

## A Portrait of Takano Choēi

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Takano Choēi (1804–1850) was a scholar of Western learning or *rangakusha* active in the first half of the nineteenth century; he worked as a physician, a scientist and translator. However, he is most famous, along with Watanabe Kazan and Ozeki San'ei, as a victim of the *bansha no goku*, the conservative clampdown on Western studies in 1839. It was his *Tale of a Dream* (*Bojutsu yume monogatari*), a piece written in 1838 to protest the application of the “shell and repel edict” on foreign ships, which was the cause of his arrest.<sup>1)</sup> Ironically, this essay was not typical of Choēi's work, for unlike Kazan he was far more a scientist and socially conscious physician than a political activist. Choēi's works include the first translation into Japanese of a book on Western physiology, essays on public health issues such as famine and pestilence, an essay on Western philosophy, and books on Western military technology to name a few. Nevertheless, he was sentenced to life imprisonment, and spent nearly six long years in the Kodenmachō-prison in Edo. In 1844, having plotted to set the prison on fire, Choēi managed to escape, after which he lived the remaining years of his life as a fugitive, relying on the protection of his trusted friends and of friendly daimyō, selling his translations to make a living. Takano Choēi was at last discovered in Edo where he was living in hiding, and committed suicide there to avoid capture in 1850.

The dramatic nature of Choēi's life and death has inspired historical novels, plays and television programs in Japan. Many of these accounts are sterilized versions that omit any details deemed undesirable, choosing to focus on his bravery and intelligence.<sup>2)</sup> Greene's 1913 “Life of Takano Nagahide,” the only work of length in English known to me, is typical in its view of Choēi as a man who tragically died for his role in the modernization of his country: “Eighteen years after his death, the Meiji Restoration took place. It is hardly too much to say that Takano's sacrifices contributed much to prepare the way for that era. In July, Meiji 31 (1898), His Imperial Majesty assigned to Takano the Senior grade of the fourth rank, and granted yen 100 toward the fund for a monument to his memory. Thus although Takano died without realizing his ambition, he has in these later years won the distinguished recognition of the Sovereign of whose reign of enlightenment he was the harbinger.”<sup>3)</sup>

Scholarly work in Japan has been conducted from the 1960s onwards almost exclusively by Sato Shoŷuke, whose many works have made an enormous contribution to the field. In his attempt to correct the heroic image of Choēi presented in other books,

Sato has perhaps bordered on the over-critical. Sugiura Minpei is another writer who has followed this line.<sup>4)</sup> Yet to present a balanced picture of Choēi is not as easy as it would seem, for he is an elusive figure, full of contradictions, as this paper aims to demonstrate.

I have based my examination of aspects of Takano Choēi's life and character on his personal correspondence, more specifically on the twenty eight letters collected in *Takano Choēi no tegami* published by the Takano Choēi Kinenkan in 1991. Choēi's letters have been used frequently in previous scholarship because they are such a rich source, particularly for their depiction of his life as a young student in Edo. Most of the letters are addressed to his adoptive father and maternal uncle, and provide intimate detail of his daily life and problems. Later letters include one to his cousin Chio, letters to his cousin Kyoichiro, friend Yanagida Teizo in Kožuke (Gunma), fellow prisoner Yonekichi, who was released and others. Although letters written after Choēi's escape from prison exist,<sup>5)</sup> they are not included in this collection, and due to time limitations have not been used in this examination. In the past, Choēi's letters have mostly been used to provide information about his family background. Greene, for example, uses them interspersed with biographical narrative. Treatment of Choēi's character, on the other hand, has often been based on anecdotes,<sup>6)</sup> or on statements made by Choēi's students in later life.<sup>7)</sup> While any historical examination of personality will always be the subjective view of the historian, by making Choēi's personal letters the object of study in itself, and comparing what can be gleaned from them with anecdotes and with Choēi's frequent treatment as a hero in secondary sources, I hope to demonstrate some of the often overlooked complexity of his nature.

