

甲越勇將傳 武田家 廿四將

三討死之内

諸角豊後守昌清

甲陽廿四隊將の中智勇他人の右に出で戦場  
 救度の強者あり川中嶋の軍味方大小数と  
 大將既小危下と見えけり此れ必命と擲て主君と救ひ奉らんと手勢を勝て二千余人  
 直先小楠と一過巻立る敵中小會救も多突て入七烈八裁一駈馳せ色りふ  
 勇一越後替右往左往と敗走りあわぬ總敗軍ありんとりけて時を逃  
 與の方の茂林の  
 中一道の  
 狼煙天と  
 焦て立  
 登と  
 等く怪  
 ひ川原の  
 地底一面小嶋  
 敵兼一より伏罨  
 地雷火一時み奔  
 出諸角と一手の軍勢  
 人馬諸共中天小撃上  
 ら二騎も不残未塵ふらぬ  
 正清僅ふ此火氣の避をらん  
 との入全身悉焼爛行歩又難け長  
 火に飛散鐘の細とろ十馬千ふ  
 お捨降刀只引吐火中ふ  
 投て果より前代  
 未聞の陣没あり



二十三

国任政

應秀

柳下亭種貞誌

一三勇齋  
 國廿万画

# I M P R E S S I O N S



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COVER: Matsumoto Kisaburō. Male Courtier. 1878. Wood, glass, human and mouse hair, copper alloy, gesso, lacquer with pigment. Catalogue No. E92427, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution. Photo: D. E. Hurlbert. (Detail)

BACK COVER: Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi. Kamakura period, late 12th century. Wood with gold leaf, polychromy and inlaid rock-crystal eyes. Shinnyo-en, Tachikawa City, Tokyo Prefecture. Photo: Christie's Images Limited 2008

FRONTISPIECE: Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *No. 23. Morozumi Bungo-no-kami Masakiyo, One of Three Heroic Deaths in Battle (San uchijini no uchi, Morozumi Bungo-no-kami Masakiyo)*, from the series *Biographies of Heroic Generals of Kai and Echigo Provinces, Twenty-four Generals of the Takeda Clan (Kōetsu yūshō den, Takeda-ke nijūshi-shō)*. c. 1848. Color woodcut. 36.6 x 25.7 cm. American Friends of the British Museum (The Arthur R. Miller Collection) 15009. (Detail)

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**NOTES TO THE READER**

Personal names: For Japanese and Chinese names, the surname is cited first, followed by the given or artist's name. This does not apply, however, to those who publish in the West and/or who have opted to use the Western order of their names. In discussion, Japanese artists are referred to in the form most commonly cited, usually by the given or art name. Katsushika Hokusai, for example, is known as Hokusai.

Diacritical mark: The macron is used to indicate a long vowel in Japanese (Shunshō), except where the Japanese name or term has entered the English lexicon (Tokyo, shogun).

Measurements: Measurements are given in centimeters, height before width. For paintings, measurements apply only to the perimeter of the image, exclusive of the mounting.

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一勇齋

國共力



三命



## IN THIS ISSUE



FIG. 1a. Unkei's Dainichi on view at Christie's New York. March 16, 2008. Photo by the author



FIG. 1b. The Japanese press documents the sale of Unkei's Dainichi at Christie's New York. March 18, 2008. Photo by the author

< FIG. 3. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *Dolls in the Latest Style* (*Fūryū ningyō*). 1856. Color woodcut. American Friends of the British Museum (The Arthur R. Miller Collection) 22216. (Detail; see p. 106)

SAMUEL MORSE introduces a masterpiece of Japanese sculpture that caused considerable excitement in the media when it appeared at auction in New York in March 2008 (fig. 1). Unkei's statue of Dainichi, now registered as an Important Cultural Property, has already been studied and published by a Japanese scholar, but Morse puts it in context for our *Impressions* audience. The sale was good for the vendor and the auction house; the buyer, a Japanese new religious sect, also benefited from fabulous worldwide publicity. There was a huge sense of relief shared by the entire Japanese media that the piece had somehow been "saved" for Japan. And yet, the new owners of the Dainichi insisted on seeing the text of the Morse article before they would allow use of photography. Misinformation of various types was spread by academics, many of whom seem reluctant to admit that we in the West might benefit from having great Japanese art in our own museums. Who will travel to Tachikawa to see the statue in the future? If it were in an American museum, would it not have been an exquisite ambassador of Japanese culture?

Four essays relate to themes presented in *Designed for Pleasure*, the 2008 catalogue for the exhibition organized by the Japanese Art Society of America (JASA) and Asia Society on the occasion of JASA's thirty-fifth anniversary. Three of the essays were first presented as lectures at the symposium held in conjunction with the exhibition at Asia Society in March 2008 (fig. 2). David Waterhouse frames his note on Hishikawa Moronobu as a postscript to his groundbreaking essay in *Designed for Pleasure*. Will we ever know the meaning of the two poems he discusses? Haruo Shirane takes on the literary aspects of the theme of the "Eight Views" in popular Edo-period culture. David Pollack is fearless in his approach to erotica and its accompanying pillow talk. Samuel Leiter takes us behind the scenes in the world of kabuki that he knows so intimately.

