.](image)

In one quarter of the city, five to seven people died at the beginning of the epidemic, but soon the pillows had to be put in a line for every family, and people grovelled and died on the streets. In some wards with from 50 to 100 people dying the crematory was unable to manage the crowd of coffins. Thus the coffins were kept for ten to fifteen days in the heat of the summer, and the foul-smelling air travelled from Kozukahara 小塚原 (the main site for cremations) to Shitaya 下谷, Asakusa 浅草 and Kanda 神田, all commoners’ districts. Improvised

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53 See Kinton Dōjin, p. 3 recto and verso. Another part records Dōjin’s conversation with a priest: “The funerals of the eighth month reached the number for a whole year. Usually, I employ one cook and a man, who I find in front of the temple. It is in general enough even if there is much to do; this time, however, I employed one stonemason and a day laborer, and still it was not enough. I felt better only after I employed a craftsman for wells.” See Kinton Dōjin, p. 16 recto.
coffins were piled up in a hurry, and the coffin makers were so busy that cooper
and carpenters came to assist. Even sake barrels were used as coffins. In Sudachō
須田町, Kanda, 50 to 60 funeral processions passed in one day, and in Nihon-
bashi 日本橋 as many as 100.54 A friend of Dōjin’s went in the middle of the
eighth month to the crematory in Kozukahara, where he learned from the cremator
that since 7/15 the burners had been running continuously. By the end of the
month the number had decreased somewhat. However, from the beginning of the
eighth month, 20 to 30 bodies had to be set aside, so that by mid-month 600 were
still not cremated. The friend went on to explain that the number of coffins was
endless, and when he began counting them while walking from Kozukahara to
Shinmachi 新町, he came up with 173 coffins on a walk of not even half a
mile55 (see Fig. 7).

![Figure 7: Long Line of Funerals. Kinton Dōjin. Ansei korori
ryūkō ki, pp. 11 verso, 12 recto. Courtesy of Waseda University Library.](image)

There were so many fatalities that prompt funerals could not be conducted. Aside
from the spiritual and emotional offense of leaving the bodies outside for several
days in the summer heat, there was the fear of cholera arising from miasma. Thus
the people dreaded the corpses not only for their foul odor but also because the
air around them was believed to be potentially infectious. The magistrates for

54 Minami Kazuo (1980), pp. 77-78.
55 Kinton Dōjin, pp. 11 verso through 12 verso.
temples and shrines (jisha bugyō 寺 社 奉 行) were aware of this and tried to console the populace of Edo:

There are too many dead bodies in the area of Senju 千 住, Kozukahara, so that the cremators are overwhelmed and have to forsake the bodies for several days; the developing foul air around Shitaya and Asakusa is causing much distress, especially at night when it becomes even stronger. Many doctors consider the possibility of whether the putrid air could be infectious or bring about the epidemic fever (ekirei hainetsu 瘴 瘟 瘟 瘟). They also informed the temples that temporary burials (kariuzume 仮 埋) should be carried out or other methods of disposal should be devised so that the described unbearable predicament could be avoided.56

The order continues: “The jisha bugyō sent this note and announced that reasonable burials would be carried out in the city.”

In light of these horrible conditions, the jisha bugyō kept their promise and allowed the opening of another cremation ground:

1858/8/26
Recently due to the epidemic many people have died, and the crematory in Senju, Kozukahara, is overwhelmed. Thus a new crematory will be opened in Sunamura shinden 砂 村 新 田. The temple Higashi-honganji 東 本 勝 寺 petitioned the senior councilors to build this new cremation place, which was permitted, but at the same time the councilors stated that other temples have the right to use the burner as well, since it will be the only new location in the city at present.57

Since cremation itself brought about an awful stench, by locating the new crematory facility on the outskirts of the city (today close to Shinkiba 新 木 場) the Shogunate hoped to get a grip on the overflow of rotting bodies.

