Introduction

Wakashu, a third gender is studied through wood-blocks, prints, paintings, and fictional writings. Who were the Wakashu? A definition and larger examination will be provided later in this paper but as a brief introduction the Wakashu were adolescent males who had not gone through the coming of age ceremony which was an important step in the identity of males in Edo Period Japan. Unlike most of the Japanese language, Wakashu has no Chinese precedent, nor was Wakashu ever used in China as a word, making the word unique to Japan. Scholarship on the Wakashu and gender/sexuality in pre-modern Japan is limited, with only a few dedicated historians and art historians studying this aspect of social and cultural Japanese history. This paper will help to examine the Azuchi-Momoyama Era, the Tokugawa era, and the Meiji era of Japanese history through the lens of gender and sexuality. The primary focus of this paper will be on the Tokugawa era as this is the era when the Wakashu were culturally and historically relevant and thriving. Examining these three eras will demonstrate the following: how each period accepted or rejected gender and sexuality especially when looking at individuals who chose to have relationships with the same gender, and how each era either continued prior traditions or created new traditions of acceptance or challenge to same-sex and gender identity. Understanding language will also be necessary for this paper, especially for an examination of pre-western influence and post-western influence of sexuality and gender acceptance in Japan. The Wakashu is an almost forgotten part of Japanese history; their significance stems from the Tokugawa Era's gender and sexuality acceptance and the cultural/social changes that occurred during the Meiji Era.

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1 Joshua S. Mostow and Asato Ikeda, A Third Gender Beautiful Youths in Japanese Edo-Period prints and paintings. Ontario, Canada: Royal Ontario Museum, 2016, 19
Historiography

Primary Sources

The primary sources that cover the Wakashu and the era’s before and after the Wakashu in Japanese History come in three primary forms: prints, woodblocks, and fictional stories. No known diaries/journals, oral histories, or personal accounts from a Wakashu are known to survive. The primary sources used for this paper come from the prints and woodblocks created during the era of the Wakashu. The place to see these prints is through museums in the West is in Canada and the United States. One of the primary sources used primarily for this paper is the exhibit catalog “A Third Gender beautiful youths in Japanese Edo-Period, Prints, and Paintings. The majority of the prints seen as examples in this paper come from this collection of prints and background information about the Wakashu. Later in this paper in the Wakashu section, examples of these prints will be demonstrated. Some of the primary individuals who created the woodblocks and prints used in this paper are from Suzuki Harunobua (1725-1770) and Hosoda Eisui (1790 - 1823). These two artists have multiple examples of prints available through the A 3rd Gender catalog.

The fictional stories that are used in this paper as primary sources come from “The Great Mirror of Male Love” by Ihara Saikaku. In these short stories, a glimpse into the relationships between Wakashu and men/women and how they played an important role in society as a whole. One story Love: The contest between two forces discusses boy love which is a profound thing.
This practice is mentioned to have occurred in China and Japanese history. Looking at other world communities will be explored further in this paper 2.

**Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources for an exploration of not only the Wakashu, Edo Period, and the Meiji period come from several primary authors, which include: Joshua Mostow, Jim Reichert, Mark J. McLelland, and Gary P. Leupp.

First is Joshua Mostow. One of his books that informs the topic of this paper well but also informed the research for this project is “Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field” which looks at not only the Wakashu during the Edo Period. An opportunity to examine gender during the Meiji period, and the transition that had to happen in Meiji period art. This transition included learning the western style of art and the use of nudity in the art. The art from Europe did have nudity, but it was a desire for a woman leaving some mystery. Edo Period has prints that show full frontal nudity. The change in how the art coming out of the era shows a lean-to conservative viewpoint from the Western World, specifically Europe.

Next is Jim Reichert who wrote an excellent book entitled "In the Company of men representations of male-male sexuality in Meiji literature." This book is one of the few sources which helps to examine the changes that occurred during the Meiji period. One of the main topics of this book includes homosexuality and heterosexuality, especially looking at the reform that happened.

