



The territory of the Japanese saké label expresses a complex of relationships between the source and the viewer located in Japan, viewing exported saké, and saké produced outside of Japan. Categories of imagery and imagination seek to establish and strengthen connections of Japanese identity.

Photograph 1: Takikoi (waterfall & carp) image. Daiginjō (very best unadulterated saké). The vigor of the carp is admired as they swim upstream, against all odds, to spawn.

Source: Patricia Yarrow. Kimura shuzō, Hyogo, (Kobe) Japan.

NOTE: This presentation concerns the territory of the Japanese saké and the relationships of the viewer located in Japan, viewing exported saké, and saké produced outside of Japan. Categories of imagery and imagination seek to establish and strengthen connections of Japanese identity.

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What is saké? Saké is usually translated as “rice wine .” In Japan, “the word ‘saké’ is a generic term for all alcoholic beverages including beer, wine, or whiskey. “Nihonshu” or “the saké of Japan” sets saké ^[1] apart from other alcoholic beverages.

[1] Gauntner, The Saké Handbook 25.

Label: Sakuhan of Daimon shuzô, Ikoma mountain range in Katano City, Western Japan, near Kyoto.

Source: <http://www.sakahan.com/Hanzaemon/hanzaemon.html#star>

Label: Imada shuzô, Toyoda Gun, Hiroshima, Japan.

Source: <http://www.esaké.com/Brewers/ImadaB/imadab.html>

Label: Napa Saki [sic] Junmai-Ginjô. Proving controversial and difficult to locate actual brewers and company. I even own a fish-bottle! Will check with local importer.

Source: <http://www.lipsimport.com/>

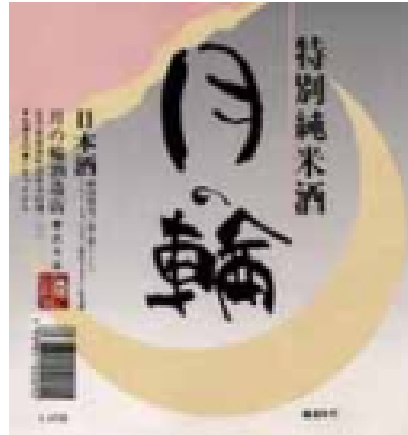
...Moonlit Nights

婆々どの酒香に行き月よ哉

*baba dono no
saké nomi ni yuki
tsuki yo kana*

*I wonder
if I should go
drink granny's saké*

Kobayashi Issa (1811)



J

Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827)

My contention is that conversation of the gaze between the source/producer and viewer/gazer changes dynamically between local, global and transnational scale of geography. The thematic content of saké labels mediates the dialogue through signifiers of Japanese identity on all three scales.

Quoted poetry source: http://cat.xula.edu/issa/searchissa.php?s_string=saké&sorter=date

Label: Tsuki no Wa (Roundness/Wheel of the Moon). Tsukushinoko, Iwate

Source: http://www.sake-world.com/html/jt-2001_0.html

...Harvested Rice

夕つきや刈穂の上の神酒徳利
yūzuki ya kariho no ue no miki tokuri

evening moon~
 above the harvested rice
 and a bottle of sacred saké

Issa (1819)



As of 2004, “There are about 2000 *shuzō* 酒蔵 (saké breweries) licensed to brew saké in Japan” and “each brewery has the rights to about five brand names .” There are about 10,000 *meigara* 銘柄 (brand name).^[1] Within Japan, the total liters of alcohol consumed have decreased from 108.9% to 97.7 liters/year. The peak consumption was over 1990-1994.^[2]

[1] Gauntner, “The History of Saké “Meigara .”

[2] National Tax Agency Japan. *Shuzeikazei Jokyo no Gaiyo*(Alcoholic Beverages Tax and Related Statistics). Liquor Tax and Industry Division, Taxation Department. Jul., 2002. Nov. 10, 2004. <National Tax Agency <http://www.nta.go.jp/category/english/index.htm>>.

Label: Nihonkoku from “Sappuki .”

Source:

<http://www.missionliquor.com/Store/Qstore/Qstore.cgi?CMD=011&PROD=1049840233>

I. Methodology



5

The labels for this study were gathered from several sources:

- The “Thirty Saké Brewers in Thirty Days Tour .” A month of field research in Japan during Winter break 2004.
- Tokyo’s Nihonshu Center^[1] in Tokyo. Hundreds of bottles of saké from every corner of Japan were on display from floor to ceiling.
- English and Japanese websites of saké brewers and export websites resulted in a database of labels sources and lore.
- Boulder’s Liquor Mart survey of exported saké.
- Amu, a small Boulder saké-restaurant was kind enough to allow me to photograph their stock and recapture an echo of the Japanese local neighborhood sakéria, the true home of the saké label.

[1] “Nihonshu Center,” Yahoo! Travel. Dec.4, 2004 <http://travel.yahoo.com/p-travelguide-2764681-nihonshu_center_tokyo-l>.

Photograph: Wall o’ saké bottles at the Nihonshu Center, Tokyo.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, January 2004. Tokyo.



Paper labels are ephemera and abundant.

As late as 1940, 60% of all saké was still getting to the consumer through wooden taru and personal ceramic bottles carried to the saké shop. Only 40% of all saké was finding its way into 1.8 liter glass bottles^[1]. “The first glass bottle of saké appeared on the market in 1879. After WWII, the tokkuri and taru days were essentially finished.

The advent of disposable labels and rapidly modernizing transportation brought the saké label into new artistic territory. Today, between 1,600 and 2,000 saké makers produce thousands of individual saké products, each requiring a distinguishing label.^[2] No longer carrying only practical information, the labels serve as signifiers of identity and reinforce and recalibrate connection of the individual to a larger sense of belonging.

[1] Gauntner, “Yamahai saké ; Glass Bottles .”

[2] John Gauntner, “The History of saké "Meigara," Saké World saké Newsletter. #52, Feb. 4, 2004. December 2, 2004
 <http://www.esaké.com/Knowledge/Newsletter/SW/SW2004/sw2004_1.html>.

Photograph 1: Tokkuri with fired label on a shochu bottle.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Label 2: Kai-un (To “open” good luck). *Taru* barrel. Doi brewery, near the ruins of Takatenjin Castle. Shizuoka ken, Japan.

Source: <http://www.esaké.com/Brewers/DoiB/doib.html>

Label 3: Gekkeikan. Early Meiji bottling.

Source: Gekkeikan’s saké Museum website.

Photograph 4: Tendo-shuzō, Aizu-wakamatsu-cho

Source: Patricia Yarrow, December 2003



Neil Smith says, “The production of scale is a central means by which capital is both contained and freed, provided with a territory and at the same time a global base.”^[1]

Three geographic scales position the relationship between the source of label production and the viewer:

(1) locally produced within Japan to be viewed by Japanese

[1] Neil Smith, “Geography, Difference and the Politics of Scale.” *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences*, ed. Joe Doherty .(NY: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 75.