The regulations and arrangements of the Shogunate and its organs are well recorded by Dōjin. He sought to keep a record of what had occurred and also to provide precedents for further disasters. All the numbers given, whether deaths or

56 Edomachibure, No. 16153, in Edomachibure shūsei (2002), p. 285. The date of the duplicate given here is 1858/9/4, but as also indicated in the reproduction of the order in Bakumatsu ofaregaki shūsei, vol. 5, No. 4787, p. 355, 1858/8/24 is more likely the original date. Kinton Dōjin, pp. 8 recto and verso, only writes 8th month. See Fujikawa Yū (1893), p. 364.
57 The order starts: “The accompanying paper is a notification from the jisha bugyō that is to be sent to all temples; read it, inform everyone, sign it and pass it on to the next. When completed send it back to the Enkakuin 圓 觀 院.” Reprinted in Fujikawa Yū (1893), p. 364. See also Yamamoto Shun’ichi (1982), p. 465.
cremations, signify human bodies. These bodies were both a metaphor for and components of the larger social body.

**Protection**

The medical world debated the disease’s etiology and medical therapies, and the government proclaimed the latest remedies. Yet, the futility of all these measures is illustrated by the high toll the epidemic took. When Dōjin dryly states that “even the wisdom of famous doctors cannot explain the cause of the disease (byōkon meishō 病根名證),” he explains why many came to the conclusion that time-honored healing practices were in need. Rumors about evil monsters (yōkai henke 妖怪変化) fortified the belief that the scourge could not have been caused by any human device; thus its cure, too, had to be requested from non-human entities. By carrying out purification rites for the expulsion of evil spirits and the gods of disease (ekijin 病神), and putting up magical objects for protection, the people of Edo hoped that the deadly disease would spare them.

Common practices were praying to the gods and giving offerings in cases of infection, or seeking protection by wearing amulets and other aids. In particular Edoites sought out the Mitsumine shrine 三峰神社 in Chichibu 秩父, today’s Saitama prefecture, during the epidemic. An amulet from the shrine had been a popular means of protection against disaster and disease throughout the Tokugawa period. The shrine is devoted to the wolf (ōkami 狼), a familiar of the legendary prince Yamato Takeru 日本武尊 that guided him through the mountains. The link between cholera and the shrine became even more important due to the rumors that the epidemic was caused by a fox, because it was believed that an efficient remedy against a beast was another beast, in this case the wolf, or someone who knew how to handle the wild creatures, such as the yamabushi 山伏.

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58 Dōjin’s recording of the amount of relief rice per person has the same goal. See footnote 52.

59 Kinton Dōjin, p. 4 recto. The medical discussion among physicians, such as Ogata Kōan and others, has been treated in my M.A. thesis (1993). In Japanese, Yamazaki Tasuku (1932), Tatsukawa Shōji (1979), and Yamamoto Shun’ichi (1982) give the best accounts.

60 Apparently many shared the belief in the general medical concept that poisonous agents infected the body, which led to its breakdown and eventual death.

61 See Kinton Dōjin, p. 4 recto. “Stupid rumors about the disease are making the rounds, such as that [cholera] came from a monstrous beast (yōkai henge), and people talk about water and fish poisoning; no one in the city, high or low, goes to get water from the clear Tama river 玉川 for this reason, or eats the fresh and healthy fish.”

(mountain ascetics), see Fig. 8. By borrowing from the shrine something related to the wolf one should be protected from the evil doings of the fox (*kitsune* 狐). That the neology of cholera *korori* (“drop” dead suddenly) was often spelled with the characters fox 狐, wolf 狼 and *tanuki*狸 (raccoon dog) emphasized this imagined relationship.

Figure 8: *Kawaraban*. Upper part: *Banzuke* 番付 of Busy and Sluggish Businesses. Below: *Yamabushi* 山伏 (Mountain Ascetic) is paid for expulsion of the fox. Courtesy of Historiographical Institute, Tokyo University.

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63 For the petition by villagers about their planned pilgrimage, see Takahashi Satoshi (2005), pp. 145-146.

64 The popular belief in being possessed by the fox spirit was neither new nor exclusive to times of disease. In popular stories, young adults were particularly vulnerable to the fox spirit, who enticed them disguised as a handsome man or pretty woman.