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2 Ihara Saikaku, *The Great Mirror of Male Love*, translated by Paul Gordan Shalow (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), 52
Mark J. McLelland has done the majority of the research on same-sex male relationships. His writings are informative for an examination of homosexuality especially the acceptance during the Edo Period of same-sex male relationships however his study of gender is limited. As explored further in this paper, gender and sexuality in Japanese Edo Period Japan and the modern United States are different. Our use of the terms is different. His book "Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan Cultural Myths and Social Realities" is one of the sources to look at same-sex relationships. He also co-authored an excellent article entitled Sexual minorities and human rights in Japan: a historical perspective with Katshuiko Sakanuma which not only covers Edo Period Japan but also discusses Meiji period Japan.

Similar to McLelland, Gary P. Leupp wrote an excellent book looking at homosexuality during the Edo Period (which does not explore gender but does look at the acceptance of same-sex relationships) entitled "Male Colors the construction of homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan." He explores nanshoku, wakashu, and the history of sex life.

The Wakashu had a significant cultural influence before the Meiji Period of Japanese History. With so much cultural acceptance before the Meiji period of same-sex relationships and sexual contact, were there any significant reasons for a change in cultural acceptance after the Meiji period took control of Japan, and if so, what if any outside influences could have caused this change in societal acceptance.

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Gender and Sexuality in Japan

From a historical viewpoint, gender “is a useful category of historical analysis”⁴. Gender has suggested changes to some important revisions of the “master narratives” of national histories - that is, the dominant, often celebratory, tales of the success of a nation and its leaders.⁵ Defining gender and sexuality in the context of Japanese society during different eras is a challenge. Before the Meiji Restoration, the actual words used to describe ‘gender’ and ‘sexuality' were not a single word; instead, multiple words help to define gender and sexuality diversity. To help aid in the importance of understanding the use of different terms, and how they relate to western definitions of gender and sexuality is essential to making the path of clear understanding possible about the use of language. As a starting point, an exploration of what western society, including American English definitions of gender and sexuality, are essential. Joshua Mostow helps to provide an exploration of gender and sexuality from both a western view as well as a Japanese view. He defines gender as "a set of two or more categories, such as masculine, feminine, and neuter into which words are divided according to animation, psychological associations or some other characteristics,"⁶ which is a very western definition of gender. In Japanese society defining gender has more complexity. In Japan “sex/gender systems, physiology, anatomy, and body codes (clothing, cosmetics, behaviors, minds, effective and object choices) are taken over by institutions that use the bodily difference to define and coerce gender identity."⁷ One of the ways that many societies have understood gender and sexuality is examining at what society views as overall acceptable even if its relationships between two

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⁴ Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, 1 & Joan W. Scott “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” American Historical Review 91 (1986): 1053- 1075
⁵ Molony & Uno, 1
⁷ Joshua Mostow, 51
minority groups. "The Common-Sense" Gender/Sexuality System chart below is how typically western society has viewed acceptable relationships. This chart is essential to understanding the Wakashu because of the challenge that western view has on relationships especially between older and younger individuals especially when looking at male-male relationships.

8 To read this chart, “the solid lines between arrowheads indicate the relationships understood to be possible, but to which some social stigma adheres” 9. Historically, and today, a relationship between two adults is socially and culturally acceptable, but adult and youth could have a relationship, but society examines some factors. The "dashes have some social stigma, and the dots have an even more social stigma. 10 Why present information like this? As explored further in this paper, the relationship that Wakashu have are intricate, and the relationships Wakashu have are not solid line relationships instead are more dotted.

In comparison to the chart, one above, chart two below is a visual of how Japanese gender/sexual relations occurred and were understood, mostly before the Meiji restoration.

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8 Joshua Mostow, 51
9 Ibid, 51
10 Ibid, 51
In chart 2, gender/sexual relationships in seventeenth-century Edo Japan. One significant distinction is the equitable relationships in the homosexual (both gay and lesbian) views compared to western perspective around cisgender identified individuals. There is also a focus on what can be presumed to be non-homosexual men having the explicit societal acceptance to have relationships with younger men.