Photograph 1: Taka-chi-yo (High-Thousand-Generations). An early childhood name perhaps for a young lord. Pine and ancient style fermentation pot in background.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Label 2: Kizakura shuzō, Fushimi, Japan. 吟醸 伏見 の竜馬. Dai Ginjō, Fushimi 伏見, a famous saké brewing district of Kyoto. (“Eyes Cast Down”) Sakamoto Ryūma “One of the leaders of Meiji Revolution. Born in 1835 in a samurai family of Tosa domain. He began to learn swordsmanship at Tokyo but quickly changed his preference to “navigation technique” thanks to an influence of a prowestern samurai, Katsu Kaishu. ...built modern merchant and military fleets ...unified prowestern movements... assassinated in 1867 at Kyoto.” http://www.docoja.com/cgi-bin/mainwordj?histg+Sakamoto_Ryoma+dico/hisgifg

幕末の史跡寺田屋に近いカッパントリーならではの坂本竜馬をラベルにした限定の吟醸酒。

Source: <http://www.kizakura.co.jp/htm/kappashop.htm>



(1) Local label. The saké available is the indigenous product. Every bottle label will proclaim exactly where it is from, and will often provide a story that inherently hails the glory of being, well, Japanese.

Photograph 1: Taka-matsu (Falcon Pine). Hunting bird of the nobility and long-enduring tree. The crossed falcon feathers is a family crest.

Source: 静岡県地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizaké Map. Personal collection.

Label 2: Back label is the official certificate that all ingredients used are organic. Tamanohikari's Junmai Dai-Ginjô "Bizen Omachi 100%."

Source: http://www.saké.com/merchandise.html#4_1



(2) Global label. Saké is produced within Japan and sold as an export from Japan. The viewer is *not* located within Japan. Most local Japanese saké *shuzô* (breweries) sell everything they make within Japan. The producer must decide how much English if any, to add to the label.

Here we see three display choices:

- English for label and “saké”,
- No added English, and
- Name, level (Jun Mai-Ginjô) giving the Japanese term in English letters, and the alcohol level and net contents, both of which are expressed in numbers and really do not need translation into English.

Photograph 1: Sushiran shuzô from Shizuoka. Oni-goroshi from Wakatake.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Amu restaurant, Boulder, CO. February 2005. Also:
<http://www.sushiran.com/menus/saké.html#Onikoroshi>

Label 2: Daimon family brewery (*aka* Sakahan) in Katano City, near Kyoto, Japan.

Source: <http://www.sakahan.com/Hanzaemon/hanzaemon.html#star>

Photograph 3: Hana no Mai saké. (“Dance of Flowers”), Jun-Mai-Ginjô (brewed with rice only). Shizuoka-ken.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Amu restaurant, Boulder, CO. February 2005.



Henri Lefebvre intones “place is not mere land area, it is a projection onto a (spatial) field of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice” ^[1]. Scales do not exist in nature, but are created by human agency, and therefore continue to respond to changes in those activities.

- Namahage is a traditional new year’s festival of Japan celebrating the return of the kami spirits from abroad (Sado Island?) coming to bring fortune and carry away bad fortune. This is a socially bonding festival.
- Sexual ambiguity fitting many stereotypes and a subject for future research.

Quote: ^[1] Henri Lefebvre, Donald Nicholson-Smith, tr., *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991) 8.

Photograph 1: Namahage. A festival in Akita.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Amu restaurant, Boulder, CO. February 2005.

Photograph 2: “Himegoto” a “secret love affair .”

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Label 3: Godo Shusei Co. ,LTD. AOMORI Prefecture, Japan

Source: <http://www.godo.jp/index.html>

LG
T

Scale: Transnational Label




1

2

11

(3) Transnational label. Produced outside of Japan to be viewed by non-Japanese.

The question is: How much of Japanese identity is needed to carry over to a viewer/buyer with an unknown, and perhaps entirely missing, sense of connection with Japan?

Label 1: Momokawa saké , from Saké One, Forest Grove, Oregon.

Source: <http://www.momokawa.com/>

Label 2: Hakusan in Napa Valley, California.

Source: <http://www.hakusan.com/hakusake.html#plum>



The source of the saké is produced outside of Japan. The viewer may be located in the same country of the source, or in another country, including Japan. This is a much smaller category than the local and global, but it is persistent.

There are seven breweries in the USA (one failed in Colorado), one in Penrith, Australia, and there once was a brewery in Hawaii.

Sun Masamune sake brewery is the first in Australia. Konishi shuzō of Itami purchased it in in 1997.

Label 1: American based saké brewers and logos.

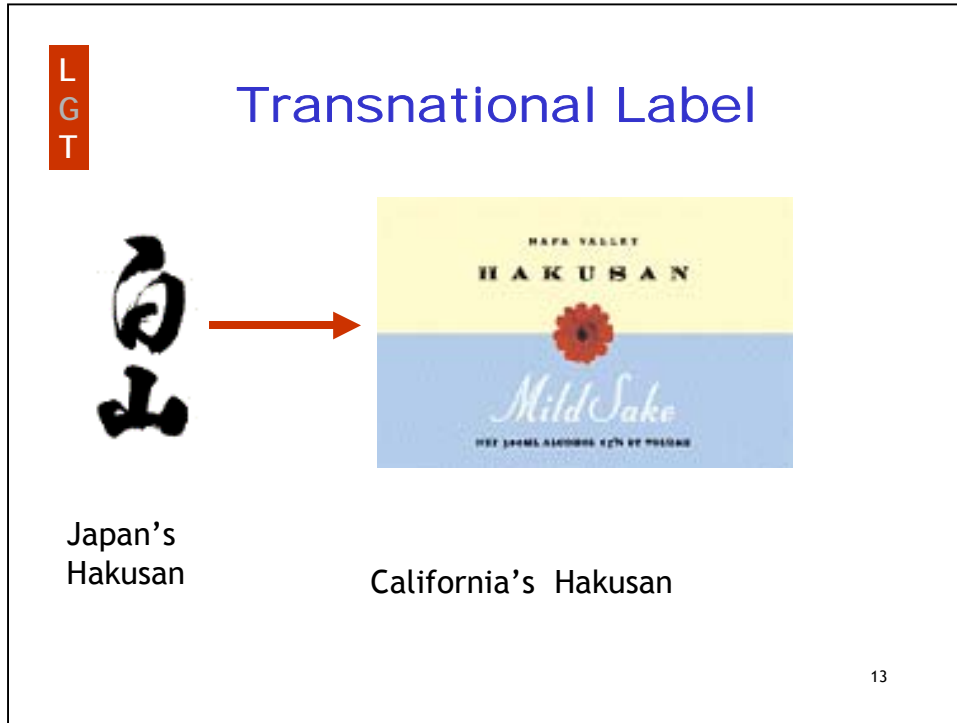
Source: Home pages of the breweries.

