

SACRED TWIG AND TREE: TAMAGUSHI AND SAKAKI IN JAPANESE-ENGLISH DICTIONARIES

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The present article analyzes Japanese-English dictionary translations for *tamagushi* 玉串 ‘a Shinto offertory *sakaki* branch’ and *sakaki* 榊 ‘an evergreen (*Cleyera ochracea*) regarded as sacred.’¹ This case study in bilingual lexicography has four sections. The first reviews how *tamagushi* was translated as English “sacred twig” in a newspaper story about the constitutional separation of religion and state. The second section introduces the Japanese words *tamagushi* and *sakaki*, and presents outstanding definitions from a monolingual dictionary (Figures 1 and 2). The third compares *tamagushi* and *sakaki* translation equivalents from two dozen Japanese-English dictionaries (Tables 1 and 2), finding typographical errors like “offer a sprig branch” instead of “offer a sprig *or* branch.” The concluding section discusses bilingual dictionary errors about *tamagushi* as exemplifying often unreliable English equivalents of Japanese flora and fauna names. For instance, the *tamagushi* entry in

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the prestigious *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* (4th ed.) misspells *Cleyera ochracea* as “*Cleyera orchnacca*.”

What Is a “Sacred Twig”?

The original idea for studying *tamagushi* translation equivalents came when I saw “sacred twig” in a newspaper story and looked in Japanese-English dictionaries to try to find out its meaning (unsuccessfully, as it turned out). This preface will introduce the “Ehime *Tamagushi* Donation Lawsuit” and elucidate some logographic problems for users of Japanese dictionaries.

What eventually became called the *Ehime tamagushi-ryō soshō* 愛媛玉串料訴訟 “Ehime [Prefecture] *Tamagushi* Donation Lawsuit” began in 1982 when an interdenominational group of prefectural residents sued government officials for having spent ¥166,000 (about \$735) in public funds to purchase Shinto offerings. On March 17, 1989, the Matsuyama District Court — overturning all previous precedents — ruled these *tamagushi* expenditures violated the Japanese constitutional “wall of separation” between religion and state, and ordered the defendants to repay the prefecture.

An attention-grabbing “Use of Public Money for Sacred Twig Ruled Illegal” headline in the *Asahi Evening News* (March 17, 1989, p. 1) introduced an account of the Ehime government’s unconstitutional donation of something called “sacred twigs” to Shinto shrines. Not knowing what a “sacred twig” was, I compared a Japanese vernacular newspaper, the *Hokkaido Shinbun* (March 17, p. 1), and found the story centered upon a word transcribed 玉ぐし料 with three elements: a Chinese logograph 玉

meaning 'jade,' *gushi* written ぐし in hiragana syllabary, and a logograph 料 'fee' suffix.

Although I knew both these *kanji* 漢字 'Chinese logographs' and could think of two Japanese (*gushi* regularly voiced <) *kushi* words meaning 'comb' and 'skewer,' I was uncertain how to look up the key-word because most logographs have alternative Japanese readings. *Kanji* can have *kun'yomi* 訓読み 'semantic reading(s)' from native Japanese pronunciation and/or *on'yomi* 音読み 'phonetic reading(s)' borrowed from Chinese, with the latter Sino-Japanese pronunciations loosely divided between *kan'on* 漢音 'Han reading,' *go-on* 呉音 'Wu [Shanghai region] reading,' *tō-on* 唐音 'Tang reading,' and *kan'yō-on* 慣用音 'popular reading.' The common 'tree; wood' logograph 木, for example, is read *ki* or *ko* in indigenous *kun'yomi*, *boku* in *kan'on*, or *moku* in *go-on*. For the "sacred twig" term in question, the initial logograph 玉 denoting 'jade; precious stone; exquisite; bead; ball; etc.' can be read *gyoku* or *gyo* in Sino-Japanese or *tama* in native Japanese, and the suffixal logograph 料 is a loanword -*ryō* 'fee; charge; materials.' In the Ehime lawsuit context, governmental funds (i.e., -*ryō*) had been donated for something possibly called *tamagushi*, *gyokugushi*, *gyogushi*, *mutatis mutandis*.

At this juncture, native speakers of Japanese could intuitively look up *tamagushi* in a monolingual dictionary arranged alphabetically.² But nonnative speakers are caught in a Catch-22 peculiar to dictionaries of

2. "Alphabetical" in the extended sense of Japanese あいう 'a, i, u' ... ordering followed in practically all modern monolingual dictionaries and a few bilingual ones (e.g., *New Standard Japanese-English Dictionary*).

logographically written languages: they need to know the pronunciation of a word before looking it up in an alphabetical dictionary. If you do not know how to read a particular Japanese word written in *kanji*, the most efficient approach is to use a specialized dictionary of logographs. I looked in Nelson's *Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary* (2nd ed.) s.v. 玉 'jade; etc.' and found a compound with *kushi* 串 'skewer; to string' glossed as "*tamagushi*, *tamakushi* Shinō {sic, a misprint of Shinto} sacred paper-decked *sakaki*-branch offering." Knowing the pronunciation of this key Japanese word translated as "sacred twig" unlocked *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* (4th ed.) which translates *tamagushi* and *sakaki* as equivalents to "a sprig of *Cleyera orchnacca* {sic} offered to a god" and "a *sakaki* (pl. -s)."

Still uninformed about *tamagushi* and *sakaki* or "*Cleyera orchnacca*" (a misspelling of *C. ochracea*), I looked in some Japanese monolingual dictionaries and learned that *tamagushi* means 'a *sakaki* branch decorated with cotton or paper, presented as an offering in Shinto ceremonies' and *sakaki* means generally 'evergreens used for religious offerings' or specifically 'a small evergreen of the Theaceae family.' This serendipitous finding of errors in two of the best Japanese-English dictionaries led to the present investigation into *tamagushi* and *sakaki*.

Since the "seed idea" for this study came from a Japanese newspaper, the first step was to check other accounts. In the vernacular press, the Ehime lawsuit was literally front-page news in March 17, 1989, evening editions. Comparing three major national newspapers (*Asahi Shinbun*, *Yomiuri Shinbun*, and *Mainichi Shinbun*) and the regional one mentioned above (*Hokkaido Shinbun*) revealed terminological similarity.

Headlines in all four cited *tamagushi-ryō* 玉ぐし料 ‘tamagushi offerings/donations’ with differing ways of saying “court rules” and “unconstitutional.” The four stories repeated this word along with other terms quoted from the original lawsuit: *tamagushi-ryō nado* legalistically hedged with *nado* など ‘etc.,’ *kentō-ryō* 献灯料 ‘votive lantern/light offerings,’ and *kumotsu-ryō* 供物料 ‘oblations; offerings.’

In contrast with this *tamagushi-ryō* uniformity among vernacular press accounts, four English language newspapers gave variously less understandable translations. The *Asahi Evening News* (March 17, p. 1) and *Mainichi Daily News* (March 18, p. 12) translated the fundamental word *tamagushi-ryō*. Their headlines were “Use of Public Money for Sacred Twig {sic}³ Ruled Illegal” and “Court: Use of Public Funds For Shrine Offerings Illegal” with story references to “sacred twigs” and “sprigs of sacred trees ... tree sprigs.” The *Japan Times* (March 18, p. 1) and *Daily Yomiuri* (March 18, p. 12) bypassed *tamagushi*, presumably owing to the English lexical gap for such specialized Shinto vocabulary. Headlines read “Court instructs governor to repay shrine donations” and “Court Decision Supports State-Religion Separation” with “donations” and “prefectural funds ... public funds” in their stories.