"Kuniyoshi's Imagination" was the title of an international symposium held at the British Museum and the Royal Academy of Arts in London, March 26–27, 2009. The conference accompanied an exhibition focusing on the gift of the Arthur R. Miller Collection of Kuniyoshi prints to the American Friends of the British Museum (fig. 3). The exhibition travels to Japan Society Gallery in New York in the spring of 2010. Elizabeth de Sabato Swinton reviews *Kuniyoshi*, the exhibition catalogue. Ellis Tinios and Kinoshita Naoyuki expand their symposium talks for the benefit of our

*Impressions* readers. Tinios tackles Kuniyoshi's Chinese themes, whereas Kinoshita explores the art of theatrical public displays in the late Edo period. In the wake of advances in technology and craftsmanship in the nineteenth century, Matsumoto Kisaburō, who began his career making lanterns and paper stencils, evolved into a master of life-size "living dolls" fabricated with creepy but cool hyper-realism for spectacular public displays at the temple Sensōji in Asakusa, Tokyo. These lifelike mannequins captured the attention of Westerners as well, but have since gone unnoticed and unappreciated in several museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for more than a century (fig. 4). The Smithsonian discarded one female doll years ago, and the Detroit Institute of Arts recently deaccessioned its pair of sumo wrestlers.

Amy Reigle Newland's translation of the reminiscences of Toyohara Kuni-chika reveals the not-so-glamorous and often tough life of an artist with a penchant for drinking embedded in the community of actors and prostitutes in the late nineteenth century.

Monika Bincsik surveys an exhibition of exported lacquer organized in 2008 by the Kyoto National Museum. The installation, in the museum's dreary and dimly lit Taisho-period landmarked building, was disappointing. Still, it must have been a real coup to arrange all those loans, not to mention the conditions, atmospheric and otherwise, necessary for their display. The catalogue, on the other hand, is quite remarkable for the quantity of illustrations and detailed catalogue entries.

Alexandra Munroe organized *The Third Mind* for the Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 2009. The ambitious exhibition included over one hundred artists and spanned more than one hundred years. She knew that her work, which demonstrated how ideas from Asian sources have been continuously transmitted to American artists, would be subversive, not to mention controversial. No one had pulled it all together before. That said, attendance reached over 212,000. Ryan Holmberg contributes his judgment of the successes and failures of the exhibition and its catalogue.

As a great favor to our readers, Melinda Takeuchi elegantly unpacks a dense and complex volume of Columbia University conference papers treating *The Tale of Genji*. Joshua Mostow appreciates one of the latest contributions to the study of *surimono*, *Reading Surimono*, with three hundred poems translated by John Carpenter, editor, and his international colleagues that advance our attempts to grasp Edo-period vernacular. Finally, Jonathan Reynolds, an architectural historian, critiques a volume on an architect in mid-career, Hitoshi Abe.

We offer sincere thanks to the loyal advertisers, benefactors and JASA members who stood by us during the recession of 2009. They, above all, made this publication possible. Dana Levy has once again designed a beautiful issue of *Impressions*. And, as always, our authors are deeply indebted to the talent of Jane Oliver, associate editor, and Robbie Capp, copy editor. Allison Tolman has given generously of her precious time to bring in advertising; Joan Baekeland, our president, graciously helped pay the bills.



FIG. 2. Panelists for the *Designed for Pleasure* symposium at Asia Society New York, with (from left to right) Samuel Leiter, Haruo Shirane, Donald Jenkins and Julie Nelson Davis. March 1, 2008. Photo by the author

John C. Weber helped us in many ways, and Thomas R. Hummel of Toppan Printing rendered invaluable aid of every kind.

For assistance with the difficult chore of tracking down photographs, we salute Bonnie Coles, Kobayashi Tadashi, Janice Katz, George Mann, Sarah Thompson, Inge Klompmakers, Osada Ikue, Tsunoda Hideo, Shirakura Yoshihiko, Timothy Clark, Rosina Buckland, Akama Ryō, Sebastian Izzard, Lori van Houten, Shawn Eichman, Matthew Welch and Felicia Pickering. Rie Hayashi, librarian for the International House of Japan, Tokyo, went far, far beyond the call of duty in assisting with this issue of *Impressions*. Thanks also to Elizabeth de Sabato Swinton for her other contributions, and to Nicole Rousmaniere, Kazuko Morohashi, Hiromi Uchida and Timothy Clark, who gave their time and expertise to assist us with the adaptation of Professor Kinoshita's lecture for publication. ☸