Label 2: Go-Shu from Sun-Masamune shuzō. Penrith, Australia. West inland of Sydney.

Source: <http://www.sun-masamune.com.au/nama.htm>

Label 3: Go-Shu from Sun-Masamune shuzō. Penrith, Australia. West inland of Sydney.

Source: <http://www.sun-masamune.com.au/nama.htm>



Signifiers of Japanese identity do not necessarily carry over to the transnational scale.

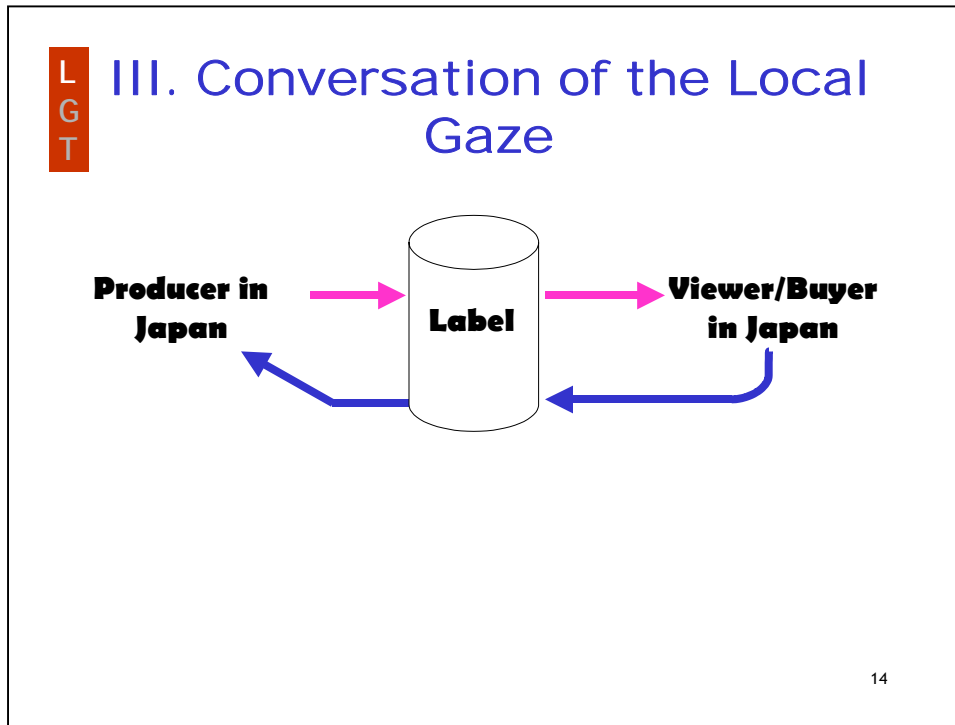
Label 1: "Hakusan", Napa Valley, California.

Source:

<http://wine.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.hakusan.com/>

Label 2: Hakusan in Napa Valley, California.

Source: <http://www.hakusan.com/hakusake.html#plum>



The term “gaze” is a film theory term.^[1] I use gaze to refer to both men and women in common as “spectators to give a sense of control.”^[2] The gaze is a look of desire, and as such has the power to produce change.

The relationship between the producer of the *saké* and the viewer/buyer of label is mediated by the gaze. The result is a symbolic landscape of allowable and hidden territories of Japanese identity.

The graphic: The gaze of the producer of the *saké* as incorporated onto the label attracts the favorable attention of the viewer/buyer, who is Japanese and securely within the home country. The label will appeal to certain emotions and associations are absorbed at a glance and match the internal dialogue in progress.

A feeling of connection with home, family, and country ensues as the viewer/buyer moves emotionally closer to the featured location producing the *saké*.

[1] Joseph Childers, ed., *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literatry and Cultural Criticism*. (New Work: Columbia UP 1995) 174.

[2] Childers 175.



Kizakura Shuzō, located in Fushimi, Kyoto, promotes their saké with the theme of the yellow cherry blossom (Kizakura 黄桜) and the Japanese mythical water sprite Kappa 河童 theme. The Kappa family are all excellent swimmers...and drinkers. The female Kappa depicted on this label is a lighthearted allusion to the Meiji era *ryōsai kenbo* 良妻賢母 “the good wife and wise mother” role.

This symbol is particular to Japan and not easily exportable outside of the context of Japan’s shared history and folklore. The main theme is life of the Kappa family leading an idealized family life, and always with saké.

The theme of family life as portrayed by Kappa Kizakura Country bears further investigation.

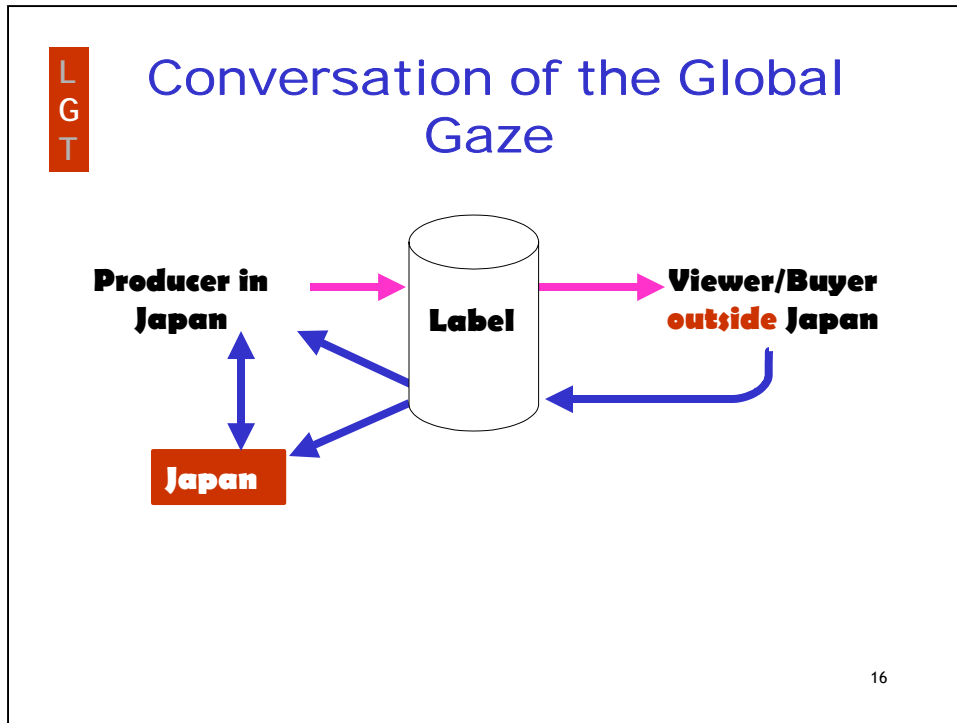
Label 1: Kizakura’s “Kizakura Kappa Country” campaign.
Source: <http://www.kizakura.co.jp/index.htm>

Photograph 2: Male kappa on saké cups, Kizakura Gift Shop. Kizakura, Fushimi, Japan.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, January 2004.