Takano Choēi was born the third son of Goto Saneyoshi (Sošuke), a samurai of middle rank, in Mizusawa, present day Iwate prefecture, in 1804. He was adopted by his maternal uncle Takano Gensai, who had studied under Sugita Genpaku, and one can imagine that Choēi's interest in Western medicine was present from an early age. In 1820, against his adoptive father's will, Choēi traveled with his elder brother Tansai and cousin Yořin to Edo to study. Although headstrong, young Choēi wrote long letters home explaining his everyday problems and asking for advice and money. The story is often recounted that Choēi worked as a masseur at night to support himself, and this would appear to be so. However, he was by no means independent, either financially or emotionally. Choēi expresses his delight at receiving a letter from his adoptive father in this 1822 letter: "First of all, having heard nothing of your circumstances since the eighth month I had been anxious to hear from you and had been talking about you, so to read your letter made me do a little dance for joy."<sup>8)</sup>

Perhaps Choēi's delight at receiving letters from home was all the greater because they often contained money. Choēi made frequent requests for financial help. This is a little surprising when one considers that Choēi's adoptive father had not approved of his study in Edo. The following letter to Gensai in 1823 demonstrates not only the difficulties facing a student of Dutch, but also the way in which Choēi is dependent on his adoptive father for money. He writes: "Recently I had been working on some

translations, but as I did not have any kind of a book to help me it was extremely difficult. I would have liked to make a copy but it would have been too detailed and of course in Dutch so I was unsure of what I should do. All in all, nowadays it is very difficult to do translations without one, so if it were affordable I thought I would like to buy one. When I asked around about it I was lucky enough to find a hand-written copy of a Dutch dictionary,<sup>9)</sup> although at a cost of three *bu* and two *shu*.<sup>10)</sup> For the time being I paid one *bu* and two *shu*. I'm extremely sorry to have to ask you, but I would be much obliged if you could urgently send me two *bu*. With the money you sent previously I bought some clothes for spring and summer so please rest assured."<sup>11)</sup>

The most striking example of the way in which Choēi asked his relatives for money comes in a letter to Gensai announcing his departure for Nagasaki in 1825. The manner of his request is close to an imposition: "On this occasion I borrowed one *ryo* from Kanzakiya,<sup>12)</sup> and three *ryo* from Komadome Shoken<sup>13)</sup> of Honcho-ni-chome. I will return the one *ryo* to Kanzakiya when I return home next spring. However, with regards to the three *ryo* from Komadome Shoken, although his household is not well off at the moment, because I am an old friend, like a brother, and because this is the chance of a lifetime, he borrowed the money from someone else in order to lend it to me. As I borrowed the money upon the strict promise that I would have the money sent from home by the end of the sixth month, I beg of you most humbly please to send it. I am terribly sorry to ask for another three *ryo* after you sent two *ryo* the other day and it must seem as though I have no thought for your difficulties, but as I told you in a previous letter I used that money entirely in paying off my debt to Kanzakiya. If you send the three *ryo*, please think of it as money that you would have sent to Nagasaki next spring. As for the money for next summer, I will by then be on good terms with the Dutch and when we travel to Edo together I should make about three or four *ryo* from their items for sale and will use that money to come home.<sup>14)</sup> If you do not send the three *ryo*, it will mean that I will have broken my word and caused hardship for Shoken, as well as losing the unity of sentiment that comes from our long-standing friendship. Also I will be unable to enter or pass by his house so please understand this well. If you do not have the money on hand, I am extremely sorry, but even if it means borrowing it from someone else I hope you will send it as soon as possible."<sup>15)</sup>

In comparison, Greene, who includes this letter in his 1913 article on Choēi, abbreviates the passage severely and creates an impression far more polite than the original: "I have borrowed one *ryo* from Kanzakiya and three from Komadome Seiken. I shall return Kanzakiya's loan next spring, but I hope you will kindly return Komadome's for he is financially embarrassed."<sup>16)</sup>

Choēi was never short of a word, and his letters are often long and rambling, filled with detail. Greene's decision to abbreviate is understandable, but the reflection of Choēi's personality is unfortunately lost.

Otsuki Fumihiko suggests that Choēi often imposed upon his fellow students for money. "It is said that when Choēi was short of cash, he would go to the houses of

Genboku and others, urging them to lend him money. He would ask for five or ten ryo on several occasions, and if one refused he would practically extort the money and flee.”<sup>17)</sup>

Part of the reason why Choēi never had much money was because he often used it to help others more unfortunate, or placed himself in dangerous situations through his naivete and irrepressible optimism. A typical example of this is when he became a type of secondary guarantor (*hitonushi*) for a young man called Kumekichi, who wanted to work in Edo. A *hitonushi* was a kind of guarantor who helped the guarantor (*ukenin*), in providing security for service contracts. He was usually a father, brother or relative and provided a back-up for the guarantor if he should not have enough money to make a settlement, or if the servant should run away. As the following letter of 1824 shows, Choēi took on this role for a man to whom he was completely unrelated and whom he had only just met.