JULIA MEECH, Editor

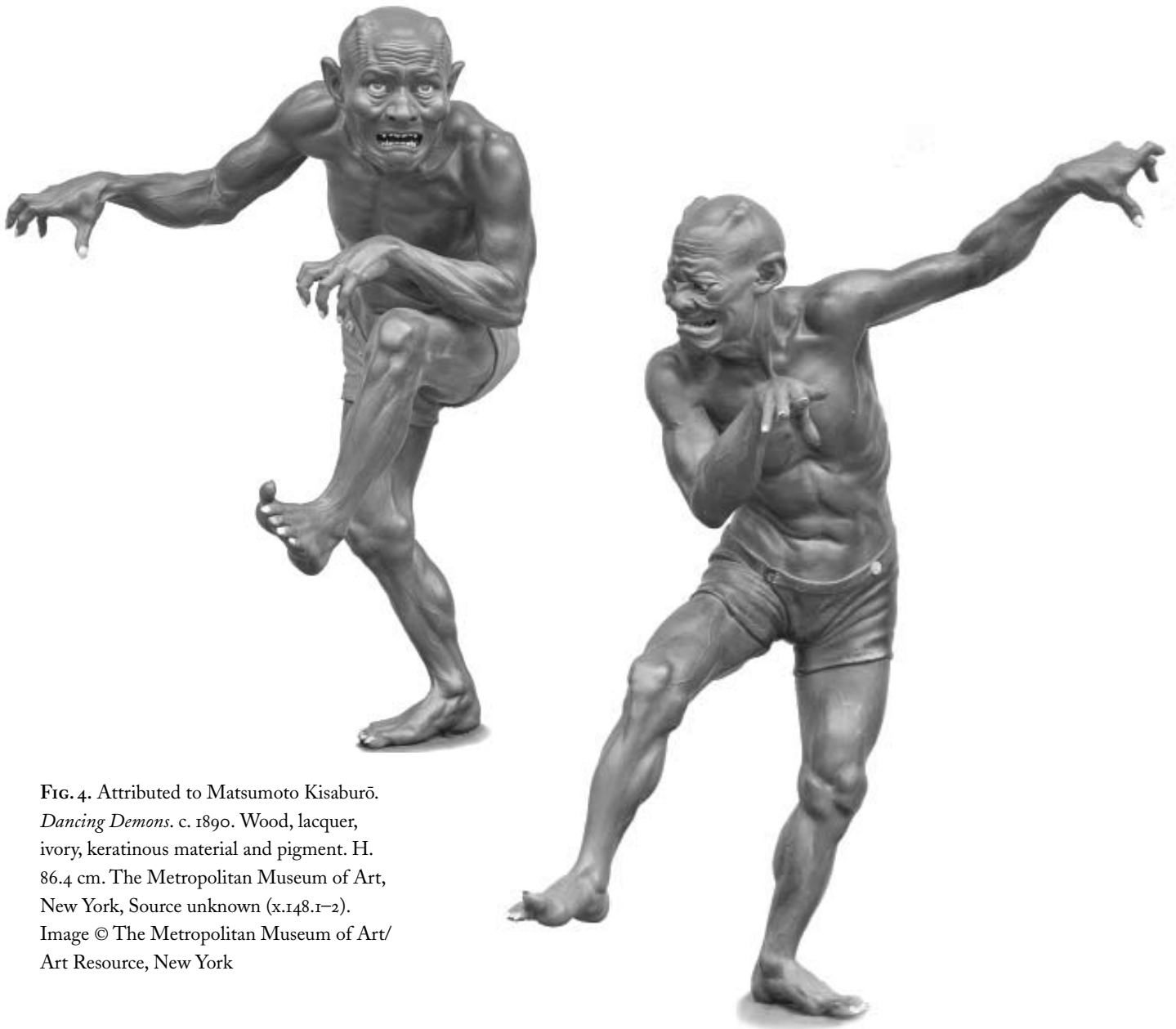


FIG. 4. Attributed to Matsumoto Kisaburō. *Dancing Demons*. c. 1890. Wood, lacquer, ivory, keratinous material and pigment. H. 86.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Source unknown (x.148.1-2). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/ Art Resource, New York





# Revealing the Unseen: The Master Sculptor Unkei and the Meaning of Dedicatory Objects in Kamakura-Period Sculpture

SAMUEL C. MORSE

**I**N THE TWELFTH MONTH OF JISHŌ 4 (1180), troops of the Taira clan marched on Nara from Kyoto to subdue the militant monks of Kōfukuji, the tutelary temple of the aristocratic Fujiwara clan, which had been founded in the first half of the eighth century. Tensions between the temple and the Taira had been simmering for the previous two decades as the Taira gradually gained political and economic control of Kyoto and the surrounding provinces, primarily at the expense of the Fujiwara and their allies. According to the great chronicle of this conflict, *The Tale of the Heike*, forty thousand troops entered Nara under the command of Taira no Shigehira (1156–1185). As the battle wound down on the evening of the second day of fighting, Shigehira ordered his soldiers to set fire to houses at the northeast corner of the city. Caught by a ferocious wind, the conflagration rapidly spread to Kōfukuji, to Tōdaiji—home to the monumental eighth-century bronze Great Buddha—and to Gangōji, one of the most important temples from the time of the city’s founding. Most of the halls of the three monasteries and the works of art housed in them were burned.