After a prolonged appeal, the Takamatsu High Court overturned the Matsuyama decision on May 12, 1992, ruling that the Ehime donations

3. The *Asahi*’s story translating plural “sacred twigs” made better sense than the singular “Sacred Twig” in its headline. This -s was probably omitted in order to squeeze “Sacred Twig Ruled Illegal” into three columns (28 point, 14 cm.).

were constitutional and within the realm of “social protocol” because each one was too small (¥5000–10,000) to be considered as governmental support of Shintoism. The English-language press treated *tamagushi* about the same; compare these headline and story references: “Offerings to Shrine,” “offerings to a shrine ... shrine offerings” (*Asahi Evening News* May 13, p. 4), “shrine donations,” “donations to Shinto shrines ... donations to shrines” (*The Japan Times* May 13, p. 1), and “shrine offerings ... *tamagushi* (tree bough offerings)” (*Mainichi Daily News* May 16, p. 2). The latter transliteration-explanation is comparatively the most informative.

Whether *tamagushis* should be translated “twigs,” “sprigs,” “boughs,” or “branches” depends upon relative size; see Table 1. They are generally available in lengths ranging from around twenty centimeters for use in miniature *kamidana* 神棚 ‘home altars’ up to one meter for public shrine offerings; and in some processions Shintoists carry entire *sakaki* trees. “Twigs” or “sprigs” is a suitable translation for privately used *tamagushis*, but “boughs” or “branches” is more accurate for the Ehime lawsuit. Japanese monolingual dictionaries define *tamagushi* in terms of *eda* 枝 ‘branch; bough; limb’ rather than one of its smaller designations: *koeda* 小枝 “small branch” ‘twig; sprig; spray’; *wakaeda* 若枝 “young branch” ‘sprig; switch; shoot’; or *hosoeda* 細枝 “slender branch” ‘twig; wand.’

Unlike Japanese *kentō* ‘votive light/lamp’ or *kumotsu* ‘oblations; offerings,’ neither *tamagushi* nor *sakaki* has a direct English counterpart. Ideal translations could transliterate and explain; for instance, “*tamagushi*, a decorated Shinto offertory *sakaki*-tree branch” or “*sakaki*, a flower-

ing evergreen (*Cleyera japonica*) considered sacred by Shintoists.”

Understandability is the biggest difference between Japanese and English language reporting of the 1989 *tamagushi* donation lawsuit. All the vernacular newspapers, as well as other news media, mentioned *tamagushi-ryō* 玉串料, which most native speakers of Japanese know to mean ‘donations of sakaki branches used in Shinto rituals.’ But only two of the four English papers, practically the sole foreign coverage of the lawsuit, translated *tamagushi* as “sacred twigs” or “sprigs of sacred trees,” which is scarcely meaningful. Consider the predicament of foreigners (e.g., religious scholars, constitutional lawyers) interested in the Ehime case: unless they were reading a Japanese vernacular account, they would not learn about *tamagushi*, and that was the crucial point.

Before analyzing how Japanese-English dictionaries translate *tamagushi* and *sakaki*, these two source terms will be introduced.

The Japanese Words *Tamagushi* and *Sakaki*

This section outlines the linguistic background of *tamagushi* and *sakaki*, and discusses monolingual definitions of them (Figures 1 and 2) from the highly-acclaimed 1988 *Daijirin*.

Tamagushi < Old Japanese *tamakushi* 玉串 is a *sakaki* branch decorated with strips of paper, silk, cotton, or linen, and presented to gods during Shinto rituals. The definition of *tamagushi* in Figure 1 discriminates two meanings, and lists run-on derivatives with *sasageru* ささげる ‘offer; present’ (cf. Table 1) and *-ryō* 料 (mentioned in the Ehime lawsuit, p. 5). In translation, this definition reads:

たまぐし玉串 ①木綿または紙をつけて神前にささげる、
神かみの枝。「一をささげる」②
植物サカキの異名。「神風や」
のほをとりかさし新古今神祇
一りよう玉串料神道の儀
式で、神前にささげる供物。



Figure 1

The *Daijirin*'s Tamagushi Definition

Tamagushi [type 2 accent {on ma}]. ① A *sakaki* branch decorated with cotton or paper, and presented as an offering in Shinto ceremonies. *Tamagushi o sasageru* 'to offer a *tamagushi*.' ② A name for the *sakaki* tree. {1205} *Shin kokin* {*Wakashū*} {Revised Collection of Old and New Tanka Poetry} ("Respect for the Gods") "Holding the ornamented *tamagushi* leaves." *Tamagushi-ryō* [type 4 accent {on shi}] 'donations of *tamagushi* for Shinto ritual offerings to the gods.'

The *Daijirin* entry is concise, notes accent (regularly predictable in both cases), and makes effective visual use of an illustration; yet it gives neither an etymology for the word nor a usage example for the primary meaning (see the *Nihongi* on p. 9).

Since the etymology of *tamagushi* is dubious, the *Daijirin*, like most monolingual dictionaries, avoids problems by not citing a word origin. The few Japanese dictionaries that do give a *tamagushi* etymology (e.g., *Kokugo daijiten*, *Iwanami kogo jiten*) accept the famous dialectologist Yanagita Kunio's idea of *tama* 玉 'jade; ball' meaning *tama* 霊 'spirit; soul.' His hypothesis is feasible (see Shiba 1983): a Japanese *tama* 'spirit' is believed to have a *tama* 'round; ball' shape. However, dictionaries do not

mention that Yanagita's original *tamagushi* "spirit stick" etymology (1917: 563-566) speculated upon a rare Buddhist funerary practice called *takegushi* 竹串 'a paper-decorated "bamboo stick" used to signify mourning.' The *Nihon kokugo daijiten* defines this word as meaning 'sharpened bamboo pole' or 'scissors' (in pickpockets' cant), but it is apparently not listed in any Japanese dictionaries or encyclopedias of Buddhism. This otherwise unrecorded Buddhist *takegushi* "bamboo stick" was more likely a derivation from, rather than the source for, ancient Shintoist *tamagushi*.

The *Daijirin* (Figure 1) indicates that *tamagushi* is written 玉串 with *tama* 玉 'jade; gem, jewel; precious; ball, bead; bullet' and *kushi* 串 'string together; skewer, spit; stick.' In contrast, more historically oriented Japanese dictionaries (e.g., *Kokugo daijiten*, *Kōjien*, even *Brinkley's* in Table 1) indicate that the *kushi* in *tamagushi* was originally transcribed with *kuji* 籤 'bamboo slip; (divination) lot; written oracle; raffle, lottery.' *Tamagushi* 玉籤 occurs in the (ca. 720) *Nihongi* 日本紀 [Chronicles of Japan] cosmological legend about when the sun goddess Amaterasu got angry and hid in a cave, the benighted gods decorated a giant sakaki tree with jewels.