“At that time I happened to come along, so the head of the house and Kumekichi came to my room and made all sorts of requests. However, in these times it is not so easy to accept someone as a companion along the way and I refused briefly. Nevertheless they whined about this and that so that I had no choice. I did not think that Kumekichi would be a bother, and so he became my companion. I later learned that he had fled his parents’ home and wanted to come to Edo to work for a confectioner and learn how to make sweets. By and by, as we traveled along, he ran out of money, so I was forced to somehow make do and get us to Edo. When we arrived, he promptly began to complain over and over that he had no acquaintances in Edo and nowhere to go, and asked me please to help him. It seemed difficult to abandon him after all this time . . . [so] I asked a man called Eizo of Musashiya in Minamitenma-cho, Kyōbashi, and told him that as I would be Kumekichi’s secondary guarantor would he please become his guarantor. Because of what I said, he had no choice but to agree . . .

“However, helping an unrelated stranger is a risky affair and I decided to immediately send a letter to Kumekichi’s father so that when I received a thank you letter I would be able to have a little peace of mind, no matter what should happen afterwards. I hoped to send the letter to his father immediately and at the end of last year I sent a letter by sea mail to Uncle Yoimin in Ishinomaki telling him of this matter. If Kumekichi had run away after committing some evil deed, and if there were reason to believe that he might cause difficulties for me later on I thought that I should cut off the relationship without further ado. So I asked a boat called Yasomaru at Fukagawa [to carry the letter], and while I was yet to receive a reply, Sojūro told me in a letter that I should not be doing favors for servants, but since it was already too late, I thought that I would cut off the relationship when Kumekichi changed his job in the third month. In addition, Shimura-sensei and others told me that I should by all means sever the connection and it was when I had already agreed to do so that at ten o’clock in the morning on the twenty-sixth of the second month Kumekichi was given three ryo in gold and sent on an errand. However, he not only ran away from his place of errand, but stole a tortoiseshell comb and ornamental hairpin, goods worth more than

thirteen *ryo*. I asked many people and at many places but without being able to discover his whereabouts.”<sup>18)</sup>

As a result, Choēi became a servant at a daimyo estate for six months, and used his wages to pay back the debt left by Kumekichi. Luckily, his work left him much free time and, he writes, “by paying a fee I was able to borrow Dutch books and so on from the library and copy them.”<sup>19)</sup> Surprisingly, Choēi shows little resentment towards the runaway Kumekichi, saying simply, “All in all, since Kumekichi came from a poor family, it could not be helped.”<sup>20)</sup> It would also seem that Choēi did not learn from the experience. Only a short time later, he became guarantor for an old acquaintance, who also absconded from work, leaving Choēi with the responsibility of repaying the debt. This time he did so by working as a masseur at the daimyo estate where the money was owed. Similarly, he was philosophical about his friend’s behavior, blaming the economic situation for his misfortune: “. . . as he was a close acquaintance from childhood, there was nothing else I could have done. If things were as they used to be, this would never have occurred, but nowadays this amount seems like a lot of money.”<sup>21)</sup>

In a letter to Gensai in 1825, written in Nagasaki, Choēi renounces material wealth in favor of a simple life of studiousness. “When I think carefully about it, there is not one in ten thousand men who does not desire gold and silver, but I believe that for a poor man like me to desire wealth is to go against the principles of the way of Heaven. Please understand that even if it is with shabby clothes and dirty face, I am intent on completing only my studies and then coming home.”<sup>22)</sup>

It seems true to say that Choēi was ruled by a burning ambition to succeed in his field rather than a desire for wealth. Ironically, the period in which he had the most money was probably when he was in prison. There is evidence in his letters of his sending money to his family and friends. Choēi was able to do this because he was appointed as the *roñanushi*, the highest office among the inmates. It was the custom for each new prisoner to bring money called *tsuru* with him into the prison, usually about ten *ryo*, quite a large amount. This was divided among the twelve inmate officers, with the *roñanushi* naturally receiving the most.<sup>23)</sup> His job was to help the prison officials maintain order, to see that rules were obeyed, and prevent prisoners from running away or committing suicide. The *roñanushi* also had the opportunity to order his underlings about, acquire forbidden items, gamble, smoke and other privileges. Some *roñanushi* inflicted cruel punishments on those who brought no money with them or were disliked by others. Certainly Choēi seems to have used his position for money and to maintain contact with the outside world, but he seems to have been popular among the inmates, and there is evidence of him working to have the sentences of others reduced and giving farewell presents to those being exiled.