This unprecedented destruction provided an unparalleled opportunity for a previously little-known group of sculptors working in the Nara region. Thrust into the forefront of sculptural activity in Japan as they worked to replace the destroyed statues, the Nara sculptors (*Nara bussshi*), as they came to be known, responded with a remarkable burst of creativity.

Unkei (?–1223) and his fellow sculptor Kaikei (act. 1185–1223), the pre-eminent Nara sculptors, have been two of the best known and most widely studied artists in Japan. Over the past twenty-five years, more than ten works have been newly attributed to Kaikei. In addition, three works have been assigned to Unkei: two statues of Dainichi, one sold with great attention by Christie’s New York in March 2008, and now in the collection of the Shinnyo-en, a religious group based in Tachikawa City near Tokyo (fig. 1), and another at a temple in Ashikaga City north of Tokyo; and a statue of Daiitoku myōō, one of the Five Wisdom Kings, in the Kōmyō’in, a sub-temple of Shōmyōji in Yokohama. Professor Yamamoto Tsutomu, a leading authority on Kamakura sculpture, formerly of the Tokyo National Museum and now at Seisen University in Tokyo, has studied the two Dainichi statues extensively.<sup>1</sup> This essay, a slightly expanded version of a talk I gave at Christie’s New York, on the occasion of the auction of the Dainichi statue purchased by the Shinnyo-en, is indebted to research by Yamamoto.<sup>2</sup>

< **FIG. 1.** Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi. Kamakura period, late 12th century. Wood with gold leaf, polychromy and inlaid rock-crystal eyes. H. 66.1 cm. Shinnyo-en, Tachikawa City, Tokyo Prefecture. Photo: Christie’s Images Limited 2008



FIG. 2. Unkei. Dainichi. Kamakura period, 1176. Wood with gold leaf, polychromy and inlaid rock-crystal eyes. H. 98.2 cm. Enjōji, Nara. Courtesy Enjōji and Mizuno Keizaburō

Dainichi is classified as a Buddha but is shown as a bodhisattva in princely regalia, with hair piled in a high topknot and wearing the crown and jewelry of royalty.

## HISTORICAL AND TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

Many of the sculptures that were lost in the Taira assault had been produced in the eighth century, when the Nara capital had close ties with the continent. The Japanese sculptors in Nara adopted the relatively naturalistic styles popular in and around Changan, the Tang capital, in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Commenting on the place that these artists were to assume in the history of Japanese Buddhist art, the noted art historian Mōri Hisashi observed that Nara was the birthplace of what he considered to be a classic style of Japanese Buddhist sculpture that would come to inform the art of subsequent eras and have a particularly profound impact on Unkei and Kaikei.<sup>3</sup>

The sculptors who refurbished the Nara temples at the end of the twelfth century on behalf of the victorious Minamoto clan and the influential Fujiwara aristocrats, had honed their craft primarily through repairing or replacing works that had been in the temples for centuries and had been damaged or destroyed by fire. These artists, also known as the Kei school (from a syllable shared by many of their names), drew on examples from the eighth century to formulate a new style of Buddhist imagery that became the dominant mode of sculpture throughout the succeeding Kamakura period (1185–1333).

They traced their roots to an artist named Raijō (1044–1119), who had come to Nara from Kyoto in 1096 to repair and replace works at Kōfukuji that had been burned in an accidental fire. Rather than return to Kyoto and seek commissions from the aristocratic patrons there, Raijō and his successors chose to remain in Nara, where they worked in relative obscurity, but found steady employment in restoration of damaged works. Although the specific connections between Raijō’s circle of sculptors and Kōkei (act. 1175–1200), who is generally credited with founding the Kei school, is unclear, by the 1170s, Kōkei and his eldest son, Unkei, to whom the statue of Dainichi in the collection of Shinnyo-en is attributed, were producing icons in Nara infused with a new sense of vitality inflected by the art from the time of the city’s establishment.