65 Kinton Dōjin, p. 4 recto.
Many villagers used their communal system for support and combined their funds to send representatives on a pilgrimage to obtain protection for the entire village.\textsuperscript{66} In a large city such as Edo, where human interrelationships worked differently, however, commoners used devices close to hand. Some of Edo’s preventive activities are mentioned by Dōjin:

Rich and poor complain day and night that the disease will catch them and they put sheets with names of gods and leaves of the fatsia (yatsude 柿指) at the doors and gates. They carry portable shrines (mikoshi 神輿) of the local patron gods, perform the lion dance, let flutter sacred paper strips, and clean around the house for their protection against evil. Out of the desire to end the year quickly, they decorate the doors like they do on New Year with pine and bamboo, tighten straw ropes and throw beans; also those who expel evil for money come to their houses. In general one gets the impression that they merge the Gion 祇園 festival with the New Year festival.\textsuperscript{67}

Many such magico-religious practices, including the pinning of the yatsude, prayer tags (jufu 呪符) and masks of an evil spirit\textsuperscript{68} on the entrance to one’s home, were deemed to be effective in driving out or warding off the disease.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{66} In 1858/8/25 young villagers went on a pilgrimage, carried out ascetic practices and collected money for temple restorations. See Yamazaki Tasuku (1931), pp. 562-564.

\textsuperscript{67} See Kinton Dōjin, pp. 4 recto and verso. Similar descriptions can be found in broadsheets. Yamazaki Tasuku has collected sources about various practices, such as yamabushi and priests offering prayers to keep the disease away. See Yamazaki collection, Juntendō University. Also see Fig. 8.

\textsuperscript{68} For instance, “King of the disastrous gods! Have you forgotten the promise of 1858/5/25/?” Sadayasu [fingerprint in red]. Cited by Dōjin Kinton, p. 24 recto.

\textsuperscript{69} Takahashi Satoshi (2005), p. 78, lists all the religious events, Buddhist, Shintō or otherwise in nature, that took place in Ōmiya 大宮 (Shizuoka) during 1858.
Figure 9: Festival in Kyoto to expel Cholera. Courtesy of Juntendō University.

The remedies for protection, prevention and cure were countless. Some were common means of dealing with disease—Tatsukawa Shōji recognizes in the “cholera festival” assimilations from the “smallpox festival”\
70 (see Fig. 9)—, and some were new metaphors. In houses with cholera patients, people borrowed Tengu 天狗 (long-nosed goblin) masks or a lion’s head, placed them in front of the sickbed, and dedicated offerings, such as sekihan 赤飯 (red rice usually indicating joyful events). One well-known broadsheet carries the mask of a devil that was to be pinned to the front of the door. The advertisement of the publisher encourages its purchase (see Fig. 10):

Ekireiyouke えきれいよけ (Expulsion of the Epidemic)

A long time ago in Shōji 2 [1200] there was an epidemic on the island of Sado 佐渡. The people put the image of Kimen Myōjin 鬼面明神, who is enshrined on the island, on every door to prevent the disease from entering. This is mentioned in a book, Koroku jitsuden 古老口実伝 (Old Men’s Talk about their Experiences). Now, in 1858, we have an epidemic like the one in Shōji 2. We have copied the image and encourage the people to put it up on their doors to help those who are already infected by the disease to recover and to pre-

70 Tatsukawa Shōji (1979), p. 188.
vent the deity of disease (ekirei kami えきれい神) from entering the houses of those who are not yet afflicted.71

**Figure 10: Ekireiyoke.** Protective image of the Kimen Myōjin 鬼面明神. Courtesy of Juntendō University.

Another popular image for protecting the house is included in Dōjin’s collection: the picture of the Hakataku 白澤 (chin. Bai Ze).72 (see Fig. 11). The magic picture advertises that if one puts it by one’s pillow every night, one will have no bad dreams and will avoid disastrous influences.73