Then all the Gods were grieved at this, and forthwith caused ... {豊玉} Toyo-tama, the ancestor of the Be {'clan; guild'} of jewel-makers to make {玉} jewels. They also caused Yama-tsuchi to procure eighty {玉籤} precious combs of the five-hundred-branched true sakaki tree. (tr. Aston 1972: 47)⁴

4. In Aston's translation of this *locus classicus*, he transliterates *tama* 玉 in the jeweler's name "Toyo-Tama" and renders it as "jewels" and "precious": with "combs" deriving from *kushi* 櫛 'comb,' a textual variant for this *kuji* 籤

Japanese dictionaries originally developed out of glossaries to Chinese texts (Bailey 1960: 1-4), in parallel to early Latin-English lexicography (Landau 1989: 37-39). The (ca. 934) *Wamyō ruijishō* 倭名類聚抄 [Japanese Names, Classified and Annotated] was the first dictionary to gloss *tamagushi* and *sakaki*. It says: “The *Nihongi* mentions *tamakushi* 玉籤, *kuji* 籤 {‘bamboo slip’} is pronounced *sen* {in Sino-Japanese *on’yomi*}.” And it cites a misunderstanding about the ‘longan tree, *Euphoria longana*’ (< Chinese *lóngyǎn* 龍眼 “dragon eye,” Japanese *ryūgan*) from no longer extant bilingual glossaries: “The {ca. 720} *Yōshi kangoshō* 楊氏漢語抄 {Yang’s Annotated Chinese Wordbook} says longan refers to the sakaki tree, but the name is now used for its fruit, see the {early 10th cent.} *Honzō Wamyō* 本草倭名 {Japanese Names for Plants}.”

Sakaki is a small evergreen with glossy, alternate leaves, yellowish-white flowers, purple berries, and close-grained wood. From ancient times, the Japanese have considered it sacred, and have used *sakaki* branches and leaves as offerings to the gods. This luxuriant evergreen is traditionally planted to delineate boundaries around Shinto shrines. Current botanical nomenclature designates *sakaki* as *Cleyera ochnacea* DC. or *C. japonica* Mak.⁵ *Sakaki* belongs to the family Theaceae (along with teas, camellias, etc.) and is most closely related to two *Eurya* species: *hisakaki* (< *hi[me]* 姫 ‘princess; little,’ i.e., smaller) *E. japonica* Thunb.

‘bamboo slip’ that occurs in a *Nihongi* (Aston 1972: 62) goddess’s name Tamakushi Hime 玉櫛姫 “Jewel Comb Lady.”

5. *Sakaki* was previously classified (see Table 2) as *Eurya ochnacea* Szysz. These generic and specific names derive from Greek *eury*s ‘wide; broad’ and *ochnē* ‘pear tree’ (cf. the *Ochnaceae* family of trees and shrubs with coriaceous leaves). The *Cleyera* genus is an eponym for the German naturalist Dr. Andreas Cleyer (1612-1659).

and *hamahisakaki* (< *hama* 浜 ‘beach,’ viz. coastline habitat) *E. emarginata* Mak.

In modern Japanese, *sakaki* is written 榊 with a doubly exceptional logograph. It is an ideograph (in the proper sense of ‘logograph representing an idea’ rather than loosely ‘Chinese character; logograph’) and is a *kokuji* 国字 ‘Japanese [not Chinese] logograph.’ Ideograms and *kokuji* are two of the rarest logographic types, each constituting a small percentage of a typical written Japanese sample. First, the idea of *sakaki* 榊 is expressed with a melding of *boku* or *ki* 木 ‘tree’ and *shin* or *kami* 神 ‘god; divine, sacred’ [of *Shinto*]; comparable to a graphic fusion of the word *shinboku* 神木 ‘sacred tree.’⁶ Second, the *sakaki* 榊 ideograph is a *kokuji* ‘national [i.e., Japanese] logograph’ rather than a usual *kanji* 漢字 ‘Chinese logograph’ borrowing. *Kokuji* often denote Japanese plants and animals not native to China, and thus not normally written with Chinese logographs.⁷ Monolingual dictionaries customarily note *sakaki* is written with a Japanese-made *kokuji*; and several *kokuji* definitions (e.g., *Kōjien*, *Daijirin*, *Kokugo daijiten*) cite 榊 as an example of one. However, *The Modern Reader’s* is the only present bilingual dictionary that mentions it.

6. This ideographic “sacred tree” *sakaki* has a “sacred fish” analogue in *hatahata* 鱚 (written with the 魚 “fish radical” and 神 ‘god,’ or 鱚 with 雷 ‘thunder’) ‘a sandfish, *Arctoscopus japonicus*’ that Japanese legends associate with the thunder god.

7. Many Japanese-Chinese dictionaries (e.g., *Shin Nichi-Kan jiten*, cf. *Brinkley’s* in Table 2) translate *sakaki* as equivalent to *yāngtóng* 楊桐 “poplar paulownia,” but the *Nihon kokugo daijiten* notes this is wrong. This mistake apparently began when the 1938 *Cihai* defined *yāngtóng* 楊桐 as *Eurya ochnacea* (with a *sakaki* illustration), and added that the 1671 *Zhengzitong* 正字通 erroneously identified *yāngtóng* as *nān(tiān)zhú* 南(天)燭 “southern (heaven) candle” ‘*Lyonia ovalifolia*,’ an evergreen shrub with red berries. In contrast, the *Cihai* correctly defines Chinese *lǐng* 枏 as *Eurya japonica*.

さかき回(神・賢木)「栄える木の意」①神域に植える常緑樹の総称。また、神事に用いる木。②ツバキ科の常緑小高木。暖地の山中に自生。高さ約一〇m。葉は互生し、長楕円状倒卵形。濃緑色で質厚く光沢がある。六、七月、白色の小花を開く。枝葉を神事に用いる。↓ひさかき。③源氏物語の巻名の一。―かき回(神かき)祭りのとき、みこしの先頭に立って神を担いで歩く役の人。神持ち。

Figure 2

The Daijirin's Sakaki Definition

The *sakaki* definition in Figure 2 gives three meanings and includes entries for *hisakaki* (see p. 10) and *sakaki-kaki* 神かき “sakaki-carrier” (cross-referenced to its synonym *sakaki-mochi* 神持ち). In translation, this definition reads:

Sakaki [type 0 accent {high level pitch on *kaki*}] (meaning *sakaeru* ‘flourishing’ *ki* ‘tree’) ① A general name for evergreens planted at the boundary of shrine precincts. Later, trees used for religious offerings. ② A small evergreen of the Theaceae family, native to mountainous areas in warm regions. Height roughly ten

meters. Leaves are alternate, long, elliptical, obovate, dark-green, thick, and glossy. In June or July, white flowers blossom. Its branches and leaves are offered to the {Shinto} gods. See *hisakaki*. ③ The name of a chapter in the *Genji monogatari* {The Tale of Genji}. *Sakaki-kaki* [type 3 accent {high level on *kaki*}] ‘person who carries a sakaki in front of a *mikoshi* {portable shrine} during a festival.’ *Sakaki-mochi* {‘sakaki carrier’}.

Meaning ① ‘sacred trees’ is historically and etymologically valid, but gives a misleading picture of the usual meaning ② ‘*Cleyera*’ (cf. Malone’s 1940 study of *mahogany* definitions). This definition does not mention the common surname *Sakaki* (e.g., psychiatrist Sakaki Hajime 神俣 1857–1897). Unlike *tamagushi* in Figure 1, the *Daijirin* gives a *sakaki* etymol-

ogy from *sakae-ki* “flourishing tree.”