Key terms to understand Japanese view of gender and sexuality include nanshoku, and shudo. Each of these terms helps to explore the complex language, grammar, and use of language within Japanese society. Because of the complexity between western and Japanese definitions and view of gender and sexuality, many of these terms from a western language perspective fall under sexuality, but for the era, they can be used to examine gender.

Nanshoku means “male eros” or is a term used to describe the specifically constructed homosexuality (used as a modern term) of Pre-Modern Japan. One of the challenges of this word in English is no good definition is simple. Different attempts at translating this have led to a different interpretation of language. Some of these include " sodomy," " pederasty" and "buggery." None of these words accurate define male-male relationships in Tokugawa Era Japan,

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11 Joshua Mostow, 52
13 Gary P. Leupp, 7
and Gary Leupp stresses the importance of understanding the broad use of the term and the lack of a proper English translation explicitly. This term used in the exhibit, A Third Gender and has an association with the beauty of the Wakashu when compared to a woman. 14

Shudo, as translated into English as "the ways of the youth" and a close translation to English, is pederasty. Even with this translation it is etymologically inoffensive and is a rough apt description of relationships it is essential to recognize that western view of relationships and modern terms do not always fit into modern western definitions.

Having these definitions and understanding of societal expectations around relationships is fundamental to understanding gender and sexuality in Japan because of the variance of Japanese understanding and definition of gender and sexuality versus the western definition of each term. In Japan, the definition of gender and sexuality can change depending on the era. Because both the pre-Meiji restoration and during the Meiji restoration will be historically examined in this paper defining gender and sexuality has to be defined for both eras. When thinking of gender during the Edo period of Japan scholars should not compare Western definitions of gender and sexuality to the definitions of gender and sexuality of the Edo Period or earlier periods in Japanese history.

**Azuchi-Momoyama Era (1573-1603) and earlier**

Even before this era, there are examples of gender and sexual history that does resemble the Tokugawa Era. A great example to demonstrate that the gender and sexual acceptance that is seen later during the Tokugawa Era came from the sharing of stories from Jesuit visitors to Japan in 1579. Jesuit Alessandro Valegnani described:

14 Mostow & Ikeda, 19
“The first evil we see among them is indulgence in sins of the flesh; this we always find among pagans… The gravest of sins is the most depraved of carnal desires, so that we may not name it. The young men and their partners, not thinking it serious, do not hide it. They even honor each other for it and speak openly of it…. Five or six centuries ago, an evil monk put forward the pernicious doctrine nowadays so widespread.”  

What Jesuit Alessandro Valegnani is describing is the open same-sex relationships between Samurai warriors. The evil monk described is historically connected to Kobo Daishi who legend has linked same-sex back to for centuries.

Even earlier in 1550, another example comes from Jesuit Saint Francis Xavier on his travels to Kyoto in which he describes "amongst them the abominable vice against nature is popular that hey practice without any feeling of shame. They have many young boys with whom they committed wicked deeds.”  

It is from this earlier account that the Jesuit visitors find that same-sex relationships were not happening just among monks and younger learners but also with Samurai warriors.

These examples bring a lens into the world of what will be described below of the Wakashu. Wakashu was not only part of the samurai culture but also reached into other aspects of Japanese society. The main difference between what the Jesuits describe above and the Wakashu below is that the Wakashu reaches to almost all aspects of society are not restricted to the monasteries and the Samurai warriors.

16 James Neill, 270
Tokugawa Era (1603 - 1868)

From 1600 – 1868, the Wakashu were around to help give companionship and sexual pleasure to both adult men and women. The social expectations of the Edo Period or the Tokugawa Era Japanese society are complex and are part of what will be explored further as a means to help show the distinct reason Wakashu are not just sexual individuals from the past but do represent a third gender. One important part of this paper and the work done by Mostow & Ikeda is to distinguish between Wakashu youth who are of modern standards of consent when it comes to sexual activity, versus the younger youth in Edo Period Japan who by modern standards would constitute pedophilia.