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71 *Ekireiyoke,* Yamazaki collection, No. 8826, Juntendō library.
72 Bai Ze is a fantastic Chinese animal that is a companion of dogs and can speak. Legend holds that the animal informed the Yellow Emperor how to overcome attacks of supernatural creatures. See Donald Harper (1985), p. 491.
73 Kinton Dōjin, last page.
These images and remedies are mere glimpses into popular practices. Mircea Eliade has pointed out that as long as there is an explanation or justification for calamity, it can be tolerated. This seems to be true for the 1858 epidemic experience. Dōjin points out explicitly that the current epidemic was in fact a pandemic and not only the disaster-prone fate of Japan. Thus, the magico-religious notions of either the curse (tatari) or punishment of the deities (the epidemic gods), or a natural disaster (tenpen chii) caused by imbalance in the atmosphere offered people an outlet, a way to take action by praying for cure, prevention and an end to the epidemic. It was Heaven’s work. The appearance of a comet presumably strengthened the consensus that the epidemic was out of

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74 For a short depiction of the various medicaments, see Saitō Gesshin, p. 167.
75 Mircea Eliade (1965), p. 98.
76 Kinton Dōjin, p. 6 verso.
human hands. Expression and release were found in the festival atmosphere of calling in the New Year, which could herald a new beginning. From the prints it is difficult to infer that the people envisioned that the end of the current order (matsudai 末 代) was near or that they called for social reforms (yonaoshi 世 直し). The absence of any serious tumult among the populace of Edo despite the indiscriminate raging of the disease illustrates their acceptance and tolerance of the calamity. Heaven’s design was unknowable. However, despite their optimism in this stressful time, the commoners of Edo were not silent about social conundrums resulting from the epidemic, which found expression in parodies, humorous songs and games. And the demand for news along with humorous accounts was readily supplied by publishers.

Humor in Time of Cholera

Precaution and protection were certainly the major concerns of physicians, the Shogunate and the people alike, yet amid the circulation of therapies and preventive practices, numerous voices pointed out the economic consequences of the epidemic. Not everyone lost out. Takahashi Satoshi has recently shown how the Yoshida 吉田 shrine in Kyoto and the Mitsumine shrine, mentioned above, made great profits from the believers who came to ask for protection.79 Pictures, such as the Kimen Myōjin (see Fig. 10), must have sold well, too, to the joy of publishers. The sheer number of booklets and broadsheets that were sold in such a short time demonstrates that the compilers, authors, artists, wood-print carvers and publishers did not produce the broadsheets and leaflets for purely altruistic

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77 Hōkiboshihonden 嵐気彗 本伝 (About the Comet of Abundance). In Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 2, pp. 19 verso and 20 recto. See also the poem cited by Kinton Dōjin, p. 19 recto. See also the mention of the comet in Tsugami Etsugorō (1989), p. 92.

78 “The latter age” (matsudai), the last stage before the apocalyptic world renewal (yonaoshi) according to popular Buddhist belief are not described in the analyzed sources. Only the title of the Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi refers to this. Yet there is no evidence for or mention of the eejanaika え え い な き ("it’s all right") movement and iki 一揆 (peasant uprisings) in the sources. Here I disagree with Harry Harootunian, who states: “Panic and rumor were rampant, and the ‘public spirit’, we are told, was unstable. The foreigner was already in the land, and in the countryside there appeared hysterical chiliastic cults. These cults are marked by their rejection of corrupt times (ee ja nai ka), […], and by their frenzied ‘dance to correct the world’ (yo naoshi odori).” See Harootunian (1970), p. 255. The year is here mistakenly given as 1859. Reinhard Zöllner points out that the eejanaika movement, the phenomenon in which commoners transcended everyday life by collective strategies and communications, first appeared in early summer of 1867. See Reinhard Zöllner (2005), p. 311.

79 Takahashi Satoshi (2005), chap. 3.
reasons. Sure enough, my two main sources, Kinton Dōjin and the editor of Matsudaibanashi hakyosezōshi, while drawing the attention of their readers to those who profitted, also plunged right into the lucrative market. The extant sources are woodblock prints by the survivors, the winners, poking fun at themselves.