With consensus that the *-ki* suffix in *sakaki* means 木 ‘tree,’ the two most probable *saka-* etymologies are either a *sakae* 栄え ‘flourishing; luxuriant’ evergreen or a consecrative *sakai* 堺 ‘boundary’ planted around shrines. While the *Daijirin* (Figure 2) cites the first ‘flourishing tree’ etymology, comparable dictionaries like the *Kōjien* and *Kokugo daijiten* prefer the second ‘boundary tree’ owing to ancient pronunciation: prototonic *sakaki* < Old Japanese *sakakī* and *sakai* ‘boundary’ versus deuterotonic *sakae* ‘flourishing.’ Besides historical phonology favoring *sakaki* < ‘divine boundary tree,’ there are Shinto traditions of encircling shrine grounds with *shinboku* 神木 ‘sacred trees,’ especially *kansugi* 神杉 ‘sacred cryptomeria.’

The *Daijirin* notes *sakaki* is written 榊 with the Japanese “sacred tree” ideograph or 賢木 with *saka* 賢 ‘sage; wise’ and *ki* 木 ‘tree’ logographs. The former 榊 “sacred tree” transcription is first recorded in the (early 11th cent.) *Konjaku monogatari* 今昔物語集 [Collected Stories, New and Old] “People who deal with *sakaki* are perhaps too many to know.” “The Sacred Tree” chapter of (ca. 1000) *The Tale of Genji* 源氏物語 (viz. meaning ③ in Figure 2) writes *sakaki* as the latter 賢木 “sage tree.”⁸ This digraphic 賢木 “sage tree” was also used in the (ca. 712) *Kojiki* 古事記 [Records of Ancient Matters] (tr. Chamberlain 1981: 64)

8. The *Genji* chapter (10) title comes from this passage (tr. Seidensticker 1981: 187): “Not wishing to apologize for all the weeks of neglect, he {Genji} pushed a branch of the sacred tree in under the blinds. ‘With heart unchanging as this evergreen, This sacred tree, I enter the sacred gate.’”

“pulling up by pulling its roots a true *clevera japonica* with five hundred [branches] from the Heavenly Mount Kagu”; and the (645-760) *Manyōshū* 万葉集 [Myriad Leaves {Poetry} Collection] (tr. Pierson 1929: 199) “I tie pure white strands of mulberry to the branches of the sacred tree.” The (ca. 720) *Nihongi* [Chronicles of Japan] (cf. p. 9) has another early *sakaki* 坂木 “slope tree” transcription: (tr. Aston 1972: 42-3) “True Sakaki tree of the Heavenly Mt. Kagu.”

To summarize the *Daijirin* definitions of Japanese *tamagushi* and *sakaki* in Figures 1 and 2; both note pronunciations, discriminate multiple meanings (‘offertory *sakaki* branch; *sakaki*’ and ‘religious evergreens; *sakaki*; *Genji* chapter’), cite classical examples, and include subentries. The first illustrates a *tamagushi* and the second etymologizes *sakaki*. Reflecting the fundamentally differing needs of monolingual and bilingual dictionary users, hardly any Table 1 and 2 Japanese-English sources in the next section give these features.

Having introduced the newspaper “sacred twig” *tamagushi* translation and the 榊 “sacred tree” *sakaki*, these two words can be used to exemplify Japanese bilingual metalexicography.

Japanese-English Treatments of *Tamagushi* and *Sakaki*

This principal section will use *tamagushi* and *sakaki* to illustrate some aspects of Japanese-English lexicography.⁹ First, how can you translate these Japanese words into English? Both are paradigmatically

9. The findings could be extended to other languages. Compare these *Diccionario Manual Japones-Español* entries: “**tamagusi** 玉串 s. ramo de árbol

“culture-bound” to the source language and lack direct translation equivalents in the target one (see Tomaszczyk 1983 and Bugarski 1985). Zgusta (1971: 318-325) distinguishes three word-types in bilingual dictionaries, terms with: translational or insertible equivalents, explanatory or descriptive ones, and “onomasiological gaps” with no equivalent. *Sakaki* bridges the first two types; either translatable through the English borrowing *sakaki* or the botanical designations *Cleyera ochracea/japonica*, or explicable with the coinage “sacred tree,” which is especially adroit because *sakaki*’s ideograph 榊 combines 木 ‘tree’ and 神 ‘god; divine’ elements. *Tamagushi* exemplifies the third with a target lexicon gap that an English dictionary needs to fill through explanation. It can be minimally translated as “a branch/sprig of (a sacred tree) *sakaki*,” optionally clarified with information about “decorated with paper, etc.” and/or “Shinto offering to the gods.” “Sacred branch” is thus a contextually possible rendering of *tamagushi*; e.g., in *The Tale of Genji* “Sacred Tree” chapter, Seidensticker (1981: 190) translates, “Genji sent out a poem attached to a sacred branch.”

“Sacred tree” is probably more familiar than “sacred branch” to most Anglophones. The CobuildDirect on-line corpus of English, which includes over twenty million words, matches three texts (Van der Post 1972; Good News Bible¹⁰ 1976; Aiken 1980) using “sacred tree” but none for “sacred twig,” “sprig,” “bough,” or “branch.”

sagrado. ～を捧げる ofrecer a una deidad una ramita de árbol sagrado” and “**sakaki** 榊 s. <植> árbol sagrado: cleyera ochracea.”

10. Besides this translation “Abram travelled through the land until he came to the sacred tree of Moreh, the holy place at Shechem” (Good News) other

Tables 1 and 2 show translation equivalents to these Japanese words from twenty-six bilingual English dictionaries that gloss both or either *tamagushi* and *sakaki*.¹¹ This corpus was chosen for purposes of analyzing dictionary errors and is not a complete listing. Owing to the relatively low frequency of word usage for Japanese *tamagushi* and *sakaki*, the present sample delimits itself to larger Japanese-English dictionaries. There is no need for either a student's bilingual dictionary or a traveler's pocket wordbook to include these specialized vocabulary items. To illustrate the creation and copying of mistakes within Japanese bilingual dictionaries, some multiple Kenkyusha editions are listed. Otherwise, when *tamagushi* and *sakaki* translation equivalents have no significant errors, the tables exclude both abridged dictionaries (e.g., listing *Inouye's* but not *Inouye's Smaller Japanese-English Dictionary*) and earlier editions (e.g., listing the third edition of *The New Crown Japanese-English Dictionary*, yet not the first or second). Within typographical limitations, tabular entries reproduce the translation equivalents as they appear in dictionaries. N.B. abbreviations (e.g., "J-E Dict.") and translations (*mei* 名 'n.' for *meishi* 名詞 'noun') are listed below.

Biblical (Gen 12: 6) renderings include: "the plain of Moreh" (King James Version), "the oak of Moreh" (Young's Literal, New American Standard), "the oak (or terebinth) of Moreh" (Revised Standard), "the oak at Moreh" (Living Bible), "the Oracular oak" (James Moffatt), or "an oak called Moreh" (Story of the Bible).

11. The majority are alphabetical dictionaries of Japanese words, but three are of *kanji* logographs: *The Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary*, *Beginner's Dictionary of Chinese-Japanese Characters*, and *Japanese Character Dictionary With Compound Lookup via Any Kanji*. The latter two are among the six dictionaries that include *sakaki* but not *tamagushi*. Two smaller dictionaries in Table 2 list *tamagushi* but not its tree.

