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## 懺悔 / *Zange*: Buddhism, Gender and Meiji Literary Confession

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The use of *zange* in Meiji “confessional” literature shows that a native Buddhist term came to be used to describe secular narratives of the self, even texts, both original and translated, written from a Christian perspective. The range of writers who engaged the concept of *zange* in expressing an individual secular life is so wide that *zange* appears to have been significant in the development of the modern confessional novel. My look at *zange* will illustrate that the use of the term had expanded significantly beyond Buddhist practice and conversion to become an essential frame for speaking of the self in the early 1900s among female writers and male literati and that these *zange* show that the writing of the self differed along gender lines.

### ***Sange* in Early Japanese Buddhism**

The Chinese term that would later be rendered “keka” in its Japanese reading, meaning “repentance for trespassings,” was used in translations of Buddhist sutras from Sanskrit from the years 148-170 CE, but from around 300 CE, the term “sange” was introduced in sutras to denote repentance. In using the term “sange,” the Buddhist sutras and stories emphasized not just the *disclosure* of evil deeds (“hotsuro”) but also the *correction* of them by seeking forgiveness and cleansing the self. For example, in the Ceremony of Repentance as described in the *Kan Fugengyō* (trans. 424-441 CE), *sange* was an

opportunity to purify the “six organs of sensation.”<sup>1</sup> In his book *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, Marinus Willem de Visser cites numerous sutras translated from Sanskrit as early as 384 CE that describe the act of repentance (*sange*).<sup>2</sup> He states that the first character of “sange” (“san”) in this Buddhist context is an abbreviation of the Sanskrit word *ksamayati* meaning “to ask for forgiveness” and the second character “ke” or “ge” refers to the utterance of repentance (to be accompanied by a sense of shame). By repenting and feeling shame, the penitent can become pure and stainless. In considering both Indian and Chinese Buddhist texts, however, de Visser is concerned to note that Indian and Chinese Buddhism placed different emphases on the goal of repentance: “Evidently the Indian Buddhists laid stress upon the value of confession and asking forgiveness, whereas in China repentance, as the cause of confession, was deemed the main point.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, in the Chinese case, it is the *desire to repent* that leads to the confession whereas in the Indian case, it is the *confessional aspect* and asking of forgiveness from the listener that is the goal.

These translations of Sanskrit religious texts led to an increase in native *sange* practices and texts. In Japan by 838 a repentance festival, the Butsumyō Sange, had been instituted in which rites for asking forgiveness were performed. Numerous sutras emphasize the confession as a “rite” that must be performed multiple times per day. Alternately, the living being may repent upon hearing a *sange* sutra. Different sects required different types of *sange* rites. For example, the Tendai sect differentiated five kinds of repentance to be performed six times in the space of 24 hours. The rites also could be accompanied by a *sangemon* or text of repentance. One such *sangemon* read:

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<sup>1</sup> Marinus Willem de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1935, 251.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter 8, 249-310, of de Visser for a highly detailed and informative discussion of *sange*.

“All my evil deeds of the past / Were based upon beginningless greed, anger and stupidity. / The evil, born of my body, speech and thought, / I now repentantly confess it all.”<sup>4</sup> These limited examples of early Buddhist *sange* are given here to show that in ancient Buddhism, where the term *sange* was introduced initially through translation into Japanese, *sange* was both confession and repentance and was performed in a ritual context. Repentance provided rebirth, enlightenment, and escape from the prison of the world in a strictly Buddhist context. Practitioners of Buddhism performed these rites in order to reject this world, live virtuously, and eventually reach an enlightened state.

### ***Zange* in Medieval Japan**

Stories of those who performed *sange* appeared in ancient Buddhist sutras and texts. In her study of *zange* narratives from Japan’s medieval period, Margaret Helen Childs has looked at longer repentance narratives called *zangemono*. Childs translates *zangemono* as “revelatory tales” rather than “confession” or “repentance” tale. This choice highlights the idea of resolution in storytelling and listening. The process of reflection in this kind of confession ideally leads to the rejection of illusions of permanence that obstruct enlightenment. In this way, *zange* were stories that, not unlike earlier *sange* rites, “illustrate the Buddhist concept of transience, the belief that nothing is permanent, including human relations and the self. Sorrow persuades the protagonists of the truth of this fundamental concept, and this leads them to abandon the secular world and pursue enlightenment.”<sup>5</sup> *Zange* narratives, at this time, took the form of religious conversion

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 255.