On the other hand, Ōtsuki cites an anecdote in which Choēi is said to have upset his medical colleagues with his arrogance. After studying in Nagasaki, along with many of his fellow students, Choēi returned to Edo, where he opened a medical practice in 1830. Since Choēi had been head student at the school in Nagasaki, even upon return-

ing to Edo, he did not use any polite terms of address towards medical colleagues such as Ito Genboku and Otsuki Shunsai. Naturally, they resented this, but out of respect for Choēi's ability, they endured his haughtiness in silence.<sup>24)</sup>

If we are to believe this anecdote, it highlights one of the greatest inconsistencies in Choēi's personality. Namely, that although known to be arrogant and competitive among his *rangaku* colleagues, Choēi seems to have had the ability to build up warm and trusting friendships. This is particularly true of his pupils, such as Uchida Yataro and Suzuki Shunzan, who helped him during his imprisonment and after his escape, and of his companions in prison. One friend made in the Kodenma-cho prison called Yonekichi, was released from prison and provided Choēi with an important link with the outside world. Choēi writes to him in a letter from prison in 1844: "I cannot express my gratitude for your looking after Ro-jirushi [Choēi's mother] last year. I am sure she caused you nothing but trouble. Please do not desert me or think of me as a stranger. I ask for your continued close association. You are a source of strength more than ever. I hope you will have sympathy for my present circumstances."<sup>25)</sup>

Choēi's attitude here is far from that of the proud doctor of ten years previously, depicted in Otsuki's anecdote above. Choēi's generosity towards the stranger who wanted to learn how to make confectionery, for example, and towards the prison inmates is also curiously inconsistent with the at times cruel indifference with which he treated his family responsibilities.

Choēi's life is often seen in terms of the sacrifices he made, yet when studying his life, one is struck rather by the enormous sacrifices made by his family and friends. The most obvious example lies in the fact that his relatives allowed him the freedom to refuse to take on the position of heir, a role which had been intended for him from the time of his adoption. Even before this, Choēi had failed to attend the first anniversary of his adoptive father Gensai's death. Choēi cited illness as being the reason for his absence, but more probably he feared that if he should return he would be made to fulfill his responsibilities in Mizusawa. This fact is only very thinly veiled in his letters, and his family must have known his true reasons. For example, note the following passage in an 1830 letter to his relatives:

"However, four years ago when I was suffering from beri-beri, the news came that my adopted father had died from illness. I was shocked, and wanted to make arrangements to return home immediately, but due to my illness I had no choice but to stay. You, my relatives, were kind enough to hand me the headship without hesitation and for a time I felt relieved. After that, I gradually began to recover from my sickness, but as it was already after my father's death, there would have been no point in leaving my studies half undone, and I felt apprehensive about returning for another period of study once I had returned home. I wanted very much to study for one or two more years and it was while I was staying in spite of everything that my illness broke out again."<sup>26)</sup>

In the same letter, Choēi asks his relatives to find another man to marry his cousin

Chio, to whom he was betrothed, and to take over as head of the family. Having obtained his relatives' agreement to this proposal, Choëi writes more freely of his plans in this letter written the next month:

“Consequently, it is difficult for me now, because of my ill health, to learn techniques, and for myself, I would like to devote the rest of my life exclusively to study. By doing this I will be considered to be of no use to my lord, and all these years of study to have been to no purpose, a shameful situation. If possible I hope to serve by some other means, at least to repay one ten millionth of the favor from which I have benefited. When I thought so hard that I forgot to eat and sleep, I selected one aspect of Western learning.<sup>27)</sup> Unless I am in Edo, it will be difficult for me to undertake this work. This is no ordinary undertaking, and although I will not yet write of it until things settle into place, Ryoōaku will tell you of my intentions. When it is completed, it will probably benefit all of Mizusawa and of course too I hope, his lordship.<sup>28)</sup>

It was his ambitions in the field of Dutch Studies that motivated these drastic measures. It was probably because Choëi's relatives recognized these ambitions and his stubbornness that they eventually gave in to his wishes. It is important to remember that Choëi's actions at this time also meant that he gave up his samurai status to become a humble town doctor, which is why, when thrown into prison in 1839 in the events of the *bansha no goku*, he was placed in the peasants' prison (*hyakushoōro*), not one of the buildings reserved for samurai retainers.