TABLE 1. ENGLISH TAMAGUSHI 玉串 EQUIVALENTS

1867 <i>J and E Dict. with an E and J Index</i>	---
1908 <i>Brinkley's J-E Dict.</i>	Tamagushi , たまぐし, 玉串, 玉簀. <i>n.</i> ①Slips of white paper attached to a branch of <i>sakaki</i> (<i>Cleyera japonica</i>), and placed before the altar in a shintō temple as an offering to the Kami. ②[<i>Bot.</i>] <i>Cleyera japonica</i> {sic}. <i>Tamagushi wo sasagu</i> , 玉串ヲ捧グ, to offer a <i>tamagushi</i> (to the Kami).
1918 <i>Takenobu's J-E Dict.</i>	---
1922 <i>Beginner's Dict. of C-J Characters</i>	---
1924 <i>Inoue's J-E Dict.</i>	tamagushi (玉串), <i>n.</i> a branch of <i>Eurya ochracea</i> offered to a god.
1924 <i>A Standard J-E Dict.</i>	tamagushi (玉串), <i>n.</i> an offering of the sacred tree.
1928 <i>Saito's J-E Dict.</i>	Tamagushi (玉串) [名] A branch of the sacred tree (offered to the gods). ●玉串を捧げる to offer a branch of the sacred tree to the gods.
1929 <i>Sanseido's College J-E Dict.</i>	tamagushi 玉串 a branch of <i>Eurya ochracea</i> (offered to gods).
1931 <i>Kenkyusha's New J-E Dict. 2</i>	tamagushi (玉串) <i>n.</i> A branch of <i>Eurya orchnacca</i> {sic} offered to a god. ①玉串を捧げる offer a branch of the sacred tree to a god.
1933 <i>Kenkyusha's School J-E Dict.</i>	tama 玉...串(ぐし)を捧げる offer a branch of the sacred tree (to).
1948 <i>C.C.F.'s New J-E Dict.</i>	---
1949 <i>Romanized J-E Dict.</i>	---
1954 <i>Kenkyusha's New J-E Dict. 3</i>	tamagushi 玉串 <i>n.</i> a sprig of <i>Cleyera orchnacca</i> {sic} offered to a god. ①玉串を捧げる offer a sprig branch {sic} of the sacred tree to a god.
1954 <i>Little Besta J-E Dict.</i>	tamagushi (玉串) ①～をささげる offer a sprig of the sacred tree.
1963 <i>Kenkyusha's New School J-E Dict. 2</i>	tamagushi 玉串 (offer) a sprig of the sacred tree (to).
1963 <i>Ohbunsha's Essential J-E Dict.</i>	tamagushi 玉(串) ①玉ぐしをささげる offer a sprig (or branch) of a sacred tree to the gods.
1964 <i>Kenkyusha's New Pocket J-E Dict. 2</i>	tamagushi 玉串 ①玉串を捧げる offer a sprig of the sacred tree (to a god).
1964 <i>New Standard J-E Dict.</i>	たまぐし【玉串】 ①～をささげる offer a sprig of the sacred tree.
1972 <i>The New Crown J-E Dict. 3</i>	tamagushi 玉串 (offer) a sprig of the sacred tree (to God).
1974 <i>Modern Reader's J-E Character Dict. 2</i>	玉串 tamagushi , tamakushi Shimo {sic} sacred paper-decked <i>sakaki</i> -branch offering.
1974 <i>Kenkyusha's New J-E Dict. 4</i>	tama-gushi 玉串 <i>n.</i> a sprig of <i>Cleyera orchnacca</i> {sic} offered to a god. ①玉串を捧げる offer a sprig [branch] of the sacred tree to a god.
1975 <i>Sanseido's New Concise J-E Dict. 8</i>	tamagushi 玉串 a branch of the sacred tree (offered to god).
1976 <i>The Kodansha J-E Dict.</i>	たまぐし【玉串】 a sprig (≡ branch) of a sacred tree offered to a god.
1979 <i>A Cultural Dict. of Japan</i>	tama-gushi 玉串 sprig of the sacred tree which is offered to a god. 【注】sprig 枝 {note: sprig means <i>eda</i> 'branch'}.
1989 <i>J Character Dict.</i>	---
1990 <i>Vaccari's Standard J-E Dict.</i>	tamagushi 玉串 <i>n.</i> a sprig of <i>sakaki</i> -tree offered to <i>Shinto</i> god.

J = Japanese

名 = noun

E = English

--- = no entry

C = Chinese

Dict. = Dictionary

たまぐし = *tamagushi*をささげる or を捧げる = *o sasageru*

Table 1 displays three misspellings. (1) *Brinkley's Japanese-English Dictionary* spells “*C. japonica*” correctly and “*C. jōpanica*” incorrectly.¹² (2) While the first edition (“*Takenobu's*”) of *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* passed over *tamagushi*, the second through fourth editions have a double misspelling of “*orchnacca*” for the *ochracea* species name;¹³ yet the first three spell it properly under (Table 2) *sakaki* entries. (3) Nelson's *The Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary* misprints the *t* in *Shinto* resulting in “Shimo.” (Compare Japanese *shimo* 下 ‘lower; bottom’ and *shimo* 霜 ‘frost’.)

Half the dictionaries in Table 1 give the same *tamagushi o sasageru* 玉串を捧げる ‘offer a tamagushi branch’ subentry. This phrase with the direct-object particle *o* (or *wo*) and the common verb *sasageru* ‘offer; present; sacrifice’ seems a somewhat superfluous inclusion under *tamagushi* (see *Saito's* treatment), but it illustrates abridgment problems with dictionaries. Five larger Japanese-English dictionaries (beginning with *Brinkley's* literary variant *sasagu*) give both a *tamagushi* headword translation equivalent and the *tamagushi o sasageru* usage example. Ten dictionaries give only a *tamagushi* equivalent (e.g., *Kodansha*) and seven give the example without translating the headword (e.g., *New Standard*).

12. Note how *Brinkley's* entry resembles the Japanese monolingual *Daijirin* (Figure 1) definition more closely than any subsequent bilingual dictionary: it has the most detailed translation equivalent and it alone gives the ancient *Nihongi's* 玉籤 transcription and includes the secondary ‘*sakaki* name’ meaning. The *tamagushi* entry in *Brinkley's* occupies seven double-column lines, compared with two or three in other dictionaries.

13. In this “*orchnacca*” mistake, the intrusive *r* in “*orch*” is compounded by the *e* for *c* misprint in “*nacea*.” Phonological confusions like *orch* > *och* are typical for “Katakana English” (Sherard 1986): cf. the Japanese loanwords *ōkuru* < “*ocher*” and *ōkesutora* < “*orchestra*.”

However, two of these seven concise dictionaries — *Kenkyusha's New School* and *New Crown* — misleadingly cite the *tamagushi* phrasal example as the word translation. The second edition *New School* deleted “*tamagushi o sasageru*” from the first, translating *tamagushi* with the phrase “(offer) a sprig of the sacred tree (to).” One could judiciously omit these parenthetical “(offer)” and “(to)”, or could clarify with a “God” object as in the *New Crown*.