The earliest work attributed to a Kei-school artist is also a seated image of Dainichi, datable to 1176 and housed at Enjōji, a temple near the city of Nara (fig. 2). Dainichi is the supreme Buddha from whom all forces of the cosmos emanate. This form of Dainichi, with the right hand clasped over the index finger of the left hand (the “wisdom fist” gesture), is based on the *Diamond Peak Sutra* (J. *Kongōchō-kyō*; Skt. *Vajraśekhara sūtra*), compiled in south India in the seventh or early eighth century, and embodies Buddhist practice.<sup>4</sup> During the Kamakura period, the best-known statue of Dainichi of the Wisdom World was the main image at the Lecture Hall at Tōji in Kyoto, which had been commissioned by the Shingon prelate Kūkai (Kōbō

Daishi, 774–835) and completed immediately after his death in 835. (The image is not extant; the present statue dates from 1496.) The popularity of the deity in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries seems to have been connected to a general revival of more traditional Buddhist practice that was sweeping Japan, so it would have been only natural for the Kei-school sculptors to look to the famous image at Tōji, commissioned by one of the most sophisticated thinkers in the history of Japanese Buddhism as a model for their own works.<sup>5</sup>

Carved by Unkei under the direction of his father over three weeks in 1176, the Enjōji Dainichi is characterized by self-assured modeling and naturalistic proportions. Although possessing the rigidly balanced posture typical of the sculpture of the late Heian period, its sharply angled elbows, held away from the torso, give the figure a dynamism that sets it apart from contemporary images of Dainichi produced in Kyoto. Most remarkable is the choice of inlaid rock crystal for the eyes. Both reflecting and receiving light, the crystal eyes reinforce the naturalism of the head and proportions of the body and vivify the image.

The use of rock crystal for the eyes of Buddhist images seems to have been invented in Nara in the middle decades of the twelfth century, and was rapidly adopted by the Kei-school artists. It allowed them to recast the image of the Buddha and other deities in a manner that suggested the potential of a living reality, thus countering the highly abstracted style of the previous one hundred and fifty years.<sup>6</sup> Twelfth- and thirteenth-century documents attribute their invention to Unkei. The *Mirror of the East* (*Azuma kagami*), the great history of the Kamakura period, in a passage describing the refurbishing of the Main Hall of Mōtsuji in northern Japan, states:

Enshrined as the main image was a sixteen-foot Healing Buddha [accompanied by images of the] Twelve Divine Generals. These were made by Unkei. The insertion of crystal (*gyoku*) in the eyes of statues of Buddhas and bodhisattvas began at this time.<sup>7</sup>

Whether Unkei actually worked on these statues at Mōtsuji remains open to speculation. However, he frequently used inlaid crystal eyes to great effect on works such as the statue of Fudō at the Ganjōju'in on the Izu Peninsula near Kamakura, and on the statue of Dainichi in the Shinnyo-en, as well as on the imaginary portraits of the Indian theologians Asanga and Vasubandhu, sculpted for the North Octagonal Hall at Kōfukuji between 1206 and 1209.

Unkei's technique was complex. On almost all images carved after the first quarter of the eleventh century—whether they were large sculptures constructed from multiple blocks of wood (*yosegi* technique) or smaller ones formed from a single piece of split wood (*warihagi* technique) to which smaller pieces of wood were joined—the artists worked their blocks from both the interior and exterior. Unkei was no exception. On most of his works, including the Enjōji and Shinnyo-en Dainichi images, he also separated the head from the body at the base of the neck. He carved the head independently before rejoining it to the torso. In most cases, he scored the



FIG. 3. Unkei. Fudō myōō. Kamakura period, 1186. Wood with inlaid rock-crystal eyes. H. 136.9 cm. Ganjōju'in, Izunokuni City, Shizuoka Prefecture. Courtesy Ganjōju'in and Soejima Hiromichi

wood first with a rounded chisel in a circle around the base of the front half of the neck so that it could be refit with precision back into the torso.

Unkei carved the details of the face first.<sup>8</sup> Then he would hollow the head from the inside—creating what can best be described as eye sockets. He opened the eye apertures from the front, then he inserted rock-crystal lenses into the sockets. He had painted the versos of the lenses with pupils in black ink; most often the pupil was outlined in red, and on some works, such as the Shinnyo-en Dainichi, the corners of the eyes were painted blue. This disk of rock crystal was then backed with either paper or cotton, which in turn was held in place usually by bamboo nails, and on occasion by lacquer paste. Finally, he joined the front and back of the head and inserted it in the torso. When viewed from the front, a devotee could clearly see the pupils and the whites of the eye glittering in flickering candles or shafts of sunlight.