However, perhaps the one most deserving of pity was Chio, Choëi's younger cousin and betrothed, already twenty five years old by this time, who waited for so long only to be rejected. There is only one letter remaining to tell something of their relationship. It is a letter written by Choëi to Chio, explaining the reasons why he cannot return home to marry her. The letter is written in kana and gentle in tone, and since the two grew up together, one can imagine that they were fond of one another. However, Choëi's illness is merely an excuse, and one cannot help wondering how much of what he writes is genuine and how much is merely empty words.

“At the moment I cannot leave my work for even one day, yet that is not to say that I can turn a blind eye to something which could mean the end of the Takano family line. Also, now you are officially my daughter and I cannot pretend otherwise. In addition, I am unwell and cannot even carry out my duty, so even if I were to return home now, the result would be the same. I have told a man called Saburobei whom I will send to Maezawa the details of my immobility, so please hear what he has to say. Now that things have come to this, I pray only that you will again marry a good man and carry on the family line. All of this is my fault and with all the troubles in the Takano family you must indeed be resentful of me. How angry too, your mother must be. Please apologize well to her. Try to bear everything and forgive me. I am sure that there will not always only be difficulties and worry forever and ever, good things will happen too. It is difficult to convey with a writing brush all that I would like to say. Please inquire at Maezawa. I pray that without my coming home you will find some way to continue the Takano family. Even if I were to come home after all, I cannot

offer any other plan. If my circumstances were as before, I think I would want to return home even tomorrow. However, to return home now would be as difficult as death. Please, please do not think badly of me. By and by I will by all means come home and apologize in person. I hope you will forgive me [for not coming] until then. My lord, too, surely thinks me detestable, but I believe the time will also come when my being here is on the contrary a loyal thing.”<sup>29)</sup>

It must have been very difficult for Chio to have thought anything other than badly of Choēi.

Takano Choēi is rumored to have been fond of alcohol and something of a womanizer, to the extent that it was said he “could not be without a drink or a woman for even one day.”<sup>30)</sup> However, it is difficult to determine the extent to which this can be believed. Kure relates an anecdote in which Choēi and his friend Oka Taian took out the young wife of a patient whom Oka was treating, and without his knowing, paraded merrily, singing all the while, around the streets.<sup>31)</sup>

The “wanted” posters that were sent to each domain after Choēi’s escape from prison noted that he drank a lot of alcohol,<sup>32)</sup> although some scholars suggest that his drinking began as a result of the long, dark hours in prison.<sup>33)</sup> Doi Naosaburo, who studied under Choēi during his concealment in Uwajima after his escape from prison, described Choēi’s condition thus: “[Choēi] was always melancholy and did not seem to find peace when eating or sleeping. At night he suffered from insomnia, and only through alcohol could he gain some rest. His drinking was very excessive; he drank at each of his three meals, and again at night. There was never a moment when he was not under the influence of alcohol. He is said to have drunk three *shō* in a day and a night.”<sup>34)</sup>

In a letter to his uncle Mogi Samanosuke in 1831, Choēi claims that he will remain single all his life. However, he eventually married a woman called Yuki in 1838, shortly before his imprisonment. No correspondence addressed to her remains, although Choēi does seem to have sent her money, both from prison and from Uwajima. Although very little is known about Yuki’s background, several suggestions have been put forward by scholars. According to Ōtsuki Fumihiko, Yuki was a geisha from Fukagawa.<sup>35)</sup> Sugiura adds that she was of good birth, but fell into destitution until Choēi came to her aid. In addition, he claims she was eight years younger than Choēi, although he does not make clear his sources for this information.<sup>36)</sup> Choēi himself, in his work, *The Cry of a Bird*, writes that he married a girl who had been orphaned.<sup>37)</sup> Takano Choun, a descendent of Choēi, suggests that Yuki was a daughter of the *rangakusha* Aochi Rinsho, claiming that since he had already passed away at the time of Choēi’s marriage, this would mean that his daughter had been orphaned.<sup>38)</sup> However, as Tsurumi points out, his proposal would not appear to be valid.<sup>39)</sup> Rinsho had five daughters, the two youngest of whom died in 1831 and 1849 (Choēi’s wife was still alive at the time of his death in 1850). The other three daughters were married to Tsuboi Shindo, Ito Gencho, and Kawamoto Koimin, all Dutch scholars. As Tsurumi points out, it was important for Takano Choun, whose biography was essentially a



eulogy, that Choēi appear to have married someone respectable. If indeed Choēi's wife was a geisha, one might think that the fact that Choēi chose her for himself is typical of his willful character.