Editors' religious prejudices subtly manifest in whether they translate *tamagushi* as an offering to “god,” “gods,” or “God.” Eight dictionaries in Table 1 say *tamagushis* are offered “to a god”; two “to God,” “to gods,” and “to the gods”; and one each says “to god,” “to the Kami,” and “to *Shinto* god” {sic}. Since the Japanese language does not normally grammaticize singular/plural distinctions (Becker 1991: 94–96), *Brinkley's* usage of Japanese “Kami” meaning ‘G/god; G/gods’ takes advantage of inherent ‘One/many’ ambiguity.¹⁴

In 1954, lexicographers grafted a “sprig” onto a “branch.” The third edition *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* changed the second's headword “a branch of” translation to “a sprig of,” but omitted the parentheses in the *tamagushi o sasageru* entry resulting in “a sprig branch {sic} of.” Even though this “sprig branch” misprint was corrected to “sprig [branch]” twenty years later in the fourth edition, effects of the pleonasm are still evident. Among Table 1 dictionaries published before

14. A linguistically related problem for Japanese learners of English is difficulty with plurals, and this may account for three dictionaries in Table 2 noting the regularly predictable -s in *sakakis*. Compare *a* and *the* confusion discussed on p. 21.

Kenkyusha's 3rd, six *tamagushi* translation equivalents say "branch" (while the *Standard* says "offering"): after it, two say "branch," six "sprig," and four both "sprig" and "branch." Compare these latter four typographic approaches: "sprig [branch]" (*Kenkyusha's 4th*), "a sprig (or branch)" (*Ohbunsha's*), "sprig (\rightleftharpoons branch)" (*Kodansha*), and a note that translates "sprig means *eda* 'branch.'" (*A Cultural Dictionary*).

TABLE 2. ENGLISH SAKAKI 榊 EQUIVALENTS

1867 <i>J and E Dict. with an E and J Index</i>	SAKAKI, サカキ, 榊, <i>n.</i> The name of a tree.
1908 <i>Brinkley's J-E Dict.</i>	Sakaki, さかき, 榊, 楊桐, <i>n.</i> [Bot.] <i>Cleyera japonica</i> .
1918 <i>Takenobu's J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki (榊) <i>n.</i> <i>Eurya Ochnacea</i> ; the "sacred tree."
1922 <i>Beginner's Dict. of C-J Characters</i>	榊 Sakaki cleyera japonica (used in religious ceremonies).
1924 <i>Inouye's J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki (榊) <i>n.</i> 【植】 <i>Eurya ochnacea</i> (學名).
1924 <i>A Standard J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki (榊) <i>n.</i> 【植】 <i>Eurya ochnacea</i> (學名); a sacred tree.
1928 <i>Saito's J-E Dict.</i>	Sakaki (榊) 【名】 The sacred tree of Japan.
1929 <i>Sanseido's College J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki 榊 <i>Eurya ochnacea</i> ; <i>Cleyera japonica</i> .
1931 <i>Kenkyusha's New J-E Dict. 2</i>	sakaki (榊) <i>n.</i> (植) <i>Eurya ochnacea</i> ; a "sacred tree."
1933 <i>Kenkyusha's School J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki 榊 (植) a "sacred tree."
1948 <i>C.C.F.'s New J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki (榊) a sacred tree (ア セイクリッド ツリー) { <i>a seikuriddo tsurii</i> }.
1949 <i>Romanized J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki 榊 [さかき] a "sacred tree."
1954 <i>Kenkyusha's New J-E Dict. 3</i>	sakaki 榊 <i>n.</i> 【植】 <i>Cleyera ochnacea</i> ; a "sacred tree" [to Shintoists].
1954 <i>Little Besta J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki 榊 【植】 a sacred tree.
1963 <i>Kenkyusha's New School J-E Dict. 2</i>	sakaki 榊 【植】 a sakaki (pl. -s).
1963 <i>Ohbunsha's Essential J-E Dict.</i>	----
1964 <i>Kenkyusha's New Pocket J-E Dict. 2</i>	sakaki 榊 【植】 <i>Cleyera ochnacea</i> .
1964 <i>New Standard J-E Dict.</i>	さかき 【榊】 【植】 a sacred tree.
1972 <i>The New Crown J-E Dict. 3</i>	----
1974 <i>Modern Reader's J-E Character Dict. 2</i>	榊(国字){ <i>kokuji</i> } sakaki sacred Shinto tree.
1974 <i>Kenkyusha's New J-E Dict. 4</i>	sakaki 榊 <i>n.</i> 【植】 a sakaki (pl. -s).
1975 <i>Sanseido's New Concise J-E Dict. 8</i>	sakaki 榊 a 'sakaki' (pl. -s)
1976 <i>The Kodansha J-E Dict.</i>	さかき 【植】 a sakaki; a sacred tree.
1979 <i>A Cultural Dict. of Japan</i>	sakaki 榊 sakaki; <i>Cleyera japonica</i> .
1989 <i>J Character Dict.</i>	榊 sakaki (a species of tree).
1990 <i>Vaccari's Standard J-E Dict.</i>	sakaki 榊 <i>n.</i> (bot.) a sacred tree to Shintoists.

J = Japanese

E = English

C = Chinese

Dict. = Dictionary

さかき or サカキ = sakaki

植 = botanical

學名 = scientific name

名 = noun

---- = no entry

Compared with these English translation equivalents to *tamagushi*, those for *sakaki* in Table 2 are less problematical. Note that abbreviations (e.g., “J-E Dict.”) and translations (*shoku* 植 ‘bot.’ for *shokubutsugaku* 植物学 ‘botany’) are listed at the bottom. *Cleyera ochracea*’s lexical ghost of “*Cleyera orchnacca*,” haunting three editions of Kenkyusha’s *New Japanese-English Dictionary* entries for *tamagushi*, is not seen for *sakaki*; presumably because the first edition (*Takenobu*’s without *tamagushi*, Table 1) correctly translated *sakaki*. This is a clear case of copying without cross-checking. Since it is standard lexicographical procedure for specialists to verify scientific and technical terminology (Barnhart 1967: 180, Landau 1989: 171), perhaps a botanist proofread this *sakaki* entry with a ‘bot.’ notation but not the unmarked *tamagushi*. Ghost words like “*Cleyera orchnacca*” are what Malkiel (1967: 9) calls part of the “excess baggage” in dictionaries.

One cross-linguistic result of the absence of grammatical articles in Japanese is that Japanese learners of English are prone to confuse *a* and *the* — even, according to Nord (1981: 86), to the extent that “the Japanese literally become functionally deaf to these elements of speech.” For instance (Table 1), *Vaccari*’s *Standard* says a *tamagushi* is “offered to *Shinto* god.” Since the notion of sacred trees is culturally widespread, if not universal,¹⁵ it is more accurate to translate *sakaki* as “*a*” rather than “*the* sacred tree.” Changes through four (1918, 1931, 1954, 1974) editions

15. Some examples are Druidic oak, Athenian olive, Hindu *deodar* cedar (< Sanskrit *deva* “god” + *dāru* “wood”), Buddhist pipal *Ficus religiosa* (n.b. the aptly named genus), and Japanese Buddhist *shikimi* 檜 (written with 木 ‘tree’ and 密 ‘secret’) ‘star anise.’ In addition, *sakaki* meaning ① in Figure 1 is ‘evergreens used religiously.’

of *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* in Table 2 (cf. 1) provide a good contrast: "the 'sacred tree'" (1st ed. *Takenobu's*) was generalized to "a 'sacred tree'" (2nd), then specified to "a 'sacred tree' [to Shintoists]" (3rd, cf. *Vaccari's Standard*), and ultimately reduced to "a *sakaki*" (4th). These "sacred tree" quotations indirectly mark *sakaki's* ideography; however, the fourth edition (1974: x) uses quotation marks to denote Japanese loanwords not standardized in English, for instance, the geisha 'waiting-room' term *machiai* 待合 "an assignation house; a "*machiai*."