Scholarship has been written about how to identify and the cultural importance of the Wakashu during the Edo period, but the outlying piece of history missing is why did the cultural acceptance of the Wakashu change during the Meiji period.

Meiji Era (1868 - 1912)

Adopted by Japan during the Meiji Period (1868-1912), the Victorian norm of gender and sexuality which heterosexual monogamy was standard. Male and female genders and sexuality is either heterosexual or homosexual. This change in societal acceptance was a project of radical and rapid Westernization and modernization. An exploration of this change will occur below.

Up until the Meiji era, Japan had changed but not to the culturally and socially significant extent as during the Meiji Era. The Meiji Era brings a change in the law, the education system, social expectations but for this paper substantial changes to the understanding of gender and sexuality and what is considered to be socially acceptable. Scholars have only begun to research

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17 Mostow and Ikeda, 11
the Meiji Era around gender and sexuality. Of significance when examining this time era of Japanese history is to look at the influences being both brought externally to Japan from mostly Europe, but also the implementation of internal changes throughout the era. One change is the passage of several laws and ordinances that allowed for the punishment of homosexual acts. These sodomy laws and western influences were being passed and implemented to greater Japanese society at the same time. The two laws to be examined are both parts of the Sodomy Ordinance, and these are article 266 of the revised legal code in 1873, and Shinritsu Koryo in 1870. 18

In 1872, the Ministry of Justice drafted the Sodomy Ordinance in which the term “sodomy” or keikan were linked to homosexual acts. One year later article 266 of the sodomy ordinance or legal code went into effect and proclaimed the following.

“All sodomies will serve 90 days in prison; the nobility and ex-samurai for their complete shamelessness, will be deprived of their samurai status. The sodomized youth, if under 15 years of age will not be punished. Rapists will be imprisoned for ten years. In cases where the crimes were only attempted, the sentence will be reduced by one degree.” 19

While the law did not directly name the Wakashu, the fact that Samurai is mentioned directly, and that any youth who were part of keikan acts can be inferred to link back to the Wakashu culture.

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In 1881, the above legal code was removed when a western legal expert, the French Boissonade brought forward additional western views of sexuality and legal suggested changes to the laws, especially around same-sex or any gender outside of male and female. While these legal codes were no longer in effect, the view of same-sex relationships or any variance in gender were still viewed as socially unacceptable. Interestingly, even with these codes enacted, nanshoku was able to survive in isolated places well into the Taisho Period. The “keikan code was circulated only in a limited sphere, centered on the law, and did not reach to society generally” The concern for many in society during the latter part of the Meiji restoration was not around the issue of sex but around the issue of how laws and other societal restrictions were distracting to the future of Japan. The youth of Japan would not be as focused, and this could create issues for the future leaders of Japan and society.

Meiji era brought along western influence and along with western influence came changes to a long tradition in Japan. With this exploration of the periods of Japanese history from the mid-sixteenth century to the early part of the twentieth century helps to demonstrate how and why studying historians have briefly studied the Wakashu.

Wakashu

Who were the Wakashu? To define the Wakashu has been different depending on which historian or art historian is examining the Wakashu. Joshua Mostow, and Asato Ikeda in their catalog for the exhibit “A Third Gender beautiful youths in Japanese Edo-Period prints and paintings 1600-1868), define Wakashu as “sexually mature males who were not yet recognized

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20 Mark J. McLelland, Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan cultural myths and social realities. Oxon, OX 14: Curzon Press, 2004), 26
21 Mark J. McClelland, 26
as adults.” 22 During the Edo-period gender relations involving the Wakashu bring even more challenge to western understanding because Wakashu were not to be sexualized. 23 While a sexual relationship between an older male and a Wakashu this idea that they were not to be only viewed for sexual reasons shows how the expectations of the mentorship and growing of maturity for the Wakashu was of importance. For many scholars, the concern about properly defining the Wakashu has been around deciding the appropriate age to determine when a young man moved into the Wakashu phase of life. Because the definition for Wakashu includes sexually mature males, the way for any young male in Edo-Period Japan was to go through genpuku or the coming of age ceremony. 24