Figure 12: Genealogy of Cholera. Korori ikken hosaiki狐狼痢一件巨細記 (General and Detailed Accounts about Cholera), inserted between pp. 31 and 32. Courtesy of Jun- tendō University.
The official promotion of preventive measures and therapeutic advice was processed and transformed quickly by the publishing world into a marketable product. The *bukan* 武鑑, which described for commoners the genealogies of the upper ranks of the warrior class, changes into a humorous broadsheet for the disease, in which *korori* is the family name and the aromatic powder (*hōkōsan*) the eldest son (see Fig. 12, Genealogy of Cholera). Another example of literature popular among commoners that relates to the upper echelons of society is a broadsheet of a *gunkimono* 軍記物 (war tales), which describes and illustrates the battles of warriors who stand in for various remedies against the army of cholera (see Fig. 13). Most prominent, however, is the food list.

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80 See, for instance, the broadside that advises treating the cholera patient with aromatic powder (*hōkōsan*, described above), Fig. 3 and 4.

81 *Matsudaibanshi hakiyosezōshi*, vol. 2, pp. 16 verso and 17 recto. See also *Korori ikken hosaiki*, inserted between pp. 31 and 32. Yamazaki Collection, No. 10686, Juntendō University.

82 Yamazaki Collection, No. 8875, Juntendō University.

83 Date and place are unknown but presumably 1858 or 1859. Yamazaki Collection, No.10648, Juntendō University.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things one should not eat</th>
<th>Things one could eat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish: tuna, bonito, octopus, shrimp, crab, blue mackerel, cuttlefish, sardine, etc., and processed food made out of fish, such as boiled fish paste, minced and steamed fish, and all sorts of shellfish…</td>
<td>Fish: sea bream, flatfish, horse mackerel, sillaginoid (kisu), bass, dried bonito…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others: buckwheat noodles, water, <em>nameko</em> (glib mushroom), seaweed, cucumber, devil’s tongue, dried tofu, lotus, loquat, peach, mulberry…</td>
<td>Others: chicken, potatoes, eggs, milk, tofu, beans, radish, young cowpea, crane, tortoise, ginger, red pepper, ice, mustard, horseradish…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unfortunately the list, arranged in the form of a *mitate banzuke*, does not explain the criteria according to which the articles were selected. While it gives us a good description of the diet of the time, it is doubtful that the people themselves had sufficient observational familiarity with any links between diet and the disease, and thus earlier experience with food poisoning and gastrointestinal diseases might have informed the list.⁸⁴ If these dietary restrictions were actually observed, certain professions, such as fish and noodle shops, certainly experienced financial losses.

A variety of textual styles were produced to highlight the economic contestants, as for instance, the ironic trio-verses (*sanpuku tsui* 三復追), which echo the sentiment that business went better for some than others:

- Obligation: visit of someone with sudden sickness
- Needles: quick therapy
- Epidemic: palanquins with doctors
- Trouble: agent of a tenement house
- Perplexity: guardian of the disease
- Dryness: poor people’s difficulty

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⁸⁴ The lists by Pompe and the magistrate, introduced above, certainly stood as a model for this list, even though the content differs. There are precedents for official dietary advice and taboos in time of epidemics. See Sakai Shizu (1982), pp. 59-60, for one list from the year 737. For translation of the medical advice, see Wayne Farris (1985), pp. 60-61. For a second recommendation, see ibid, pp. 62-63. The *Kōfu daikan* 甲府代官 also gives notice in the eighth month of 1858 about similar methods for prevention of cholera. Cited by Yamamoto Shun’ichi (1982), p. 669. See further Iijima Shigeru (1935), p. 286. However, the broadsheets are much more detailed and thus have a different intention. This is further confirmed by a woodblock print by Utagawa Yoshimori I, published during the measles epidemic of 1862, which lists the food groups more or less in reverse. See Helmut O. Rotermund (2005), p. 270, for the Utagawa print.
People in Edo were well aware of the monetary flow that went from one purse to another when calling for doctors, buying medicines and purchasing prayers, amulets, images and other religious objects. In time of social upheaval, which was considered as a peak moment, the possibility of a reverse in fortune was high.