Photograph 3: Kizakura Gift Shop *noren* design. Kizakura, Fushimi, Japan.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, January 2004.



The global scale of saké is brewed within Japan and exported. Japan becomes a block of associations as a perceived nation state.

The viewer/buyer may be Japanese, or of Japanese ancestry, or someone who has visited or lived in Japan, and gazes upon the label to reconfirm a sense of identity with Japan.

The gaze of a person without direct experience may view Japan as a foreign and exotic "Other ."

The theme of the gaze, generation of desire, perception of need and commerce should be investigated further.



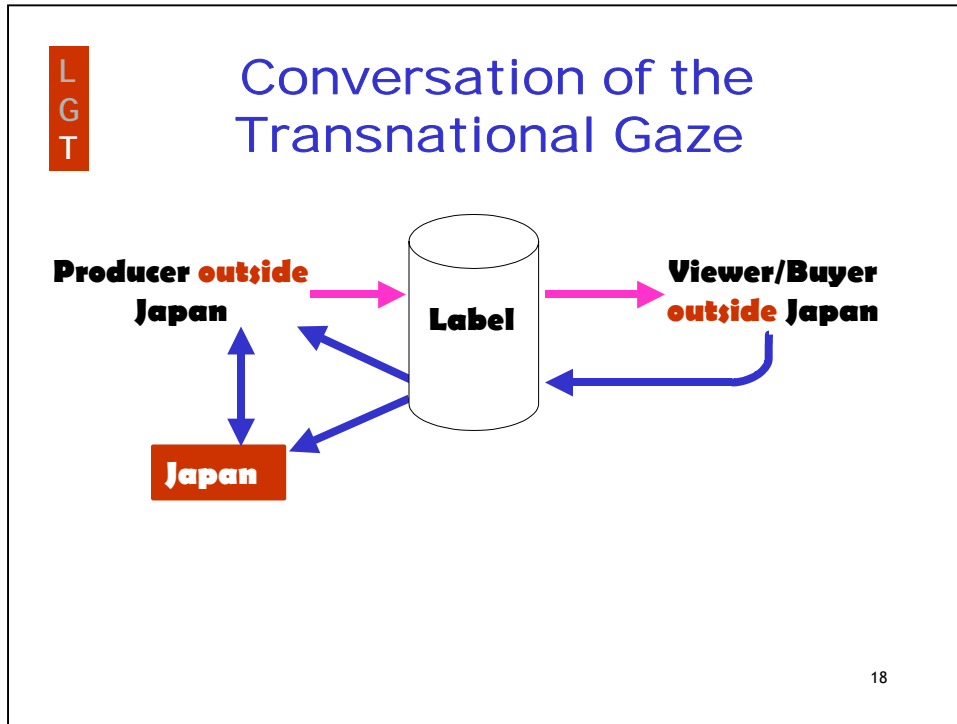
Yamanaka *shuzō* (est. 1805) produces the line of “Hitorimusume Sayaka” junmae ginjō.

Sayaka is a girl’s name in Japan. The label name means “The Only Daughter .” The image may be the same as a local and global label, but are the connotations the same?

Label 1: Yamanaka shuzō, Ibaraki ken, Japan.

Photograph : <http://www.hitorimusume.co.jp/>

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Amu restaurant, Boulder, CO. February 2005.



The transnational scale of saké is brewed and sold outside of Japan.

The gaze of the producer through the label reflects the voluntary degree of connection they wish to convey to the viewer/buyer, whose gaze may stop at the label entirely.

The viewer/buyer may have little or no identification with the producer or Japan as a nation-state. They may therefore not be aware of the distinct differences of place within Japan.



The original Hawaiian saké *shuzô* label. Aside from the bold red kanji and subtle *hanko*, overt Japanese elements are absent but the underlying structure of iconography remains.

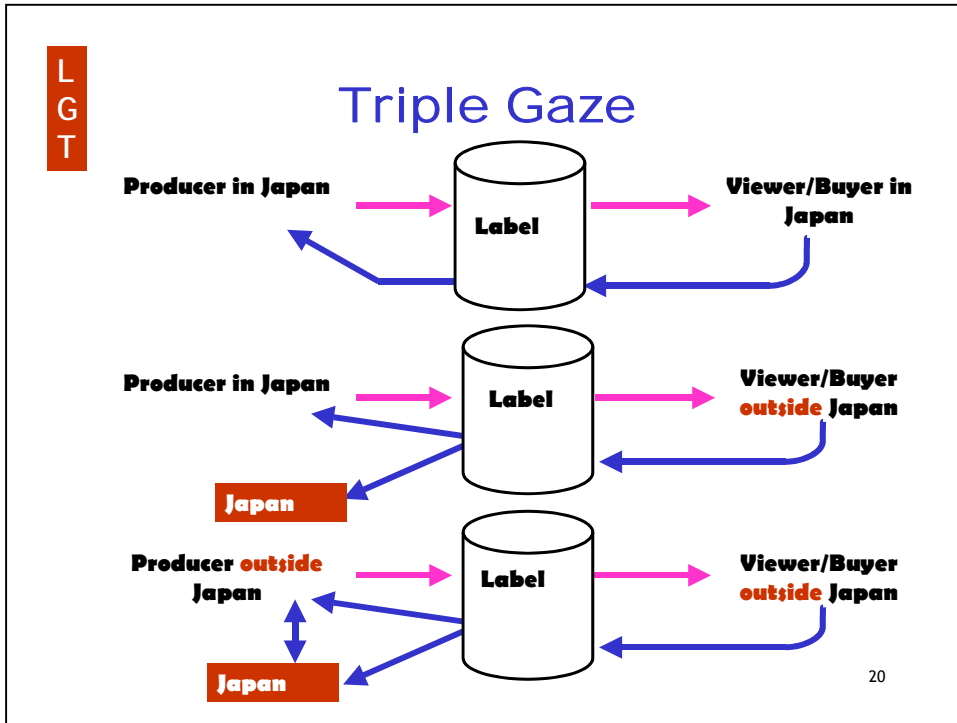
- Fuji-san has become Waikiki Diamond Head.
- The cherry blossom is replaced by the gardenia.
- The feminine dancer as geisha is now the hula dancer.
- Even the *hinomaru* sunburst is merely replaced by the bronzed slanting rays of the tropics.