Wakashu - Age ranges and how to identify a Wakashu

One of the challenges historians have with determining an age range for Wakashu is because of the genpuku ceremony was done at different ages depending mainly on individual circumstance, social class, and local customs. 25 The Wakashu were young men, the transitional phase whereas individuals were sexual desires for both adult men and women during the Edo Period of Japan.

An example of a Wakashu from the Royal Ontario Museum & Japan Society in New York City (NYC) exhibits (this is the same exhibit held at two different museums in 2016) is below. In the image, you can tell the Wakashu by the bald spot on the top of the head that set off the forelocks (maegami).

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22 Mostow & Ikeda, 13
23 Ibid, 12
24 Ibid, 12
25 Mostow & Ikeda 12,
Mostow & Ikeda, & Hosoda Eisui, 77
The image on the catalog cover for the Wakashu exhibit, and helps to show the maegami and the unique hairstyle of the Wakashu. One of the challenges of identifying Wakashu is when they are not standing alone but part a pairing or in a group.

27 Mostow & Ikeda, & Nishikwa Sukenobu, 163
In the above example, two Wakashu talk with an older male. The style of dress is slightly different from the older man and the Wakashu, which makes seeing an older male and a Wakashu easier than seeing a Wakashu with a woman. A discussion of the relationship between a man and a Wakashu will be explored further with prints to demonstrate the relationships.
In this image, the top figure is a young woman, the figure bending over slightly is a Wakashu, and the bald individual is a young boy, not quite old enough yet to be a Wakashu. Being able to tell a Wakashu from women is not easy but possible.

Wakashu - Same-Sex - Male Relationships

The way that these Wakashu interacted with older men is what makes the same sex male relationships an important part of understanding not only the Wakashu but also the overall exploration of gender and sexuality in Japanese history. There are a few ways in which a Wakashu and an older adult male had a same-sex relationship: as part of the Samurai culture, and more within the commoners through tea houses and Kabuki Theaters.

As the Samurai has a long tradition in Japan and has a strong reputation for military excellence, many historians and learners may not know about their fluid view and acceptance of sexuality as a way to show power and bring forward an appropriate warrior for the future. The Samurai were part of Japanese society during the Togukawa Era that practiced “nanshoku” or “male love”. The Wakashu and an older male relationship was a pederastic relationship where “a young man came under the tutelage of an older warrior, who groomed him for his future role in society.”

An example of this love between a Samurai and a Wakashu in the below image which is from a set of short stories. In the image below you can see the Wakashu (standing) interacting with the Samurai Warrior (kneeling). In the introduction to The Great Mirror of Male Love Ihara Saikaku immediately mentions how the relationship between an adult male and a Wakashu occurred especially for this era of Japanese History. Interestingly, no example of a

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28 Mostow, & Ikeda & Kameido Taiko-Bashi, 102
29 Mostow and Ikeda, 57
Samurai and Wakashu was noticeably seen in the A 3rd Gender exhibit; however, the Samurai culture was delved into the homosexual & Wakashu cultures as part of a Samurai’s place in the larger Japanese society.

Within the larger society, the relationship between a man and a Wakashu is also seen through the Kabuki theaters, and tea houses and great examples of Wakashu relationships in Kabuki Theaters and Tea Houses are found in the fictional stories explored later in this paper.

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Wakashu - Female Relationships

Wakashu did have relationships with women. These relationships varied depending on the age of the woman involved. Women would be either Musume (“daughter”) or be an older woman who could be the initiator of the relationship. What is important to understand of the relationship of a wakashu and a woman or women is that typically when a Wakashu was seen with a woman (no matter the age), it was seen as two kinds of bijin (“beauties”). 31 Below are two examples of each type of potential relationship a wakashu could have with women, a relationship with young women and a wakashu relationship with females.