<sup>4</sup> De Visser, 276 as taken from the *Avatamsaka sutra*, Nanjō No. 89, Ch. XL, 164b.

<sup>5</sup> Janet Goodwin, Review of *Rethinking Sorrow: Revelatory Tales of Late Medieval Japan*, *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 46 no. 4.

texts, but as Childs' study of *zangemono* shows, *zange* stories promoted the notion of storytelling as a group activity.

While stories of religious awakenings are recounted in the voice of an omniscient third person and focus on one main character, revelatory tales consist of first-hand accounts offered by a group of several monks or nuns who tell their tales in turn. The public sharing of these stories of private realizations is, in fact, a religious ritual by which means the storytellers hope to confirm their beliefs and strengthen their religious resolve.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of a shared narrative, which is built around multiple stories of regret, suggests a personal style of storytelling that is nevertheless quite public. Listeners are posited within the text so that the voyeurism of hearing or listening to a story is made explicit. A further voyeuristic element often contained in the narrative is the romantic exploits of its protagonist. Nevertheless, these tales of *zangemono* emphasized the act of giving up the world through their didactic tales of renunciation: “The basic tenet of revelatory tales is that the human condition is suffering and that our sorrows are caused by our ignorant refusal to accept the inevitability of change.”<sup>7</sup> In this case, the Buddhist context of *zange* is clear.

This notion of accepting the inevitably of change is not absent in one of the most well-remembered invocations of *zange* in modern times: when Prime Minister Higashikuni Naruhiko suggested in 1945 that Japanese people perform a “collective repentance” (*ichioku sō-zange*), claiming that a “nationwide, collective repentance is ...

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret Helen Childs, *Rethinking Sorrow: Revelatory Tales of Late Medieval Japan*, Ann Arbor: Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies, 1996, 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

the first step on our road to reconstruction, and the first step toward national unity.”<sup>8</sup>

Higashikuni invoked *zange* as a way to move expediently beyond the past, though his secular use of the term *zange* has rightly been widely critiqued for the way it invited the erasure of individual and national culpability for Japanese wartime aggression.

This use of the term *zange* is only one of many secular uses of the term in the last century. In the mid-Meiji era religious practitioners and especially non-religious authors invoked *zange* as a narrative frame. The literary performance of *zange* provided a convenient vehicle for a wide range of writers to express “interior” feelings of “pain” and “anguish” at the remembrance of the past. The ensuing sections discuss the shift that dissociated *zange* from Buddhism and marked the emergence of a secular confession in literary narrative.

### **The Secularization of *Zange* Narrative**

At the turn of the twentieth-century, the term *zange* appears in a diverse array of texts by political novelists, literati, critics, and even convicted women who wrote their life stories as “*zange*.” Early in the 1900s, there seems to have been considerable ambiguity with regard to what *zange* implied. Itō Ujitaka’s discussion of the celebrated confessional novel (*kokuhaku shōsetsu*) *Broken Commandment* (Hakai, 1906) argues for the significance of a “*zange*” text to this story of a man who makes a confession against his father’s wishes. In this novel, the protagonist Ushimatsu eventually reveals his pariah status (the fact that he was born a “*burakumin*”) and Itō argues that this decision is foreshadowed and shown to be inextricably linked within the novel to the publication by

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<sup>8</sup> “Nihon saiken no shishin – Higashikuni shusho kasha kaiken,” as quoted in Andrew E. Barshay, “Post-war Social and Political Thought, 1945-90,” in *Modern Japanese Thought*, ed. Bob Wakabayashi,

Ushimatsu's teacher Rentarō of his own confession in a thick, expensive tome called *Zangeroku*. Rentarō's *Zangeroku* tells not of embarrassment or remorse but of a strong will to articulate the self as a member of the untouchable class. Ushimatsu is deeply moved by his teacher: "Who nowadays, when autobiography means self-advertisement, the stringing together of whatever plausible tidbits a man can get together to flatter his own image, would write a *Confessions* like his, so stark and true they make you shiver? ... Yet it's for this same society's sake that he makes such passionate speeches and writes such moving books, the fire burning him up till his pen breaks in his hand and his voice is worn to a whisper—where else can you find such a crazy, deluded fool?"<sup>9</sup>

Reading his teacher's *Zangeroku*, Ushimatsu struggles over whether to hide or reveal his own torment (*hanmon*) after being forbidden by his father to reveal his roots. The centrality of *Zangeroku* to *Broken Commandment* and the centrality of *Broken Commandment* in the history of the Japanese confessional novel suggest that *zange* was a highly significant term of the time in writing the self. It also illustrates that *zange* was no longer strictly associated with Buddhism. In order to understand more fully how interiority developed in modern representation, one must therefore consider narratives of *zange* by an array of Meiji writers.