(The kanji is “Takara Musume”, or “Treasured Daughters”)

A new future for saké may be developing both as an export and as a transnational product.

Photograph 1: Takara Musume bottle label.

Source: Patricia Yarrow. Personal collection. Purchased from Hawaiian collectors site <http://www.ukulele.com>



All three diagrams for comparison.

IV. Meaning and Metaphor



1 Keiro No Hi,
Respect for the
Aged Day



2 Onigoroshi "Demon Killer",
from Genbei San

21

An analysis of the content of saké labels brings out the wealth of meaning and metaphor of the iconography.

What is important about the specifics of the images portrayed on saké labels? Each image refers to some specific source, authority, or concept that is held dear by someone, and is presented to communicate those qualities to the viewer who may also hold those values, or find them awakened upon viewing. The following labels display a selection of representative images that demonstrate the imagery used to reinforce or reawaken elements of Japanese identity as perceived by a Japanese person in Japan, a Japanese person outside of Japan, and the rest of the non-Japanese world.

(1) September 15 is *Keiro No Hi* (Respect for the Aged Day) in Japan, and Otokoyama shuzō is ready with this special label and sake. As their website eloquently states:

The websites asks us to

“Please spend more and more energetic and healthy by drinking "the water for prolonging your life and long life. As this reason, We were ready for bottles pasted this label.” [sic]

(2) The Onigoroshi, or “Demon Killer” . Originally, the term referred to sake that was so bad it would slay a demon. With modern controls over sake making that a less frequent calamity, the term now denotes sake so *good* it would kill a demon...with happiness and joy.

Label 1: Sake for “Aged Day .”

Source:

http://otokoyama.hokkai.or.jp/english/otoko_b/otoko_b2/otoko_b21/main_b21.html

Label 2: Onigoroshi “Demon Killer”, from Genbei San. Made in Japan and exported.

Source: <http://www.sakeexpert.com/product/p09444.html>

Kanji

The Ten Most Popular Kanji

- 山 Yama
- 鶴 Tsuru
- 正宗 Masamune
- 菊 Kiku
- 大 O
- 金 Kin
- 泉 Izumi
- 白 Haku
- 花 Hana



22

Raymond Williams coined the concept *structure of feeling*...the sense of the quality of life felt at a particular place and time.”^[1]

Each label is its own epistemology, with its own message to convey.

The iconography analysis uncovers many places and times that a certain brushstroke, icon, or image conveys as a “quality of life felt”

Quote: [1] Raymond Williams, The Long Revolution. (NY: Columbia UP, 1961).

Photograph 1: Jizaké from Shizuoka. “Chyū masa”, or “loyal and correct .”
Possibly the name of a sword maker.

Source: 静岡県 地酒 マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizaké Map. Personal collection.

Kanji: Strong, Rough Style...



As a written system and as art, kanji conveys a “structure of feeling .”

Kanji is by far the largest general category, with styles ranging from the elegant “running grass”, to bold sumo-style.

- (1) Kara-kuchi Ikkon (Best present of dry saké for those above you)
- (2) Nanbu-Bi-Jin (Beautiful Person of Nanbu area)
- (3) Tama no Hikari (Bright/Precious Jewel), or a light that “emits” from a jewel.

Label 1: Kizakura’s saké in a box campaign. 600 ml. Karakuchi (dry sake, “Ikkon”, or “one offer” (especial to a superior). One cup serving.

Source: <http://www.kizakura.co.jp/htm/2004wn.htm>

Label 2: Iwate ken, Japan. 岩手県 二戸市福岡字上町 13

Source: <http://www.nanbubijin.co.jp/>

Label 3: Junmai Ginjō Tama no hikari “Tokusen“ paper. Kyoto, Japan. 300 ml. Ginjō is a process using highly milled rice and is quite labor intensive. Tokusen is a “special selection .”

Source: <http://www.saké.com/merchandise.html>

Kanji: ...Flowing and Interpretive Styles



The “structure of feeling” conveyed by:

- (1) Kaiunsaké, Onuki Daito, Ogasa Gun, Shizuoka
- (2) 黒帯悠々 Kuro-Obi Yuyu Easy-going "Black Belt"
- (3) 大信州酒 Eight Ocean Mountain label.

Label 1: <http://www.kaiunsake.com/products/products-a.html>

Source: <http://www.kaiunsake.com/>

Label 2: Kuro-Obi Yuyu (to) "Black Belt" + "Leisurely, easy going .” (Doi, Suwa)

Source: <http://www.3000.co.jp/>

Label 3: 大信州酒. “Eight Ocean Mountain”, or Hakkaizan, an area of Japan, perhaps mythical.

Source: <http://www.3000.co.jp/new/hakkaizangin.html>

Kanji: ...and Hiragana



25

Hiragana by itself, without accompanying kanji, is rarely used on labels. Here, though, it forms a step towards English, but with a Japanese twist. The word “purple” is not written in katakana, which we would expect. Is this a Japanese joke shared between friends? In other words, this is highly localized word play. And, yes, this is purple saké, probably from purple rice.

NOTES: A new purple-black colored grain rice cultivar "Hyokei Murasaki No.51" was bred by crossing "Purple-Black Rice" in Indonesia Bari with "Ishikari ." This cultivar is available materialfor sake coloration. The characteristics of this cultivar are as follows:

- (1)The date of maturity is medium.
- (2)The culm length is long and plant type is panicle-weight type.
- (3)The resistance to rice blast disease is medium and this cultivar is resistant to rice stripe virus disease.
- (4)This cultivar has purple pericarp and the grain color is purple-black. It is assumed that this pigment is anthocyanin.¹

Label 3: 千代の園酒造株式会社 〒861-0501 熊本県山鹿市大字山鹿 1782

Source: <http://www.chiyonosono.co.jp/>. Great website, regional tourism site, and yes, this is purple saké.

[1] <http://agri.pref.hyogo.jp/nsiweb/web2/nougi/kenpo/khn4502.htm>



English used in four ways.

- (1) As a graphic element, as is kanji. “Pure” has subtext of Shinto cleanliness. “A full, rich body with the natural flavour of rice.” has the British spelling of “flavor”, for a more gentele approach.
- (2) “Taru-Sake” should be “Taru-zake”, but might confuse non-Japanese.
- (3) Rihaku is for a special audience that would recognize the Chinese poet Li Po (701-762).
- (4) “Ozeki Sake DRY” is straightforward enough.
- (5) “Draft Sake” gets the point across.

Photograph 1: Kizakura (“Yellow Cherry Blossom”).

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Amu restaurant, Boulder, CO. February 2005.

Photograph 2: Kiku-Masa-Mune. Kiku “Chrysanthemum” + Masamune (a famous swordmaker).

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Amu restaurant, Boulder, CO. February 2005.