One example of Wakashu with a young woman can be found in the below. This print is “Wakashu and Young Woman with Hawks” and is made by Bunro in circa 1803.

31 Mostow & Ikeda, 98 & 144
In this image, there are a few historically significant parts to notice. One being the mageami on the Wakashu is easily noticeable. Second is the clothing of the female is traditional for the era. The third is the Falcons in the image. Falcons were restricted to the warrior class by law, and the fact that this young woman has a falcon on her arm would not be within reality.

The clothing on the young woman and the wakashu are also important in this print. The eggplant design on the woman’s kimono is one of the three images of good luck for one’s first

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32 Mostow & Ikeda, 104
dream in the New Year.\textsuperscript{33} Another is the triangle design on the Wakashu’s kimono which symbolizes Mt. Fuji, and the third is that of hawks. \textsuperscript{34} Like many aspects of larger Japanese society, the fact that the use of symbolism is shown in this print shows the positive view and impact incorporating Wakashu into Japanese society was at the time.

In addition to younger women, Wakashu also has relationships with older women, and in some examples, this relationship is similar to the relationship a Wakashu would have with an older adult male. An example is showing the relationship between an older adult woman and a Wakashu can be found in Suzuki Harunobu’s “Wakashu Talking to a Watatsumi Prostitute” which was made sometime between 1768-1769.

\textsuperscript{33} Mostow & Ikeda, 104
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, 104
A few key observations can be seen in this print about the relationship between the older woman and the wakashu. In the image, the Wakashu is sitting on a raised floor talking with the woman who is identified by David Waterhouse as a watatsumi (silk-puller) prostitute. The Wakashu himself seems somewhat tentative and it the woman seems to be more experienced.

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35 Mostow & Ikeda, 147
36 Ibid, 146
which can be suggested by the fact that hunting herons are in the background. The body language of the wakashu with him sitting slightly bent over and the way he is looking at an address the woman shows either the tentative description of David Waterhouse but it also could show his submissive role in the relationship, which again, connects back to the role that men and wakashu had.

Wakashu - In Fictional Stories

Fictional stories are a necessary part of understanding the Wakashu because there are no known surviving oral history, memoirs, or diaries about a Wakashu or a Wakashu’s lovers individual experience either being a Wakashu or having a Wakashu as a lover. The fact that some fictional stories are written in 1687 by Ihara Saikaku help to provide another historical lens to learn about and see the importance of the wakashu to LGBT history. The stories are in a collection entitled The Great Mirror of Male Love, and these are a collection of 40 stories that explore nanshoku in seventeenth-century Japan. Half of the stories explore the Wakashu and Samurai relationships, and the other half on the kabuki theaters and Wakashu. These stories bring importance to providing another example of relationships in Japan during the seventeenth century were not necessarily based on love leading to marriage but rather as love looking at individual relationships, both in prostitution and in relationships between Wakashu and older males or females. Two examples will be explored, one from the samurai half of the book, the other from the Kabuki theaters.

37 Mostow & Ikeda, 146 & Hiller (1970), Ishigami (2008), Waterhouse 1975, 80
First, as told through an exploration of the Samurai through fictional stories, and a story titled "Love: The Contest Between Two Forces." In this story boy love is described and is given some justification that shows the acceptance within society.

Boy love is a profound thing. Similar cases in Chinese and Japanese history attest to this. Wei Ling-Kung entrusted his life to Mi Tzu-Hsia, Kao Tso gave his whole heart to Chi Ju, and Wu Ti pillowed only with Lin yen-nein. In our country too, the "man of old" was over five years the lover of Ise’ younger brother Daimon no Chujo.  

The commitment to same-sex relationships with an example reaching into Chinese history shows the commonality and acceptance viewed when the story was written. Some of the main characters from this particular story including Narihira and Yoshida Kenko provide examples of their relationships with Wakashu.