This opaque yet brief "a *sakaki*" English equivalent to Japanese *sakaki* illustrates how bilingual dictionaries have different uses for native and foreign speakers of a language. Using a Japanese-English dictionary, a typical Japanese-speaking user will want to know how to translate *sakaki* into English and therefore it gives a "sakaki" translation. Since the vast majority of Japanese-English dictionary buyers are native speakers of Japanese (Nakao 1989: 296), editors have marketing reasons for accommodating them with translation equivalents like "a *sakaki*."¹⁶ Using the same dictionary, an English-speaking user will want to know what *sakaki* means, but will probably be no more familiar with the "sakaki" loanword than the technical "*Cleyera*" epithet. General-purpose English monolingual dictionaries list various Japanese plant and animal loanwords like "daikon" and "fugu," yet not "sakaki." Except for *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, dictionaries do not

16. Japanese-English dictionaries using *kana* syllabary fulfill the nonalphabetic preference of native speakers. The 1964 *New Standard* and 1976 *Kodansha* list headwords in *hiragana*: たまぐし and さかき in Tables 1 and 2. *C.C.F.'s* New Japanese-English Dictionary gives a *seikuriddo tsurii* ア セイクリッド ツリー *katakana*-English gloss.

define the English loanword "sakaki."¹⁷

If the foreign user of the Japanese bilingual dictionary is truly to understand *sakaki*'s meaning, the entry must include an explanation along with a "sakaki" transliteration. This lexicographic circumstance of equivalent *plus* explanation is a well-known (e.g., Schnorr 1986: 56, Benson 1990: 49-50) exception to the rule of avoiding definitions in bilingual dictionaries.¹⁸ Zgusta (1971: 324) cites a similarly exceptional "sacred twig" case: Ossetic *alam* needs to be explicated in a dictionary as "*alam* (fruit and candy bound on a twig and carried by mounted participants of a funeral feast)."

Comparison of the diverse translation equivalents in Tables 1 and 2 shows more inaccuracies for *tamagushi* than *sakaki*. While the tree name can be precisely identified with "*Cleyera japonica*" botanical nomenclature or translated as "*sakaki*, a sacred tree," *tamagushi* requires a more encyclopedic equivalent such as "a branch of (a sacred tree) *sakaki*" with optional descriptions of "decorated (with paper)," "offer(ing)," and "to the (Shinto) gods."

17. Searching the compact-disk version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* reveals four English borrowings of Japanese tree names: "aucuba," "gingko," "kaki," and "matsu." *Webster's Third* says "aucuba" for Japanese *aoki* 青木 (lit. "green tree") comes from "Jap *aokuba* aucuba, fr. *aoku* green": but according to *Makino's*, New Latin "aucuba" derives from a dialectal name *aokiba* (suffixed with 葉 "leaf").

18. In monolingual dictionaries, some definitions for names of plants and animals wax encyclopedic: Weinreich (1967: 32) criticizes defining *carrot* as "a biennial plant (*Daucus carota sativa*) with a usually orange-colored, spindle-shaped edible root ..."

The current *ne plus ultra* Japanese bilingual dictionary in any language, *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* (4th ed.), gives inconsistent *tamagushi* and *sakaki* equivalents; translating the former as “a sprig of *Cleyera orchnacca* {sic} offered to a god” and the latter as “a *sakaki*.” On the contrary, for reasons of clarity and space-saving, it seems preferable to give “a branch of sakaki ...” for *tamagushi* and to note the botanical designation “*Cleyera ochracea/japonica*” under the cross-referenced *sakaki* headword. Only three of the twenty-six dictionaries analyzed mention *sakaki* under *tamagushi*.

From a theoretical perspective, the issues of English translations for Japanese *tamagushi* and *sakaki* typify bilingual dictionary problems with folk-botanical classifications. Conklin explains:

Translation labels (glosses) are frequently necessary, but they should be considered neither as definitions nor as exact equivalents ... This well-established and perhaps obvious semantic principle is sometimes forgotten where the assumed absolute nature (in a cross-linguistic sense) of “scientific” names or of other long-established traditional distinctions in certain Western languages is involved. (1967: 124-5)

Scientific names are one thing, “unscientific” misspellings another.

To sum up, this ramble through Japanese metalexigraphy began with one nonnative speaker's problems trying to learn what a newspaper meant by “sacred twigs.” It has discussed how monolingual dictionaries define *tamagushi* and *sakaki*, and analyzed how generations of bilingual ones have translated them.

Conclusion

Analyzing *tamagushi* 玉串 and *sakaki* 榊 translation equivalents in Japanese-English dictionaries reveals errata such as the miscopied “offer a sprig branch” and the misspelled “*Cleyera orchnacca*” for *C. ochracea*. One could argue that this article is “making mountains out of molehills” or *shinshō bōdai ni iu* 針小棒大に言う “saying a little needle is a big stick,” because in modern Japanese, the religious term *tamagushi* and the botanical appellation *sakaki* have comparatively low frequencies of usage. Both are virtually absent from target-language English lexicon, and thus more likely to be erroneously treated in dictionaries. Since everyone errs, perhaps we should overlook such minor misprints, particularly since several were corrected. Later dictionaries did not copy *Brinkley’s* “*japanica*” misspelling (presumably owing to the high salience of *Japan*) and the third edition *Kenkyusha’s* “offer a sprig branch” typo was set right in the fourth.

Nevertheless, there are two imperative reasons for not overlooking problems of dictionary inaccuracies with culture-specific words like *tamagushi*: (1) Inexact lexicography can be cloned into what might be called “sacred twiggy” mistranslations (cf. Tomaszczyk’s 1984 study of Polish-English dictionaries). (2) Japanese-English dictionary equivalents to plant and animal names are sometimes flawed.

First, “Japanized English” mistakes are legendary (Kenrick 1988) and not a few derive from dictionary errors. Examples (A)–(C) below were chosen from spoken (“cute little monkey”), written (“eye wax”), and printed (“vicious hair”) levels.

(A) Matthew Hanley (personal communication) discovered that *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* translation equivalents of *komatta* 困った 'embarrassing; troubling' misled his Japanese students into making some English communication errors. For instance, it gives "Things have come to a pretty [peculiar, strange, queer] pass" and the curious usage example "You're a cute little monkey, my dear" noted for a mischievous child.

(B) Idehara (1980: 52) recounts writing "Her eyes opened a little against sticky eye wax" in a graduate school essay, only to be corrected by his native-speaker teacher. Idehara's error came from *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* (3rd ed.) *me-kuso* 目糞 equivalent of "discharge (=mucus) from the eyes; eye-wax," which he aptly calls "being misled by the dictionary."¹⁹

(C) The lexical ghost "vicious hair" (Carr 1983) provides a final illustration. A Tokyo plastic surgery clinic ran a series of advertisements in Asian editions of *Newsweek* claiming that: "Kinky or Vicious Hair May Be Changed to A {sic} Lovely, Glossy Hair." "*Vicious hair*" has grown throughout four *Kenkyusha* editions from the 1918 *Takenobu's* translation equivalent *kuse* 癖 "A habit; a trick; a vice" headword with a *kuse-ge* 癖毛 "vicious hair" subentry up into the 1974 *Kenkyusha's*

19. Cf. *ear-wax*. Idehara says his mistake came from the *me-yani* 目脂 entry, but it was *me-kuso*. This "eye-wax" erratum was corrected in the 4th edition's "discharge [mucus] from the eyes; eye mucus; gum" equivalent, but it continues in *The Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary*, *Japanese Character Dictionary*, and *Vaccari's Standard Japanese-English Dictionary*.

