

Letter to the Editor

Benjamin Hobson (1816–1873): His Role in the Absorption of Western Medicine and Anatomy in Japan

To the Editor, *Clinical Anatomy*:

In their article on Benjamin Hobson (1816–1873), Bosmia et al. (2014) reviewed the Japanese translation by Ishiguro Atsushi of Benjamin Hobson's first medical textbook in Chinese: *Zen Tai Shin Ron* (1857) and stated in the abstract



Fig. 1. An illustration of a twin pregnancy from the *Zen Tai Shin Ron Yakkai* (1874), Volume 1 (Heaven). The plates in this second edition of the *Zen Tai Shin Ron* are somewhat smaller but otherwise equal to the plates in the 1857 edition. The figure comments emphasize that either legs or head will come out first.



Fig. 2. William Smellie, *Anatomical Tables* (Dutch Edition, Amsterdam, 1765), plate X. [Color figure can be viewed in the online issue, which is available at wileyonlinelibrary.com.]

of their article that the illustrations from Hobson's book were derived from William Cheselden's *Anatomical Tables* (1730) and *Osteographia* (1733).

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We were able to investigate the second Japanese edition of *A New Theory of the Body: Zen Tai Shin Ron Yakkai* (Hobson, 1874). The illustration depicting a twin pregnancy is clearly a rendition in the reverse from plate X in William Smellie's *Anatomical Tables* (1754) (Figs. 1 and 2). As an Englishman Hobson would have been familiar with Smellie's work. Smellie's *Anatomical Tables* were known to Japanese physicians since the end of the 18th century, via the Dutch edition of 1765 (Van der Weiden and Uhlenbeck, 2010; Van der Weiden et al., 2013).

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