Label 3: Label for Rihaku in Fukuoka, Ninohe-shi, Iwate, Japan. Rihaku was “Li Po”, a famous Chinese poet.

Source: <http://www.rihaku.co.jp/>

Label 4: Ozeki’s saké DRY.

Source: <http://www.sakéexpert.com/product/p01837.html>

Label 5: New design label for draft saké.

Source: <http://www.hakutsuru-saké.com/content/01.html#c>



- The next largest general category concerns PLACES. In this case, Fuji-san is the most iconic of place-markers. These labels portray a deeply nostalgic, almost pre-War, Meiji simplicity of design.
- (1) Shima no ka. With *kiku*. The “fragrant island .”
 - (2) Chiyo-no-mine. “Thousand-Generation Summits” with a formal Chinese look.
 - (3) Kin-mei. “Golden Light”, or “Brightness .”
 - (4) Tago-no-Fuji. The epitome of the best view of Fuji, which is from Tago coast in Shizuoka.

Photograph 1: Shima no Ka. (“Fragrance Island”). The Japanese refined saké
Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Photograph 2: Chiyo no Mine. (“A Thousand Generations Summit”)
Source: 静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizake Map. Personal collection.

Photograph 3: Kin-Mei. (“Golden Light”)
Source: 静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizake Map. Personal collection.

Photograph 4: Tago-no-Fuji. (“View of Fuji from Tago”). The view of Fuji from the coast of Tago is considered to be the best (and perhaps most convenient) view of Fuji.
Source: 静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizake Map. Personal collection.



Animals often include the *tsuru*, or crane.

(1) Hakutsuru, the white crane

(2) Chiyo musume. (1)“A Girl of a Thousand Generations” and cranes.

Chiyo musume refers to a girl who is forever young and pretty; a virgin.

(3) Yamato-zuru. Yama (the original name for Japan, and the old name for Nara) and cranes.

Label 1: New design lable for draft at Hakutsuru.

Source: <http://www.hakutsuru-sake.com/content/01.html#c>

Photograph 2: Chiyo Musume. Longevity is referenced by the crane and “Chiyo musume”, or virginal girl whose beauty lasts a thousand generations.

Source:静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizake Map. Personal collection.

Photograph 3:

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.



(1) Taki-koi (waterfall & carp) kanji and image. The vigor of the carp is admired as they swim upstream, against all odds, to spawn. Similar metaphor to our “salmon jumping and swimming upstream” for virtues of endurance and focus.

大吟醸 Daiginjō (very best unadulterated saké).

(2) Napa Saki [sic]. Fish and saké, or Saké and sake. Visual puns and metaphors abound with this representation.

Label 1: Takikoi, Hyogo (Kobe), Japan. My personal favorite label.

Photograph : Patricia Yarrow, Takikoi shuzō, Hyogo, Japan. January 2004.

Label 2: Napa Saki dai-ginjo.

Source: I own this bottle. “Napa Saki” is a highly contested label and I cannot locate the saké producers. Still checking. The nature of the controversy seems to be that it may NOT be from the Napa Valley, California, but from China.

Nature: Fuku



The Deadly
Fuku-zaké

30

Highly localized, highly Japanese. As an export, the “fatal” reputation of *fuku*, or “blowfish”, would produce more hesitation than sales. “FUKU” is also a *fuku no hire-zaki*, or “Fuku-fin is in this saké .” A specifically Japanese idea of a good time additive.

Label 1: Fuku “or “fugu”, is added to this saké.

Photograph: <http://www.kizakura.co.jp/htm/2004wn.htm>

Nature: Rice



(1) Saké is made from rice, and the manifold connections of rice to Japan and identity as a Japanese person.

(2) Fu-ku-chou (“Rich-Longevity-Long), the Long. Fuki-na (“wealthy and noble”); Kyuu, Ku, hisashii (“of long duration”); Chou, nagai (“long, chief”).

Photograph 1: Rice motif and heavily textured washi paper label.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Ozushi, Japan. January 10, 2004.

Label 2: Imada shuzô, saké is labeled as “Fukucho”, in Hiroshima ken, Japan. Imada shuzô is famous not only for its saké, but because President Imada’s daughter Miho is “helping” him as the toji’s assistant.

Source: <http://www.esake.com/Brewers/ImadaB/imadab.html>

Traditional Arts: Shodo, Washi



1



2

32

The traditional arts depicted include the shodō of kanji characters, and washi paper. Imaginative scenic backgrounds.

(1) Shira-ito no Gen-Shū (“White Thread Original Saké”). “White thread” is also a type of water fowl.

(2) Kaden (“Handing Down the Flower”), from Saga-ken. Kaden is a famous book on Noh, based on Zeami’s theories.

Photograph 1: GEN, hara (“plain, field, plateau; original”) + Saké.

Source: 静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizaké Map. Personal collection.

Label 2: Kaden saké from Saga Prefecture

Source: <http://www.japan-zone.com/culture/alcohol.shtml>

Rath, Eric. “Legends, Secrets, and Authority: Hachijo Kadensho and Early Modern Noh.” *Monumenta Nipponica* Vol. 54, No. 2 (Summer, 1999), pp. 169-194.

Traditional Arts: Ukiyo-e, The Courtly Past...



1 Sen-ju; Shirabyō shi



2 Kiku no Jyō 33

References to the traditional fan and courtly characters. The other evokes Genji and ukiyo-e prints.

(1) Sen-ju. (“Long natural life”) AND 白拍子 Shirabyooshi “A medieval female dancer in a white robe wearing a sword and a man’s headgear.”

(2) Kiku no Jyō (“Chrysanthemum Castle”).

Photograph 1:

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Definition: Katsumata Senkichiro, Ed. Kenkyusha’s New Japanese-English Dictionary. Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1954.

Photograph 2: Kiku-Jyou (“Chrysanthemum Castle”)

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.



Women are shown in range of feminine or masculine roles that strike different notes of androgyny. Women are not only portrayed as the ubiquitous geisha. The role of women within the shuzō, as producers and buyers and as depicted is very well worth future investigation.

Label 1: Bijin “Beautiful Woman” label, from Nanbu Bijin Shuzō in Ninohe-machi, Iwate-ken. Tentaka brewery is nestled in the east end of Nasu Nogahara.

Source: <http://www.tentaka.co.jp/>

Photograph 2: Suisai “intoxication star” “Drunken planet .” OR (suisai-mushi: “living like a drunkard and dying like a dream.” “Dream one’s life away.” May be a word play with yoppari (drunkenness).

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Label 3: Tamanohikari shuzō also distills shōchū.

Source: <http://www.tamanohikari.co.jp/>

Label 4: Window’s Mugi-ichi Shucho. Produced by Komasa

鹿児島県日置郡日吉町 Made from barley. The bottle has “a beautiful illustration of Ichiro Tsuta that you can see by looking at the bottle, it magnifies itself, very stunning. (hence called “window’s”).”