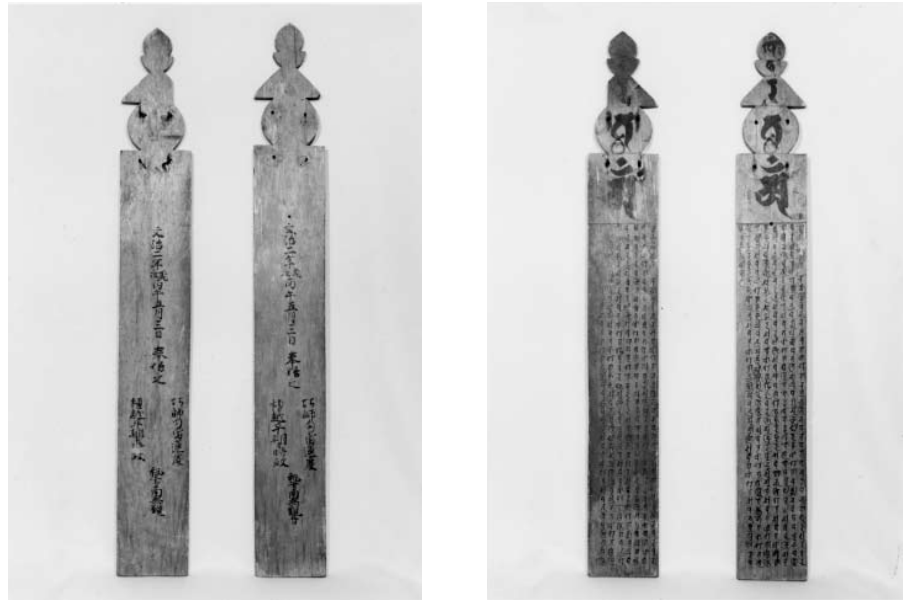
### UNKEI IN EASTERN JAPAN

We know nothing of Unkei's activities for seven years, following the completion of the Enjōji commission in 1176; however, the destruction of the Nara temples by the Taira in 1180 seems to have driven him to seek refuge in Kyoto. The devastating impact of the event on Unkei and his fellow sculptors is directly communicated by the inscription on a copy of the *Lotus Sutra* in eight fascicles datable to 1183 and now in a private collection. He signed his name, "Chief Patron, Monk Unkei," indicating that not only did he initiate the project, but had also by then joined the monastic community. For the scrolls' rollers, Unkei used pieces of wood from the charred timbers of Tōdaiji, a testament to the emotional bond he felt with the Nara temples. To make ink, he drew water from three of the most famous sacred springs near Kyoto. He also enlisted the help of monks from the temples around the Heian capital to perform rituals to quell demons and to recite the *Lotus Sutra* while the copying was taking place. More than fifty people, including Kaikei, joined the religious confraternity that undertook the project. The participants performed religious devotions after each line was copied. By the time all eight rolls were completed, they had prostrated themselves fifty thousand times and recited the name of the Buddha one hundred thousand times. The intensity of religious emotion that Unkei displayed in this project prefigures the way he would later outfit his Buddhist images, including the Shinnyo-en Dainichi, with dedicatory objects.

Despite his close connections with Nara, Unkei does not seem to have participated in the initial stages of the reconstruction of Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji. The competition for the commissions to refurbish the temples was intense, and the work was eventually divided up among Kōkei, Unkei's brother, Jōkaku, plus Kaikei and sculptors from Kyoto, members of the En or In schools. Instead, soon after completing the *Lotus Sutra* copy, Unkei went to Kamakura in eastern Japan, where Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199) had established his military government away from the influences of aristocratic culture and the old Buddhist monastic establishments. While

**FIG. 4.** Fronts and reverses of plaques in the shape of a five-element pagoda (*gorin-no-tō*) discovered inside the statues of Fudō myōō (see fig. 3) and Bishamonten. Wood. H. 71.2 cm each. Ganjōju'in, Izunokuni City, Shizuoka Prefecture. Courtesy Ganjōju'in and Soejima Hiromichi

The front of each plaque (right) is inscribed with incantations in Sanskrit; the reverse (left) is inscribed with the date and names of patrons and artist.



the Minamoto clan and their allies sponsored much of the reconstruction at Tōdaiji, they were equally intent on constructing new temples in and around their power base in Kamakura, and they turned to Unkei to provide the imagery for some of their projects. Although purely speculation on my part, Unkei must have been sympathetic to Yoritomo and his allies, who were bent on annihilating the Taira clan that had caused the destruction of the temples he loved so deeply. Indeed, the resentment toward Taira no Shigehira remained especially fierce in Nara, and after he was executed in 1185, Shigehira's severed head was displayed near the site where the cataclysmic fire had been set.

#### GANJŌJU'IN AND JŌRAKUJI COMMISSIONS IN THE 1180S

In 1186, the year after the annihilation of the Taira, Unkei received a commission from Hōjō Tokimasa (1138–1215), father of Yoritomo's consort, Masako, to produce a group of statues for his tutelary temple, the Ganjōju'in, in the center of the Izu Peninsula. Tokimasa intended to embark on a campaign against the Fujiwara clan in northern Japan, which had opposed Minamoto hegemony, and he hoped that creation of the images and the construction of a temple to house them would ensure a speedy victory. For Tokimasa, Unkei carved a seated image of Amida, a statue of Bishamonten, the guardian of the north, and an image of the Wisdom King Fudō (fig. 3), attended by Seitaka and Kongara. Inside the statues of Bishamonten and Fudō he placed a wooden plaque, the top end of which is fashioned into a "pagoda of the five elemental realms" (*gorin-no-tō*), made up of a square, circle, triangle, half-circle and jewel (fig. 4). The front side of each plaque is covered with incantations in Sanskrit; the back is inscribed with the date the image was dedicated and the name of the patron, Tokimasa, and the sculptor, Unkei.