This fluctuation of economic fortune is depicted in numerous humorous forms. Comic verses (kyoka 狂歌), poems in the style of the Hyakunin isshu 百人一首 (The hundred poets), and puns in magic squares (yabodaishi 野保台詩) fill the various parody prints (mitate-e 見立絵), broadsheets and booklets. We find more direct illustrations of the winners and losers during the epidemic in the parodic form of the banzuke. The following assigns these losers and winners in the cholera epidemic to each side:

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Daihan o kōmur 蒙大煩 (Suffer big trouble).

Referees:

Indō Oshō 引道和尚 (Indian Monk) and Yamai Yōsen 山井養仙 (Disease Foreign-ship)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West (lots of idle time)</th>
<th>East (busy time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ōki 大息 (big sigh): the water carrier</td>
<td>Dairi 大利 (big profit): the cremator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikikomi 引込 (bringing the advertisement inside of the shops): seller of purgatives</td>
<td>Jun'eki 潤益 (net profit): artisans who make the coffins quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agejate 揚立 (freshly fried): tempura street-stall owner</td>
<td>Furugi 古着 (thrift stores): buying from the yukanba 湯灌場 (person who cleans the dead bodies)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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85 Matsudaibanzashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 2, pp. 16 verso and 17 recto.
86 Matsudaibanzashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 1, p. 7 recto.
87 Matsudaibanzashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 1, p. 15 verso.
88 Matsudaibanzashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 1, p. 9 recto. See also Stephan Köhn (2005), pp. 294-295, explaining Kanagaki Rōbun’s use of the form in the Ansei kenmonshi.
89 See Fig. 8, top, Kawaraban. For banzuke of the measles epidemic of 1862, see Helmut O. Rotermund (2005), p. 267, for an eejanaika print, see Reinhard Zöllner (2005), p. 328.
People accused the cremators, monks, carpenters and masseurs of benefiting from the adversity resulting from the epidemic, while others, due to rumors, went out of business, such as fish shops and water carriers.

Another technique of caricaturing the current conditions was listing endlessly what was and was not missing during the calamity (“semi-poetic” listings, monotsukushi もの尽くし). For instance:

There is no end to the epidemic
There is no astonishment to the sudden fall
There is no time to call the doctor
There are no houses without yatsude
There is no end to the funerals, day and night
There is no place for the dead body
There are no characters for posthumous names
There is no drop in the price of rice
There is no house which does not smoke garlic
There is no time for the landlord to press for the rent.

Versus the conditions that existed:

There is as much disorderliness as you can think of
There are envelopes with charms pinned on the wall
There is everywhere the rumor about the fox
There are many graves without anybody who could take care of them.

Humor had many forms. Many pieces were travesties and parodies of the well-known repertoire, such as Jippensha Ikku’s 十返舎一九 (1765-1831) famous

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90 I adopt the term “‘semi-poetic’ listings” from Gerald Groemer (1994), pp. 244-245.
91 Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 1, pp. 10 recto through 11 verso.
92 Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 1, p. 12 recto. Again this “genre” of listing was popular at the time. See, for instance, Helmut O. Rotermund (2005), Fig. 7, p. 267.
Hizakurige 膝栗毛 (Shank’s Mare), now called Meido no tabi 冥途の旅 (Travel to the Other World). Along with the modified pillar calendar (hashiragoyomi 柱暦, see Fig. 14), these parodies are all examples of the commoner’s thirst for therapeutic laughter. Thus, the demand for humor in time of crisis accounts for the production and sheer amount of related publications, but they also lay bare the thriving business of the publishing industry.

Figure 14: Pillar Calendar and Comet. Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi, pp. 19 verso and 20 recto. Courtesy of Jun-tendō University.