Years prior to *Broken Commandment* a number of female ex-convicts had framed their confessional memoirs as *zange*. The earliest of these was by an ex-con turned Buddhist nun, Shimazu Omasa. Shimazu ascended the stage in the 1890s to tell her story of repentance for past crimes. This performance was transcribed from the spoken to the

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Cambridge University Press, 1998, 274.

<sup>9</sup> Shimazaki Toson, *Broken Commandment*, trans. Kenneth Strong, University of Tokyo Press, 1974, 199.

written word in 1891.<sup>10</sup> The narrative shows some similarities with the medieval *zangeroku* because it offers a tale of a criminal who has realized the error of her ways through religious practice, in this case Shingaku Buddhism. The performer Shimazu looks back on her bitter experiences and confesses her sins of thievery and lust in order to inspire piety in others and to “clear away the clouds of delusion.” This work to a degree echoes a much earlier confession, Ihara Saikaku’s parody of *zange* in *Life of an Amorous Woman*, since most of the story is dedicated to the crimes and adventures of the storyteller.

Shimazu’s *zange*, while appropriating a Buddhist pose, differs from a traditional *zange* in its attention to a better life in *this* world. According to Childs, medieval *zange* are stories of individuals revealing to each other their sins and regrets. These tales reject the mundane world for a spiritual state. In contrast, Shimazu is concerned with reforming this world through the reformation of the self and social activism. The handbills (*banzuke*) advertising Shimazu’s public appearances, for example, provide short biographies portraying Shimazu not only as reformed, but as a reformer *par excellence*. She was advertised as being involved in the promotion of education for children. The caption under a portrait of Shimazu featured on the handbill describes her as “a supporting member of the foundation for educational schools for children.”<sup>11</sup>

Another *zange* by a female criminal, which also preceded *Broken Commandment*, is *Hanai Oume’s Story of Repentance* (Hanai Oume *zange monogatari*, 1903), which details the protagonist’s murder of her assistant Minekichi in 1887. It is a racy autobiography that narrates private pain and a public melodrama and explicitly calls itself

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<sup>10</sup> While the text uses the term “*zange*,” the title of the recorded version of her performed repentance uses the term “*kaishinroku*” (*A Record of Miss Shimazu Masa’s Repentance* / Shimazu Masa *kaishinroku*, 1891).



a *zangemono(-gatari)* despite the fact that it is devoid of religious content. This text uses the *zange* frame to write of psychological pain and anger toward a patriarchal system that left Oume the financial pawn of a delinquent father. The confession discusses how her father, who had turned her over to an adoptive family when she was eight, returns to sponge off Oume's lucrative success as a geisha and restaurant proprietor. In this confession, the memory of the struggle of a single woman against a dominating father emerges. The speaker's resentment toward her father accompanies her inscription of the self as a productive citizen and filial daughter.<sup>12</sup> This confession of anger toward the father is culturally tolerable only if the female subject is repentant and rehabilitated, which she demonstrates by invoking the notion of *zange*. There is consequently a split in the discursive positioning of the speaker: the performer and the subject of the narrative are linked but not one and the same. There is a conscious splitting of the emotional, speaking "I" who seeks reintegration into the social order and an angry self of the past.

In this context, *zange* is used to discuss unconventional behavior by a woman. This strategy appears too in the memoir of political prisoner and women's rights activist Fukuda Hideko, who also used *zange* rhetoric in framing her memoir *Half of My Life* (*Warawa no hanshōgai*, 1904). Fukuda discusses her attempted terrorism in the incident called in criminal histories the "Osaka Incident," her masculine behavior in youth and her homosexual love, all with no recourse to Buddhist thought. It begins:

If you asked who it is that is deeply sinful in this world, I would truly be the most [deserving of that title]. If you are seeking a fool in this world, there would be no one as foolish as I. Having lived over half of my life, alas, in reflection I find that nothing I accomplished was not a crime,

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<sup>11</sup> *Shibai banzuke mokuroku*, Yokohama: Yokohama kaikō shiryōkan, 1991, 165.