Subsequently, in 1189, Unkei was asked by Wada no Yoshimori (1147–1213), one of Yoritomo's most important allies in the region, to produce a group

FIG. 5. Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi. Kamakura period, late 12th century. Wood with gold leaf and inlaid rock-crystal eyes. H. 31 cm (image only). Kōtokuji, Ashikaga City, Tochigi Prefecture. Courtesy Kōtokuji and Mizuno Keizaburō

The image is housed in a black-lacquer feretory, not shown.



of similar statues for his clan temple, Jōrakuji, located near Kamakura. This group includes an image of Amida flanked by two bodhisattvas and single statues of Bishamonten and Fudō. During restorations on the works in 1959, a different type of wooden plaque known as a “circle of the moon” (*gachirin*) was discovered inside the chest cavity of both the Bishamonten and the Fudō. The upper part of a *gachirin* is shaped into a circle, meant to symbolize the disk of the full moon, and it rests on a lotiform base with a long lower section that represents the lotus stem. Like the plaques at the Ganjōju’in, the fronts of the two *gachirin* are also covered with incantations in Sanskrit. The inscriptions on their backs name the patron, Yoshimori, the abbot of the temple and the sculptors—Unkei and a group of ten disciples. Unkei’s vigorous new style is well documented by the statues at the Ganjōju’in. The bold treatment of the images most certainly appealed to the forceful military men who commissioned the works.

## THE TWO DAINICHI STATUES AT KABASAKI IN THE 1190S

Four years later, in 1193, Unkei received yet another commission in eastern Japan from another of Yoritomo's supporters, Ashikaga Yoshikane (?–1199), whose descendants established the Ashikaga military government. The *Legends of Bannaji and Kabasaki and Order of Buddhist Ceremonies* (*Bannaji kabasaki engi butsuji shidai*), a fifteenth-century document, describes Yoshikane's role as governor of the province of Kazusa in founding many Buddhist halls at Bannaji near the modern city of Ashikaga in Tochigi Prefecture at the northern edge of the Musashino Plain, the hereditary homeland of the clan.<sup>9</sup> Bannaji, one of the most influential Shingon temples in the Kanto region, was not officially founded until 1196, after Yoshikane took the tonsure at Tōdaiji. Three years earlier, however, he had established a sanctuary in the Kabasaki district to the northeast of his main residence for his spiritual advisor, Rishin, a monk from the Izu Peninsula. The site functioned as the inner sanctum of the temple and was meant to evoke the Okunoin, the inner sanctum on Mount Kōya. But it also had a pond in the style of the Pure Land gardens of the aristocratic temples of the Heian capital.<sup>10</sup> Around this pond were several halls, including a Tahō-tō pagoda, a Sutra Repository, a Jizō Hall and structures called the Shimo no Midō (Lower Hall) and the Aka Midō (Red Hall).<sup>11</sup> The Bannaji document states that installed beneath the altar of the Shimo no Midō, also known as Hōkaiji, were remains of the brothers Ruriō Gozen and Yakuju Gozen, who had died on the same day. To ensure that they would remain filial forever, a gilded wood image of Dainichi of the Wisdom World, three *shaku* (about 90 cm in height), was sculpted and placed in a lacquered cabinet inscribed with a date corresponding to the sixth day of the eleventh month of Kenkyū 4 (1193). The text also notes that the Aka Midō, which served as the mausoleum of Yoshikane, housed a second statue of Dainichi as part of a mandala of the Thirty-seven Deities of the Wisdom World (Kongōkai sanjūshichison).<sup>12</sup> Amida would be the deity most likely to have been enshrined at a complex meant to evoke the Pure Land and to ensure an auspicious rebirth of three members of the Ashikaga clan. However, both Yoshikane and Rishin followed the teachings of Kakuban (1095–1143), founder of the Shingi Shingon sect, which proposed that Amida and Dainichi were one, thereby explaining the presence of the two Esoteric images and the allusions to Mount Kōya in the layout of the temple complex.<sup>13</sup>

More than twenty years ago, the world of Buddhist art in Japan was electrified by the discovery of a small (31 cm) gilded image of Dainichi in a black-lacquer feretory at Kōtokuji in the city of Ashikaga (fig. 5). The image holds its hands in the wisdom-fist gesture and sits on a lotiform pedestal presently surrounded by four lions from an original group of seven. On the interior of the two doors are the Sanskrit seed characters for Dainichi of the Womb World and the Wisdom World. The arrangement clearly corresponded to the description in the Bannaji document, and, as Yamamoto pointed out, mirrored the arrangement of the statues in the Lecture Hall at Tōji, the work that had provided the iconographic source for Unkei's 1176 statue of Dainichi at Enjōji in Nara (see figure 2).<sup>14</sup>





FIG. 6. Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi, left side. Shinnyo-en. Photo: Christie's Images Limited 2008



FIG. 7. Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi, head. Shinnyo-en. Photo: Christie's Images Limited 2008

Until the late nineteenth century, the Kōtokuji statue had been kept at the neighboring Kabasaki Hachiman Shrine. Then, as a result of the government's policy separating Shinto and Buddhist institutions, it was moved to the Buddhist temple. The Hachiman Shrine is located on what once had been the grounds of the inner sanctum of Bannaji, strengthening the possibility that the image was the one from the Aka Midō described in the Bannaji document. After meticulous formal, stylistic and technical analysis, Yamamoto, then curator at the Tokyo National Museum, proposed that the statue was sculpted by Unkei or by artists closely affiliated with him. X-ray photographs of the statue also revealed a group of dedicatory objects in the hollow interior.