New Japanese-English Dictionary's headword *kuse-ge* 癖毛 translated "vicious (kinky, frizzy) hair."

Second, and more to the point, misspellings seem to be especially common among English translation equivalents to Japanese biological names. The degree of (in)accuracy is difficult to determine because most dictionaries are alphabetized, but one, *A Cultural Dictionary of Japan* (1979), is arranged by semantic categories. However, its revised edition, *Dictionary of Japanese Culture* (1987), lost this semantic advantage by reordering the entries alphabetically.

As an experiment, I read through this ethnolinguistic dictionary's "Flora and Fauna" section (1979: 345-381) with roughly 1300 headwords and marked dozens of unfamiliar terms that looked peculiar (e.g., "*camts-chtcense*"). Checking them in biological reference works revealed most to be correct (e.g., the *Phellopterus* genus for *bōfū* 防風 'sand trefoil'), but at least fourteen entries have typographical errors.²⁰ These mistakes are divisible into (I) common name or (II) technical term misspellings, and (III) cross-reference irregularities.

(I) Seven misprinted commonplace words include: "linnen" for linen (*asa* 麻 'hemp; flax, linen'), "sea robbin" for sea robin (*hōbō* 魴鰯 'gurn-

20. Two likely, but unverifiable, *A Cultural Dictionary of Japan* errors are "single kwa" (*tokado-hechima* 十角瓜 'a loofah, *Luffa acutangula*') and "naking shallot" (*wakegi* 分葱 'an onion, *Allium fistulosum*' s.v. *negi* 'Welsh onion'). Hypothetical explanations are "kwa" coming from Chinese *guā* 瓜 'gourd' (also romanized *kua* or *kwa*, cf. Japanese *ka*) and "naking" perhaps from *Nanking*.

ard'), "Eastern rock" for Eastern rook (*watari-garasu* 渡り鳥 'a raven'), "Japanese acucuba" for Japanese aucuba (*aoki* 青木 'Japanese laurel'), "Judas'-ear" for Judas-ear or Judas's-ear (*kikurage* 木耳), "clemantis" for clematis (*tessen-ka* 鉄線花 'cream clematis'), and "tsue-tsue [tzetze] fly" for tsetse or tzetze (*tsuetsue-bae* ツエツエ蠅, i.e., the Japanese source of misspelling).

(II) *A Cultural Dictionary's* misprints of botanical terminology involve one specific — "*Lysichiton camtschtcense*" for *L. camtschatense* (*mizu-bashō* 水芭蕉 'skunk cabbage') — and three generics: "*Gypssphila*" for *Gypsophila elegans* (*kasumi-sō* 霞草 'baby's breath'), "*Irish*" for *Iris tectorum* (*ichihatsu* 鳶尾 'fleur-de-lis'), and "*Licium*" for *Lycium chinese* (*kuko* 枸杞 'matrimony vine').

(III) This dictionary cross-references specific and varietal names to their generic headwords, e.g., "*ma-dai* 真鯛 red sea bream, porgy" to "*tai* 鯛 sea bream, porgy," and three fish are correctly spelled in one entry and misspelled in another: "*Eukianthus pertatus*" for *E. perulatus* (*dōdan-tsutsuji* どうだん躑躅, but correct under *tsutsuji* 'azalea'), "sagittated clamary" for sagittated calamary (*surume-ika* 鰯烏賊, cf. *ika* 'cuttlefish'), and "*Collylia velutipes*" for *Collybia velutipes* (*enoki-dake* 榎茸, cf. "collybia velutipes" {sic} under *kinoko* 茸 'mushroom').

Most of the above misprints apparently originated in *A Cultural Dictionary of Japan* (1979); and the first edition of any dictionary, says Landau (1989: 257), "is bound to have a number of errors." The second edition (1987), omits many plant and animal entries, including all these misspelled ones. But one error, "*Gypssphila*" for *Gypsophila*, was directly

copied from (4th ed.) *Kenkyusha's* "a babies'-[baby's-]breath; *Gypssphila* {sic} *elegans*" translation equivalent of *kasumi-sō* 霞草 [lit. "haze/mist plant"]. If such a cursory examination of *A Cultural Dictionary of Japan* suggests one erratum every few pages, how many more could be found?

Dictionaries using scientific Latin nomenclature for flora and fauna names benefit from economy and specificity (Rey and Delesalle 1979: 24-5; Nguyen 1980: 165), but these advantages are potentially lost through "unscientific" misspellings. Not only bilingual Japanese dictionaries have such typographical errors. They are also notorious in Chinese dictionaries. The widely reprinted 1938 *Cihai*, for instance, defined the Chinese minnow *tiáo* 鱏 'pale chub, *Zacco platypus*' as "*Zucco platypus*." Many of the best Chinese dictionaries (e.g., *Zhongwen dacidian*) copied this "*u*" for a "*Zucco*" misspelling, and only recent ones have corrected it (see Carr 1993). Non-specialists, from dictionary proofreaders to users, can be deceived by seemingly "scientific" terminology like "*Zucco platypus*," "*Gypssphila elegans*," or "*Cleyera orchnacca*."²¹ Using New Latin terminology in bilingual dictionaries constitutes what Iannucci (1967: 214) calls "a third language" beyond both source and target languages; however, it is one with no "native speakers."

The final importance of considering how Japanese-English dictionaries treat *tamagushi* and *sakaki* lies in the exemplary nature of their

21. This apparently high frequency of misspelled scientific terminology in bilingual Oriental language dictionaries might be owing to its absence in monolingual ones. Unlike the Western lexicographical tradition of defining plant and animal names with New Latin technical terms, general-purpose Japanese and Chinese dictionaries rarely use them.

lexicographical problems. Most are universal in bilingual dictionaries of all languages, but a few are peculiar to Japanese. Occidental lexicographers understand both theoretical problems like difficulties of translating culture-bound words and practical ones like dangers of copying misspellings, but some may not be familiar with certain aspects of Japanese language and lexicography.

One remarkable aspect is how to treat etymological meaning at the level of logographic transcription: a nonexistent problem for alphabetically written languages. Under conventional theory of bilingual lexicography, Zgusta (1971: 343) claims etymological information is “useful only in dictionaries with considerable scholarly interest.” However, this presumption overlooks logographically written languages, as typified by the Japanese *sakaki* 榊 “sacred tree” ideograph combining 神 ‘god’ and 木 ‘tree’ elements. For native speakers of Japanese, such ideography is so obvious that a dictionary hardly needs to mention it; but for learners of Japanese, it is beneficial for a dictionary to note the “god-tree” significance of how *sakaki* is written. Admittedly, this desideratum is excessively optimistic. In the present sample of twenty-six bilingual dictionaries published from 1867 to 1990, not one overtly identifies 榊 as an ideograph. The few Japanese-English dictionaries quoting “sacred tree” come closest to noting its logographic signification.

Lastly, it should be reiterated that this article does not intend to quibble about dictionary misprints like “*orchnacca*” that revised editions will presumably set right. The intent is to illustrate how Japanese dictionaries can expand the theoretical and international perspectives of metalexicography, as seen from a sacred twig and tree.

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