Whereas in general there is no moral message in these prints, the illustration of the Tsukamidori 通神仙 (“Grasping bird,” an allegory for the profit-grasping professions, see Figure 15) draws together elements that describe not only the

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93 Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 2, pp. 20 verso through 23 verso.
94 Matsudaibanashi hakiyosezōshi, vol. 2, pp. 19 verso and 20 recto and verso. For two other examples, see Korori ikken hosaiki, inserted at the end.
95 On commercialization and the publishing industry, see Ekkehard May (1983) and id. (2005).
96 The bird is perhaps an allusion to the Hōō 鳳凰, a mythical bird that appears when rule is virtuous, multiplying the irony. For the earthquake of 1855 we have the image of the Nangitori 難儀鳥 (“Bird of Hardship”), also made of symbols characteristic of the consequences of the earthquake. In the image, the bird snatches a catfish away from the
social effects of the epidemic, yet also has a didactic undercurrent. The text explains the various puns and symbols built into the image of the bird, but also appeals for kindness, mercy, supporting one’s parents and friends, feeling pity for lower people and taking care of one’s own health (yōjō 养 生). “Then, you do not have to be afraid of cholera.”97 Virtuous behavior and self-preservation should not be forsaken despite the dreadful times. Bad times will be followed by good ones, if morality does not fall into oblivion. The text is signed by a publisher, who also had a cut of the profits.

![Image 15: Tsugamidori. Courtesy of Juntendō University.](image)

This moralizing message, though, is something of an exception, and even here not so serious. Official orders, too, do not adopt a high moral tone. The sources introduced here do not appropriate the disease in terms of the common medical discourse that prescribes for an imbalance in the body’s ki 氣 (in Chinese qi, material energy or vital energy) caused by overindulgence and hence immorality.98 Cholera was perceived of as an outside agent that entered the body indis-

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97 Tsugamidori. Yamazaki Collection, No. 8886. Juntendō University.
98 Traditional Chinese medicine saw the cause of epidemic diseases or climatic changes in general as a disruption of the balance of the elements due to irregular circula-
criminally, regardless of the virtue of its victim.\textsuperscript{99} The advice reiterated was less about preserving health via a moderate diet or moral lifestyle than about how to prevent the agent from entering one’s body.\textsuperscript{100} Therefore the prayers to the gods and amulets to protect against the epidemic are signs that morality and the body were two different entities. The widely broadcast dietary regimen emphasizes the notion that the disease is a material and corporeal event, not linked to moral causes.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The cholera epidemic struck at the worst possible time for the Shogunate. Sensitive political issues, such as the ratification of the foreign trade treaties and Shogun Lesada’s 家定 (1824-1858, r. 1853-1858) sudden death in 1858/7/4 at the young age of 35, which precipitated confrontation between political camps over his succession,\textsuperscript{101} intensified the need to calm the terror and panic of the populace in Edo. Due, at least partially, to official censorship on reporting current events, our sources do not depict reactions to these political issues. Instead the tropes equated illness with other forms of social disorder. The social event of sudden disorder uncovered images of society at a deeper level: the socio-economic order and conditions of urban commoners.

Views of society and its members are brought to the surface in times of crisis, such as epidemic or natural disaster. In the case of cholera, the physical intensity in the cosmos (\textit{tenkō no akureiki} 天候の悪厲気). External agents entered the body that was exposed to these bad influences. During the first cholera epidemic, in 1822, Ōtsuki Gentaku indeed conceived of cholera as pathogenic agents or poisonous air (\textit{jaki} 邪気 or \textit{tenkō reiki} 天行厲気) that infected the body and needed to be expelled. See Ōtsuki Shigetada (1930), p. 45. During the second epidemic no new etiology of the epidemic was discussed; rather the earlier concepts of harmful emanations caused by a seasonal imbalance were repeated, if mentioned at all.

\textsuperscript{99} In a copy of Udagawa Yōan’s 宇田川榕庵 (1798-1846) translation of Bowier, we find a discussion of what could have caused the epidemic, based on the Dutch reports. Here, the physician Shionoya Tōin 塩谷宕陰 (1809-1867) agrees with the reports that weather conditions were responsible for the current epidemic. He explains that the weather was unsteady and irregular in the third and fourth months in Japan, and thus the epidemic broke out. For the original text, see Udagawa Yōan (1859), \textit{Koreanmorupuyusu setsu 古列亜没尔斯説} (Theory of Cholera morbus), Waseda library collection, No. ya04 00923, pp. 23-25.