<sup>12</sup> James Fujii identifies as a central theme in highbrow literature of the same period. James Fujii, *Complicit Fictions: The Subject in Modern Japanese Prose Narrative*, University of California Press, 1993.

nothing I planned turned out right. Repentance of evil (*shūo-zange*) followed by pain and anguish, only these flood my mind.

The only path to curing the pains of confession (*zange*) is to *reform* oneself. But how is one to reform this self. . . . To write this book is not to forget this pain. No, taking up this brush is also itself a seed of anguish. Character by character, line by line, the more I write the more the pain intensifies.<sup>13</sup>

In this opening passage, Fukuda prepares the reader for her story of imprisonment after being convicted for her involvement in the Osaka incident by presenting a self-portrait of humility and deference. In the creative process of articulating a self, the speaker resorts to self-abjection. This anguish, which is described as emotionally and even physically painful, ultimately gives her validity and authority as a writer.<sup>14</sup> Fukuda as an ex-con is not claiming artistic license as later male writers of secular *zange* would, but the boldness and intimacy of her innovative memoir should be considered an important and influential precursor to confessional literature.

Tayama Katai's claims for his novel *The Quilt* (Futon, 1907) is very similar to Fukuda's introduction: "I too wished to follow a painful path. While struggling against society I wanted to struggle against myself. I wanted to open myself up and reveal all that was hidden and suppressed, to confess even in those cases where I feared my spirit might break in the process."<sup>15</sup> The tone of Tayama's confessional novel *The Quilt*, in sharp

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<sup>13</sup> Fukuda Hideko, *Warawa no hanseigai*, Iwanami Shoten, 1976, 15-16.

<sup>14</sup> The interesting point that Judith Butler has made regarding this process of the inhabiting power of disciplinary regimes via Foucault's argument that a prisoner is inhabited and brought into existence by the regulatory principles of disciplinary regimes (of inspection, confession, and so on), is that this process of subjection is simultaneously restrictive and creative process. In it "subjection is neither simply the domination of a subject nor its production, but designates a certain kind of restriction in production, a restriction without which the production of the subject cannot take place, a restriction through which that production takes place." Judith Butler clarifies this point in her "Subjection, Resistance, Resignification: Between Freud and Foucault" in *The Identity in Question*, ed. by John Rajchman, New York and London: Routledge, 1995, 230.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Karatani Kojin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary Durham: Duke University, 1993.

contrast to Fukuda's tone, is completely self-indulgent. It is a dramatized description of a teacher wallowing in his lustful attraction to a female student. In Fukuda's text (as in the *zange* of Shimazu and Hanai), the narrative rejects self-indulgent emotion while Katai's protagonist positively relishes the pain of his unrequited sexual obsession.

The literary strategy in Fukuda's work is to create a humble self through an appeal to femininity and to seek indulgence from the listener. Through this relationship between the abased feminine self and the indulgent reader, an "authentic" self is produced. The bond with the reader is created through a depiction of a kind of gender apostasy in which the author dramatically gives up her masculine self to become a "natural," "feminine" self who derides the masculine self. Fukuda's combined narrative of confession and resentment can be usefully described as "double-layered." This notion of a "double-layering" (*nijūsei*) of discourse in *Half My Life* is discussed by Saeki Shōichi in his *Modern Japanese Autobiography* (*Kindai Nihon no jiden*).<sup>16</sup> He identifies the primary dyads in the double-layered discourse to be the dyad of the political and the literary and dyad of the eventful and emotional. Another way of considering the double-layeredness of the narrative is to identify the conflicting rhetorical claims of the text. The intense preoccupation with the self's struggles in a misogynistic world is combined with a portrait of innocence and social contribution. Sentiments of resentment, which signal social critique, are countered with claims of regret and an insistence on (gender) normalcy. In this writing strategy, feminine qualities of humility, naiveté, and innocence provide cover for a more critical expression of frustration and anger at unfair social, political and economic conditions. Fukuda's critique of the political system that outlawed

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<sup>16</sup> Ronald Loftus discusses this point regarding Saeki Shōichi's *Kindai Nihon no jiden*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1981, 185-207, in his unpublished manuscript on the confessional writing of Fukuda and Kinoshita.

public speech by women and denied women access to public government institutions, together with her condemnation of the capitalist system that generated so much poverty especially among women, is balanced with a promotion of “gender appropriate” behavior and a denial of anything but heterosexual desire.<sup>17</sup>

Katai, by contrast, denied that he was writing a *zange*. Certainly in *The Quilt* a self-indulgent male voice is not balanced with a socially responsible self and a denial of perverse sexual leanings. Rather, the male alter ego is unrepentant. He has no regrets. He is shameless and consistently unapologetic. His confession is marked by boldness. The speaker metaphorically links himself to perversion, which is ultimately an aesthetic position, an aesthetic choice of the position of recluse or social exile.