Narihira is described as “still preferred the company of handsome youths to that of women.” Having a relationship with wakashu would have been acceptable for him as long as the relationship was one to help the wakashu grow into being an adult male who someday will take on his own Wakashu.

Yoshida Kenko is a priest, and he sent "thousands of love letters to a nephew of Sei Shonagon named Kiowakamaru". He did write a love letter to a woman, but it is clear that he did lean more to same-sex however it is clear that his desire for both sexes was present, his preference does seem to lean toward youth, young boys.

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38 Ihara Saikaku, 52
39 Ibid, 52
40 Ibid, 52
The one notice about this particular story is that it makes a good amount of comparison between young girls and Wakashu, with the preference being toward the wakashu. The view of beauty is clear that both genders provided beauty, but the Wakashu were the main for focus.

Another example of a story is titled “A Secret Visit Leads to the Wrong Bed” which shares another look into the beauty of women and the comparable beauty of the wakashu to women. The story takes place in a face-powder shop where the dialogue between the shop owner and a patron gives some view into women and wakashu around beauty. The boy that is described in this story was named Kichiya, and he was described as a beautiful boy.  The story describes that as a wakashu he would hide and observe the women in the community to learn about other ways that he can make his appearance resemble the women while still maintaining his future as an older adult male.

These stories were still available but also translated into English makes them accessible to historians and society in a way that is atypical. All the stories shared in this book all give as close to first-hand accounts as possible about the Wakashu. In addition to the stories, some of the stories are matched with woodblocks. As referenced earlier in this paper one of these woodblock prints is used to show what Wakashu appearance was compared to other members of society.

**Wakashu - Larger LGBT history**

LGBT history has seen similar examples of same-sex relationships being accepted by society. The Wakashu are not unique in being an example of gender or sexuality being accepted by society. Some examples from history that can provide historians and even general interest

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41 Ihara Saikaku, 237
explorers some comparison come from three continents: Europe, Asia, and North America. The first is looking at Ancient Greece, a look at China and the second are Native Americans.

The relationships between younger men and older men that is seen in ancient Greece appear to be similar to the Wakashu. As stated already, the wakashu was about the relationship between a younger male (Wakashu) and older male. Some scholars and historians have argued that the relationship between a Wakashu and the older male is similar to the relationship between a boy and an older man in ancient Greece around pederastic relations. While both the ancient Greeks and the Japanese had relationships between younger man and older men, it is important to break down the word pedophilia. With a Greek origin, pedophilia comes from two Greek words: pais or paidos meaning boy or child and Philos meaning loving. While the modern use of pedophilia is used to clearly define the appropriate actions to be taken by an adult with a younger individual specifically a child seeing this breakdown the idea that both the Greeks and the Japanese were having their relationships in loving ways makes the two cultures seem similar.

Like many things in Japan, the influence of China and what she has or has not accepted can play a role in how Japanese society accepts or rejects behavior, tradition, or practice. Some examples of how China over the years has accepted same-sex relationships especially similar to how the Wakashu and older men have a relationship are insightful and helpful. The first is going back to the fifth century B.C. when the first Han emperor Kao Tsu love for his minister Chi Ju. Additionally, the example of the sixth Han emperor’s relationship with Li Yen-Nien, brother of his favorite concubine Li Fu-Jen. These two examples while far older than the era studied in

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42 Mosato & Ikeda, 13  
43 Ibid, 13  
44 Ihara Saikaku, 11  
45 Ihara Saikaku, 10
Japan show that the idea of same-sex relationships and boy love have been happening in human history far longer than modern times or western traditions that make same-sex relationships seem outside of the norm. The author of Great Mirror of Male Love, even mentions that same-sex relationships and boy love "is not exclusive to us (Japan); it is practiced throughout the known world," which is profound of a statement to make in the 1600s when his book was written and published but shows the level of understanding of the commonality and normalcy same-sex relationships were around the world." 46