Source: http://www.mountfuji.co.uk/acatalog/Japanese_saké.html

Gender: ...Men

1 Fuji Nishiki

2 Ichi no Tani

3 Nihon Tō

4 Ichi no Tani

35

Men also have a range of portraiture: from archers and hunters of deer and enemies to Mr. Nice Tokyo Guy. Kanji reflects this with bold, heavy brush strokes. A new version of the cheerful Tokyo guy—in Tokugawa hairstyle. The perfect melding of west and east.

(1) Fuji Nishiki (“Brocade of Fuji”). The word “nishiki” is used in classical poetry such as *waka* and *renga* to refer to a pattern in nature of rich colors and detail. The autumn leaves are often “nishiki.” A traditional area of northwestern Kyoto is the center of the traditional craft of weaving the “nishiki” obi.

(2) Ichi no Tani (“First Valley”) is the subject of ukiyo-e prints by Utagawa Kunisada (Toyokuni III). His full name is Ichi no Tani Futabagunki. Ukiyo-e include one from a *kabuki* play of 1852. His story is found in the *jidaimono* of the Heikie-Genji cycle. The play is in translation by Aubrey Halford, “The Kabuki Handbook”, Tuttle, 1956, among others.

(3) Nihon Tō (“Japan Sword”).

(4) From Nihonsakari’s ad campaign.

While Japan is “a man’s world” in many ways, saké gives the masculine role a softer, more gentle and sensitive side.

Photograph 1:

Source: 静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizaké Map. Personal collection.

Photograph 2:

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Photograph 3: Nihon Tō brand.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Label 4: Nihonsakari, Kobe, Japan. From the “グリーンパック” Green Pack campaign.

Source: <http://www.nihonsakari.co.jp/kenjo/index.html>

Children & Family



1 Yancha Saké



2



3

36

Mischievous children and old style haircuts on children.

(1) Yancha Saké “mischievous .”

(2) Rihaku kuramoto, Iwate. Taisho 7 (1918). Two generations.

(3) Ten-taka (“Hawk in Heaven”).

Photograph 1:

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Label 2: Family of Rihaku kuramoto in Fukuoka, Ninohe-shi, Iwate, Japan. . 大正 7 年撮影。2 代目田中竹次郎の頃寒中の仕込を終え仕込みの規模拡大を祝って杜氏蔵人が集まり記念として撮影したものです。

Source: <http://www.rihaku.co.jp/kuramoto.html>

Label 3: Tentaka brewery is nestled in the east end of Nasu Nogahara.

Source: <http://www.tentaka.co.jp/>

Emotions: Heart & Feeling.



37

Saké remains a matter of the heart. The emotional portrayal tends to be of an uncomplicated happiness accessible to the broad middle class. Mr “GreenPack” represents the Every Man of Japan—a large, jolly, sumo-appearing modern Japanese man. Green is also environmentally friendly.

Label 1: Tentaka shuzô. “Hawk in Heaven .” Nasu Nogahara, Yuzakami, near Kyoto (according to their website).

Source: <http://www.saké-db.com/image/tentaka-kokoro.jpg>

Label 2: Nihonsakari in Kobe, Japan. Nihonsakari, Kobe, Japan. From the “グリーンパック” Green Pack campaign.

Source: <http://www.nihonsakari.co.jp/kenjo/index.html>



(1, 2) Saké was often made by the local Shintō shrine or Buddhist temple, and religious iconography abounds. Here we have the China-derived “lion”, or *shishi* 獅子, guarding the Shinto taru casks of saké.

(3) *Shimenawa* 注連縄, or, twisted rope of rice straw and the top slip of *shide* paper symbolizing lightening, thunder, and the eternal connection of Japanese with the *kamisama* through rice farming. The rice is made into saké, and eventually poured back into the rice fields in placation ceremonies by Shintō priests. This is the foundational circuit of Japanese identity.

Photography 1: Shishi protecting the jinja saké

Source: Photographed Patricia Yarrow, Amu restaurant, Boulder, CO. February 2005.

Photograph 2: Shishi protecting the jinja saké. Kyoto jinja.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Kyoto, Japan. January 2004.

Label 3: Shimenawa and saké. Asahikawa, Hokkaido. Otoko yama shuzō.

Source: <http://www.otokoyama.com/english/>

Religion: ...Buddhism



Hyakuin Masamune

39

Buddhist iconography ranges from calligraphed daruma to “holy” representations of deities from India or China.

- (1) Hyakuin Masamune. A famous zen priest and source of the iconic Daruma bodhisattva.
- (2) Kyū-sen (“Shintō Springwater”).
- (3) Another bodhisattva Onigoroshi from Aizu-wakamatsu-cho.

Photograph 1: Daruma face on Haku-in Masamune label.

Source: 静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizaké Map. Personal collection.

Label 2: KYUU (Shinto shrine/Royal Palace) + SEN (izumi) (“spring”).

Source: http://www.city.aizuwakamatsu.fukushima.jp/j/kanko/city/saké/miyaizumi_s.html

Photograph 3: Onigoroshi as ancient Buddhist lesser warrior deity.

Source: Patricia Yarrow. Aizu-wakamatsu-cho, Yamagata ken, Japan. January 2004.

Religion: A Dash of Daoism...



40

天之戸稲 Ama no to Mitō (“Heavenly Door, Beautiful Rice Plant”). this label features the “*magatama*”, a “sacred jewel” of the Three Sacred Objects, the mirror, sword and jewel, the Emperor in his role as top Shinto priest. To our modern eyes, it suggests the yin-yang symbol.

Label 1: Asamai shuzō in Asamai Hiragacho, Akita ken, Japan.

Source: <http://www.esake.com/Brewers/AsamaiB/asamaib.html>



The Thunder god Onigoroshi is rampant in saké label iconography
 (1) The syncretic *kappa*, the water-sprite & river *kami* mentioned earlier often carries a tokkuri of saké along.
 (2) Genbei san no Onikoroshi. Another oni face.

Photograph 2: Oni-goroshi. Devil's own label.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

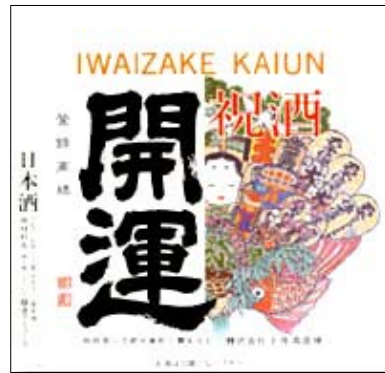
Photograph 2: Kappa on saké tokkuri. Back side has hiragana かつぱ天 “Kappa Paradise.”