Contemporaneous critics referred to many kinds of confessional literature as *zange*. Tomi Suzuki points out that the first readers of *The Quilt* regarded it as a *zange* text precisely because they observed the author’s self-criticism and self-condemnation in his portrayal of the protagonist.<sup>18</sup> In the essay “Confessional Narrative and the Novel” (*Zangeroku to shōsetsu*, 1909), however, Katai himself heatedly refuted the statement that *The Quilt* was a “repentance narrative” (*zangeroku*) because he did not express regret. Katai’s extended thesis on why his writing was not repentant was written in response to reviews by Shimamura Hōgetsu and Hoshi Getsuya, both of whom specifically called *The Quilt* a *zangeroku*. Katai’s vitriolic rejection of *zange* suggests that it continued to imply regret and apology whereas Katai instead sought to write an unabashedly perverse and “ugly” self. Murderess Abe Sada would later vociferously object to description of her

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<sup>17</sup> In another example of a *zange* Fukuda writes, “Paying no mind to ridicule or censure I dare to narrate honestly my youth without hiding a thing. This is not necessarily because I am trying to atone for my sins through repentance [*zange*]. It is to declare anew a struggle with the world and myself.” *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>18</sup> Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, Stanford University Press, 1997, 71.

own story as a “*zange*,” which suggests that the term *zange* grew increasingly to imply regret and remorse in a secular context. It is likely that male literati in the Meiji period who had no interest in writing about a repentant masculine self eventually took up the term *kokuhaku* to describe a confession that did not imply regret.

However, the debate that arose around whether *The Quilt* was a *zange* text illustrates the looseness and ambiguity of this term at the time. A book review critical of Kinoshita Naoe’s novel *Zange* was thoroughly convinced that *zange* was indeed synonymous with writing by young male novelists new to the profession. The review is dismissive of this new trend among “youth” (*seinen*) to write from the perspective of a self-loathing subject. Written a few months before the release of *The Quilt*, this book review described *Zange* and contemporary “*zange*” as a *recent* approach to writing the self: “The anguish of contemporary youth is a problem of the ‘self’ (*ware*); questioning what life is, is a question of the ‘self,’ and the consequences of a life is a pursuit of the consequences for the self.” These conflicting interpretations of *zange* suggest a transitional cultural mode of expression that, in its multifarious manifestations, could be described variously as autobiography, oral history, memoir, confession, interview, life history, testimony, or even documentary fiction. Soon the term *zange* gave way to “*kokuhaku*,” but it had already been used to translate such texts as Rousseau’s *Confessions*, which would later, in the postwar period, be re-translated as *Kokuhaku*. Other secular *zange* texts of this time include Yamaji Aizan’s “Confession” (*Zange*, 1903), “A Record of Confession” (*Zangeroku*, 1905) by Chikasumi Jōkan, the novel *My Memories* (*Warawa no omoide*, 1906) by Fukuda Hideko, the poem “Confession” (*Zange*, 1906) by Mizuno Yōshū, Okamura Tsukasa’s reading of Rousseau’s *Confessions* in *Shisō*

*koshi*, in 1908, Futabatei Shimei's essay "Yo ga hansei no zange" in 1908 and Miyazaki Koshoshi's *Confession of My Early Years: My Hometown* (Hansei no zange: Kokyō-hen, 1908), Kuga Chigaharu's *Little Confession* (Shō zange, 1909), Kuramochi Eikichi's *Confessions from Prison* (Gokuchū zange sōtan, 1909) and others. Among the modern authors of confessional narrative we find critics, political novelists and activists, ex-convicts and poets.