North American Native American communities have had a long history of accepting difference, not as something harming the community but making the community a better place for all. In Native American communities’ individuals who do not fit into the Western gender norms of ‘male’ and ‘female’ fall into what is known as a two-spirit person. This person can have both masculine and feminine ways of dressing, acting, and their roles in society. While unlike the above two examples, sexuality is not as main of a focus more the gender and how the individual chooses to identify is important. When European influences came into the Americas tribes were being looked at through the cultural lens of western explorers, and to conquerors, the notion of two-spirits was foreign, was not recorded in their observations. These observations were not recorded for similar reasons to why the Meiji restoration did not continue to accept the idea of the Wakashu; two-spirited individuals did not fit into the notion of a male and female only gender viewpoint. An appropriate quote about western influence is: “before the arrival of Christian missionaries, a man could dress as a woman and woman was free dress like a man, to hunt and go to war with men, and to marry a woman” 47 Acceptance of a third or non-binary

46 Ihara Saikaku, 10
47 Sandra Slater and Fay. A. Yarbrough eds, Gender and Sexuality in Indigenous North America 1400-1850 (Columbia, South Carolina: The University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 169
gender makes the Native Americans and the two-spirit members of their communities an excellent example about an idea of a Third Gender is not a foreign one, but one that is foreign to western perspective because of the focus on a two-gender system and acceptance.

**Contribution to or challenge to existing scholarship**

To date, the primary historians looking at the Wakashu are Art Historians. While they are invaluable to helping historians and others see who the Wakashu were, this paper will help to expand the historical knowledge of the Wakashu through an examination of the Edo Period culture, but also provide context for before the Edo Period and post Edo Period Japan the views around Gender and Sexuality.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) history has almost no inclusion of the Wakashu in global history. This paper helps bring the Wakashu into the LGBTQ known history, as well as into the known history of gender history. It will also contribute to the cultural history of Japan. Wakashu and has become a "hidden" history but not forgotten. The goal of this paper and the final paper is to help bring this hidden history out for all to learn.

This paper will also challenge existing scholarship by moving away from looking at the Wakashu as only sexual desires for both men and women, but to help examine the cultural acceptance of an individual young males’ passage from being a child to a grown adult male. The idea of a third gender and having that idea used by an entire society for a couple of hundred years makes this paper and the ideas it will historically view important to the existing scholarship. Great scholarship has been done by scholars looking at the history of sexuality, but this paper will help to see how the Wakashu are a Third Gender mostly because of the social structures in place during Edo Period Japan and the male being the higher authority over women
or any other including Wakashu. This paper helped to not only explore the Wakashu but also looked at why the change from the widespread acceptance of the Wakashu to a more conservative view of gender and sexuality occurred after the introduction of Western influences from Europe.

Conclusion

A Third Gender. The idea of a third gender challenges western definitions and understanding of the human experience. Historians and history have neglected to include all history of the past by not including more of the LGBT history. Scholars and historians are getting more and more focus on the LGBT history of all societies, but the need for further exploration is highly needed. Discovering the Wakashu through a conversation with a Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and getting the opportunity to reach and learn about these remarkable forgotten individuals of the past has helped grow this historians understanding of the past. The Wakashu may have been a transitional part of an individual's life, but it formed an important part of Japanese society for hundreds if not thousands of years. The importance of the Wakashu to understanding more about the Tokugawa Era and the Meiji Restoration in Japanese history is important to helping to understand the massive cultural shift that happened during the Meiji Era and to some extent continues today.

The question of why was there a change in acceptance of a Third Gender in Japanese history is simple, Western ideas and influences changed Japan to fit into a westernized world. The reason for the Japanese government to make the switch from tradition to making the switch to Western influence was understandable, to help Japan have a strong hold in the world. However, some history was almost forgotten because of the restoration. The woodblocks, prints, and fictional
stories used to look at the Wakashu in this paper have survived, and with their survival, the history of an important part of Japanese history survived, the Wakashu, A Third Gender.
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