Finally, one should mention Toyo, Choēi's maid and concubine during the period he spent in Uwajima. She was the daughter of a local hairdresser, and bore Choēi a son.<sup>40)</sup> After fleeing Uwajima in 1849, Choēi wrote to his friend Saito Jozo with instructions that Toyo should be given her leave and his young son made a monk.<sup>41)</sup> Nevertheless, one should remember that it was by no means unusual for a man in the Edo period to have a concubine.

Choēi does not seem to have made any of the women in his life happy, but for all that he was not completely irresponsible. As his letter to Chio, payments to Yuki, and consideration of Toyo's future show, although choosing to live his life in a selfish and headstrong way, he was not without compassion.

Similarly, although refusing to turn to Mizusawa and carry out his responsibilities, Choēi brought his mother to live with him in Edo, and continued to maintain contact with his uncle and cousin of the Mogi family throughout his life. One could reasonably expect him to have been entirely cut off. Perhaps the Mogis, who were also doctors, had a particular understanding of Choēi's ambitions and skill.

It is obvious from Choēi's letters that he loved learning, that he knew he had talent and that he had a burning desire to make use of it. It is indeed tragic that he was so hampered by circumstance and his life so unnaturally short. Thus, it is little wonder that he has received a hero's treatment. However, many heroic portrayals of Choēi present nothing but a superficial version of his life, leaving out anything which might be deemed undesirable. For example, the existence of Toyo, even though her name appears in Choēi's own letters, is often glossed over or completely omitted. Similarly, Choēi's drinking, arrogant behavior and mishandling of money are played down in many cases. As Sato Shoſuke reminds us, these aspects of Choēi's character by no means lessen his achievements, and one should remember that a personality as strong as Choēi's was perhaps necessary to survive all that he did.<sup>42)</sup> To omit this information is also to present Choēi as far less complex a man than he really was. It is not simply Choēi's bravery or ability that makes him interesting, it is his idiosyncrasies and in particular, the conflicting selfishness and generosity, strength and weakness in his nature. By reading his letters, the reader can trace Choēi's change from a vulnerable youth to a self-confident scholar, to a man made nervous by unfortunate circumstance, yet never embittered. They help give us clues to understanding more of why he chose to live the life he did, and how he managed to survive the consequences of those choices, with the help of trusted friends and family, and an extraordinary spirit of optimism.

#### Notes

- 1) Ostensibly, Choēi and Kazan were arrested for their criticism of bakufu policy. However, as Sato Shoſuke has demonstrated, it was more likely the result of a conspiracy designed by the *metsuke* Torii Yoſo to ensnare Kazan, against whom he had a personal and professional grudge.

See Sato Shoſuke, ed., *Nihon no meicho 25 Watanabe Kazan Takano Choēi*, Tokyo: Chuō-Kōronsha, 1972, 60–80.