Another example of the way in which the male subject is penned differently than the female subject in *zange* is illustrated in a comparison of Fukuda and Kinoshita's texts. Ronald Loftus has shown how the social activist and writer Kinoshita Naoe, author of the novel *Zange* (1906), writes of the "conflicts in the mind of a young man torn between a life of social activism and one of quiet introspection."<sup>19</sup> As Loftus points out, like Fukuda, Kinoshita was drawn to the popular rights movement and was active in founding Japan's first socialist party. Kinoshita's *Zange* shares some similarities with Fukuda's *Half of My Life*, including an introduction that purports to outline a "change of heart." But while Fukuda's text carries out her promise made in the introduction to explain her regrets—whether it be early gender perversity or terrorist acts as a youth, Kinoshita drops the question of change: "Where Fukuda deals with the pain of remembering past mistakes, Kinoshita takes up 'boundless' questions. He wants to explore the meaning of life and the nature of a self."<sup>20</sup> Stylistically, too, Kinoshita's text eventually strays from offering two selves—a repentant past and an enlightened future—and moves forward purposefully in a linear fashion. It lacks the layered quality of Fukuda's text.

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<sup>19</sup> See Ronald Loftus' insightful unpublished manuscript on Fukuda and Kinoshita's autobiography, 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

The confession or *zange* in writing clearly included a broad range of narrative styles, but wide differences existed in the discursive strategies for creating subjects with authority, subjects mandated to speak truths. The female writer rejected the egoistic self while the male writer indulged in it.<sup>21</sup> But what so many texts have in common at this time is a powerful textual affirmation of the speaking subject—a voice that speaks to the reader, an “I” who, as James Fujii has pointed out in *Complicit Fictions*, demands to be recognized.

## Conclusion

In canonical literary history, what has been remembered of confessional narrative that appeared in so many forms early in the twentieth-century is the fiction of non-Buddhist male intellectuals, especially of the naturalist school; but their confessional writing did not emerge in a vacuum. While the story of the development of confessional narrative in Japan has been almost entirely limited to canonical writers identified as belonging to a naturalist school of writing, an examination of other confessional texts in the Meiji period illustrates that an array of writers from male literati to female ex-cons turned to the slippery concept of *zange* to frame their desire and articulate a self. In other words, although literary theorist Karatani Kōjin has pointed out that Christianity was the point of

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<sup>21</sup> In the early years of the 1900s, a wide variety of writers experimented with the conceptual possibilities of *zange*, giving us reason to consider the form as significant in efforts to produce a self in narrative—a concern that absorbed writers at the turn of the century. Shiga Naoya’s celebrated “*kokuhaku shosetsu*,” *A Dark Night’s Passing*, includes a suggestive passage in which the confessing author-protagonist Tokito Kensaku considers the ex-con’s *zange*. Kensaku aestheticizes anti-sociality via reference to the confessing woman who he critiques as unfashionably repentant. And yet Kensaku is haunted by the confessing woman. It is not impossible to imagine that Shiga’s portrayal of the confessor through the eyes of Kensaku is a cleverly posed criticism of the indulgent confessional writer and the prurient reader. The disgust at seeing the performative mechanics of confession laid bare by an ex-criminal on the dingy stage of a traveling show and the impulse to watch it captures the seedy side of the confessional writing-reading relationship and amounts to a critique of confessional literature as driven by mere prurient interest. It significantly joins

departure for many Meiji writers penning the self, we must bear in mind that the confessional subject had been present in the form of secular and nonsecular *zange*. And while *kokuhaku* and *kokuhaku shōsetsu* are common terms used to describe early confessional literature, *zange* was used by a number of authors writing about the self from a secular perspective and used in translating the word “confession.”

The lowbrow and other non-secular roots of confessional literature have been jettisoned in favor of reading the origins of confessional literature in imported Christianity or modern European literature based in Christian thought.<sup>22</sup> While I am not suggesting that Western influence was irrelevant in Meiji, I am suggesting that religious and popular native narrative forms were also relevant in the development of self-narrative—that they played a significant role in the emergence of literary confessional literature.<sup>23</sup> The various forms of *zange* narrative in Meiji are evidence that the development of a narrative “I” in turn-of-the-century Japan had occurred in other types of confessional narrative beyond proto-naturalist, secular confessional writing as contemporary scholarship suggests.

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the lowbrow *zange* of repentance with the defiant confession of the unrepentant (and highly aestheticized) highbrow male author.

<sup>22</sup> Karatani, 81.

<sup>23</sup> It is even possible that the new form of law and legal proceedings, especially the form of the statement of the accused, encouraged a reconsideration of what a confession might look like. However, neither the terms *zange* nor *kokuhaku* were used in these legal contexts. Rather, in 1880 *hakujo* was the preferred term while in 1890 *jihaku* was the formal legal term.