Source: Photographed Patricia Yarrow, Private collection, Reno, Nevada. October 2004.

Label 3: Genbei san no Onikoroshi brand. Yamamoto Honke, Kinki region, Fushimi area "new type of light and dry saké popular among the young crowd."

Source: <http://www.sakeexpert.com/brand/brand.html#>

els of Nostalgia: and Longing



1

2

42

Is it true that Western (and perhaps Asian) consumers seek a “race-less and culture-less, virtual version of “Japan”, as Iwabuchi puts forth?^[1] The promotion of self-image in the saké promotional world is kept on the positive side. One finds festivals and folklore celebrated, and dedications to heroes and historical figures--not memorials to somber events. Spectacular calligraphy does not pound a military march as it has in the past. Instead, the brush conveys the loveliness of the season, flowers with sweet nostalgic emotional resonance.

(1) Ei-kun. Mr. Ei’s saké. Mr. Ei gazes over a field of *kiku* chrysanthemums towards a Fuji-san, which is rendered as being pulled upwards towards heaven.

(2) Iwaizake Kaiun. Kai-un (“Vehicle of Fortune”).

[1] Iwabuchi 33.

Photograph 1: 英君. Ei-kun (“wise and brilliant-lord/king”).

Source: 静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizaké Map. Personal collection.

Label 2: Doi Suwa shuzô label.

Source: <http://www.kaiunsake.com/>

Sweet Labels of Nostalgia: Sakura, Ume & Kokoro



The inevitable *sakura* blossom is not associated with the fallen war dead, but alludes to the sanctified models of samurai and geisha for a romanticized yet still relevant modality.

- (1) Benten (Goddess of Music; a beautiful woman, a beauty).
- (2) Kizakura “Yellow mums .”
- (3) Shizu-gokoro “Quiet spirit of the river and red plum blossoms .”

Photograph 1: Benten (Goddess of Music; a beautiful woman, a beauty).

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Saké Center, Tokyo. January 2004.

Photograph 2: Kizakura’s Dai-ginjō tokkuri ikkon. (One-drink bottle)

Source: Photographed Patricia Yarrow, Private collection, Boulder, CO. February 2005.

Photograph 3: 静ごころ Shizu-gokoro. Quiet spirit.

Source: Photographed Patricia Yarrow, Private collection, Boulder, CO. February 2005.



The *hinomaru* 日の丸 (the rising-sun motif of the nationalist flag of Japan used during colonial endeavors) is only found safely removed and placed on Asahi beer labels, not in the territory of saké labels. However, it may be found rather discretely as either a yellow or red sun, or a red “*hanko* .” The contemporary “red dot” of the current Japanese flag does not convey the colonial overtones.

With such a rich source of ink, images and icons to draw upon for national identification, perhaps refraining from overt promotion of the nation-state has been deemed wisest. In this way, the “cultural odor” of saké avoids a potential stench among former enemies and unforgetful colonies of the past. The exuberant portrayal moves Japan, as Iwabuchi says into the more fragrant side of “cultural odor”, which is a...way of life ...associated *positively* with a particular product in the consumption process.^[1]

- (1) 下型 西讓和 Shimo-kata Wa-jō. Shizuoka.
- (2) 蒼空“SOUKUU” (“Blue Skies”). Fujioka shuzō, Fushimi, Japan.
- (3) 初亀 Hatsu-kame. (“First Turtle”), symbol of longevity. The first of the year’s auspicious saké, to be drunk to celebrate the New Year.
- (4) 日本国 Nihonkoku from Sanpuki.
- (5) ヤエガキ Yaegaki, Typical hanko traditional signature stamp. “The “Shrine of the Eight-fold Fence” from the Kojiki.
- (6) Sun-masamune, Australia.

[1] Iwabuchi 27.

Label 1: Tentaka, Yuzukamimura, Nasu Gun, Tochigi

Source: <http://www.tentaka.co.jp/>

Photograph 2: Hatsu-kame. (“First Turtle”).

Source: 静岡県 地酒マップ 2004. Shizuoka Ken Jizaké Map. Personal collection.

Label: Nihonkoku from Sanppuki.

Source:

<http://www.missionliquor.com/Store/Qstore/Qstore.cgi?CMD=011&PROD=1049840233>

Photograph 4: Fujioka shuzō’s “SŌKŪ” (“Blue Skies”) label.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Private collection, Boulder, CO. From Fujioka shuzō, Fushimi, Japan (January 2004). February 2005.

Label 5: ヤエガキ Yaegaki, Typical hanko traditional signature stamp. “The “Shrine of the Eight-fold Fence” is dedicated to the Gods of Marriage. Specifically commemorating the union of the Princess Inata and Lord Susano after he courageously subdued the threatening eight-headed serpent, Yamatano Orochi, as related in the Kojiki.”

Source: <http://www.yaegaki.co.jp/sake/index.html>

Quote: <http://www.city.matsue.shimane.jp/kankou/jp/e/yaegaki.htm>

Label 6: Sun-masamune’s *taru* barrel with Sydney’s Opera House. Penrith, Australia. West inland of Sydney

Source: <http://www.sun-masamune.com.au/nama.htm>

“...a house without saké”

梅見てり酒なき家をなき世也

ume miteri saké naki ie wa naki yo nari

looking at plum blossoms--
a house without saké
can't be found.

(Issa)



45

In other words, the label iconography has kept the gaze of both producer and viewer in safe territory of happy nostalgia in a form of “internal monologue...as Yano says, “We long for our past Japanese selves,” or as the haiku poet and great drinker of saké Issa wrote:

“Looking at plum blossoms—a house without saké can’t be found.”

(1) Hakusan’s Plum Saké.

(2) Shizu-gokoro. Quiet spirit of the river and red plum blossoms.

[1] Christine R. Yano, *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song*. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2002) 178.

Poetry: Issa. Date of composition is unknown.

Source: http://cat.xula.edu/issa/searchissa.php?s_string=saké&sorter=date

Label 1: Hakusan, Napa Valley, California.

Source:

<http://wine.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.hakusan.com/>

Photograph 2: 静ごころ Shizu-gokoro. Quiet spirit.

Source: Photographed Patricia Yarrow, Private collection, Boulder, CO. February 2005.



Kizakura's *noren*, depicting a lovely drinking scene. I will save the deconstruction for another presentation.

Photograph 1: Kizakura *noren*.

Source: Patricia Yarrow, Kizakura shuzô, Fushimi, Japan. January 2004.



This presentation was originally a Power Point document. I have converted it into a MSWord document. The slides were converted into images in PaintShopPro 6.0. The assembled MSWord document was then converted to a PDF file. This affects the formatting somewhat adversely. The PDF file is located on my website at:

<http://www.well.com/~pyarrow/tokyo/sake.htm>

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