- 2) For example, as recently as 1993, the following book based on an NHK documentary is very much in the heroic mold. NHK Rekishi Hakken Shazaihan, ed., *Rekishi hakken 5*, Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1993.
- 3) Greene, D., “Life of Takano Nagahide,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, First series, vol. 41, 1913, 455–6.
- 4) See Sato, S., *Takano Choēi*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1997; “Watanabe Kazan to Takano Choēi,” *Nihon Shiso taikei 55*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971; and Sugiura, M., *Kazan to Choēi*, Tokyo: Daisan Bunmeisha (Regulus Bunko 76), 1977. Sato’s other works include *Yogakushi kenkyu josetsu*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964; *Yogakushi no kenkyu*, Tokyo: Chuō-Kōronsha, 1980, and *Yogakushi ronko*, Kyoto: Shibunkakushi Shuppan, 1993.
- 5) The letters are included in Takano Choūn, *Takano Choēi den*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1943, 566–615.
- 6) Such as those found in Otsuki, F., “Takano Choēi gyojo-itsuwa,” *Fukken zassan*, Kyoto: Kōbundo Shoten, 1902.
- 7) Found in Muramatsu, K., “Takano Choēi Uwajima senpukuchū no jijitsu,” *Ishin shiryōhensankai koēn sokkiroku 3*, Zoku Nihonshiseki Kyōkaiisoſho, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1997.
- 8) Takano Choēi Kinenkan, ed., *Takano Choēi no tegami*, Iwate: Takano Choēi Kinenkan, 1993, 16.
- 9) This dictionary was called *Yakken*, compiled by Fujibayashi Taisuke. Fujibayashi selected important sections of a famous dictionary called *Haruma*, made corrections and published it as *Yakken* in 1810. It came to be of great use to Rangaku scholars.
- 10) Currency in the Edo period was rather complicated, being divided into gold, silver and copper or iron *zeni* currencies. The following is a summary:  
Gold: 1 *ryo* = 4 *bu*  
1 *bu* = 4 *shu*  
Silver: 1 *kanme* = 1000 *momme*  
1 *momme* = 10 *fun*  
1 *fun* = 10 *rin*  
1 *rin* = 10 *mo*  
Zeni: 1 *kanmon* (*kan*) = 1000 *mon*  
10 (later 25) *mon* = 1 *hiki*  
According to Craig, in 1825, one *koku* of rice sold for about 63 silver *momme*, and the price of a *sho* (1.8 liters) of salt was 32 *mon*; ten Japanese radishes 258 *mon*; ten peaches 15 *mon*; ten pears 70 *mon*; six apples 32 *mon*; and a bunch of carrots 5 *mon* (Craig, Teruoko, *Musui’s Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*, Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1988, 174).
- 11) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 21.
- 12) Kanzakiya was a pharmacy in Horidome, Nihonbashi, run by a man called Genzo from Mizusawa (Tsurumi, S., *Takano Choēi*, Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1985, 61). Genzo was always extremely supportive of Choēi.
- 13) Komadome Shoken was a fellow student of Yoshida Choſhuku. It was he who had encouraged Choēi to go to Nagasaki.
- 14) The logic behind this is probably that by buying rare items from the Dutch, Choēi would then be able to re-sell them for a profit.
- 15) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 98–99.
- 16) Greene, “Life of Takano Nagahide,” 404.
- 17) Otsuki, F., “Takano Choēi Gyojo-itsuwa,” 374.
- 18) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 41–45.
- 19) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 50.
- 20) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 49.
- 21) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 71.

- 22) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 103.
- 23) Sato, S., *Yōgakushironko*, Kyoto: Shibunkakushi Shuppan, 1993, 173.
- 24) Ōtsuki, F., “Takano Choēi gyojo itsuwa,” 397.
- 25) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 217.
- 26) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 113–14.
- 27) Probably a reference to physiology, the subject of Choēi’s 1832 work, *Seisetsu igen suyo*.
- 28) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 122–23.
- 29) *Takano Choēi no tegami*, 149.
- 30) Ōtsuki, F., “Takano Choēi gyojo itsuwa,” 393.
- 31) Kure, S., *Seibold sensei sono shoōgai oyobi koōyo*, Reprint, Yanagiwara Shoten, 1979, 672.
- 32) Takano Choun, *Takano Choēi den*, 25–36.
- 33) Kusama, S., “Takano Choēi,” *Iwate shigaku kenkyū*, (1970: 60), 104.
- 34) Muramatsu, K., “Takano Choēi Uwajima senpukuchū no jijitsu,” 271.
- 35) Ōtsuki, F., “Takano Choēi gyojo itsuwa,” 394.
- 36) Sugita, M., *Kazan to Choēi*, 107.
- 37) Takano Choēi, “Wasuregatami (tori no naku ne),” Sato, S., ed., *Nihon shiso taikēi* 55, 176.
- 38) Takano Choūn, *Takano Choēi den*, 330.
- 39) Tsurumi, S., *Takano Choēi*, 323.
- 40) Tsurumi, S., *Takano Choēi*, 286–87.
- 41) *Takano Choēi den*, 599. However, Takano Choūn merely quotes the letter and ignores the information it contains. See Tsurumi, S., *Takano Choēi*, 289.
- 42) Sato, S., *Takano Choēi*, 64.