\textsuperscript{100} The link to morality is expressed later in a Chinese newspaper during the epidemic of 1895, which points out that cholera could be avoided through self-restraint. See Ruth Rogaski (2006), pp. 161-162.

\textsuperscript{101} It did not help that some, among them Mori Ōgai, thought the Shogun’s death was caused by cholera. See Mori Ōgai (2000), p. 205. Foreign reports even suggested suicide (New York Times, 10 Jan. 1859). See \textit{Gaikoku shinbun ni miru Nihon}, pp. 139-141.
of the disease’s impact on the human body facilitated using the body as a main object of imagination. The body as metaphor made visible the invisible entities of the socio-economic structure.\textsuperscript{102} In popular prints, the body became both a metaphor for the economic system as well as a contestant within it. The corporeal manifestations of the disease, as represented in images of the body that excretes and the body that consumes, are part of this economy; they present together the body economic.\textsuperscript{103} In the metaphorical language of consumption, production, reproduction and circulation, an economy of the body emerges in the depictions of the epidemic. The commoners of Edo regarded themselves as entrenched in and controlled by the market economy.

The body’s vitality (health) and money’s circulation (wealth) were inseparable, and not only in terms of the fees the Edoites had to pay to restore their physical health. The analogy of the circulation of money with the circulation of $ki$ in the body is commonplace in the Edo period.\textsuperscript{104} A standstill in the marketplace is therefore just as bad as stagnation of $ki$, which ultimately leads to death. The human body itself is static, but its $ki$ has to work; it cannot be idle, otherwise the person will become sick and, in the worst case, die. The same applies to the economy, expressed through the metaphor of the “body”, that is, an outer frame, in which money performs the task of $ki$. If accumulated or hoarded, transactions come to a halt, transforming currency into dead stock of no value. Thus, circulation is imperative.\textsuperscript{105}

The frame of the economy is static and thus void of virtue, just as the body, in which $ki$ produces and reproduces, is amoral as well. Above, there is Heaven, a vague entity that is the signifier for the inexplicable, such as the causes of natural catastrophes or, in this case, cholera. The economic fluctuations observed during the epidemic explain the pronounced climate of optimism, since those who profit

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} A different imaginary is discussed by Kuriyama Shigeisa in a short paper about two prints of the measles epidemic of 1862. See Kuriyama (1999), p. 47; Fig. 13 and 14. The two images display the anger and outrage of the losing professions against the god of measles, which is not represented in the prints I discuss here. Cholera is neither personified nor is anger or repentance exhibited—rather, puzzled faces.
\item \textsuperscript{103} The same can be said for Ansei kenmonshi, where the earthquake was also extraordinarily physical. Quite apart from cholera, the experiences of the earthquake of 1855, the storm of 1856 and the measles epidemic of 1862 all triggered production concentrated on bodily matters. Some illustrations are more prevalent, as for instance images of the economic body of the state versus imperialist countries.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Kuriyama discusses the connection between circulation and the economy in his analysis of the diagnosis and treatment called fukushin 腹 心 (Palpation of the) Abdomen and Chest), a medical discourse exclusive to the Edo period. See Kuriyama (1999), pp. 49-51. For a brief discussion, see Smits (2006), pp. 1059-1060.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Kuriyama argues that the concern with circulation and stagnation was linked to the realization that desire was at the root of vital and industrious activities, which only became unhealthy when “indolent pleasures that created knotted accumulations in a person’s vital core” were not shunned. See Kuriyama (1999), p. 55.
\end{itemize}
today could be the losers tomorrow. Even after the epidemic abated, a reoccurrence was possible. The societal response to the calamity illustrates an absence of morals in a world of fluctuation that human agency could neither predict nor affect.

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