#### INTERIOR DEDICATORY OBJECTS

In 2003, Yamamoto was given the opportunity to examine a statue of Dainichi in a private collection that had never been published (figs. 1, 6–8). It is entirely gilded and measures 66.1 cm, or 45.5 cm to the hairline, the traditional three *shaku* size. Yamamoto immediately suspected that this image corresponds to the other statue of Dainichi described in the Bannaji docu-

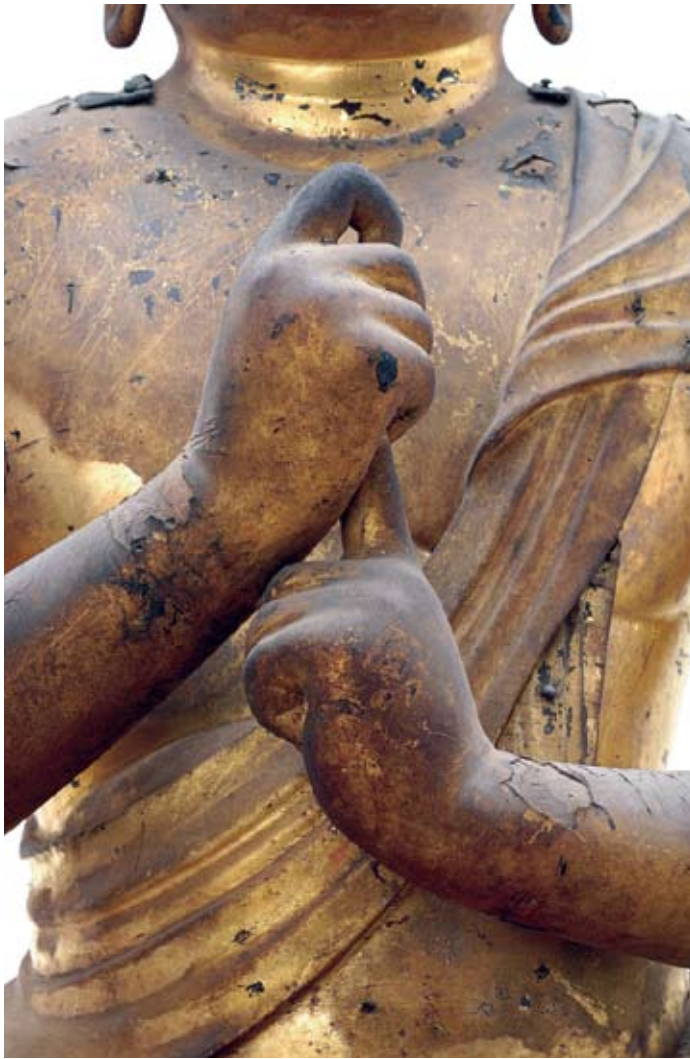


FIG. 8. Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi, hands. Shinnyo-en. Photo: Christie's Images Limited 2008

ment, the one in the Shimo no Midō. The naturalistic proportions of the Dainichi accord with most works by the Kei-school sculptors, but the carving of the body mass and the finesse of the drapery reveal the hand of a master sculptor at the height of his abilities. A comparison with the statue of Dainichi at Enjōji (see figure 2) makes this maturation of style and technique immediately clear. The somewhat formulaic folds of the skirt on the work from 1176 have been replaced by drapery that resembles real cloth. Moreover, the transition between the slender torso, here given a convincing sense of volume, and the hips is articulated more successfully. While not naturalistic in the traditional Western idiom, the Dainichi was sculpted by an artist who had a clear grasp of actual human anatomy.

Based upon his analysis of this new discovery, Yamamoto also posited a new stylistic trajectory that placed this image after the Amida triad at Jōrakuji and before the Dainichi at Kōtokuji. When matched with the account of the two statues of Dainichi described in the Bannaji document, he concluded that the work now in the collection of the Shinnyo-en was most probably the image from the Shimo no Midō, carved in 1193; the image at Kōtokuji was the statue installed in Yoshikane's mausoleum, carved sometime between the time he took the tonsure in 1196 and his death in 1199.

X-ray photographs taken of the Shinnyo-en image (figs. 9, 10) reveal that the cavity inside the statue contains a group of carefully arranged dedicatory objects. The practice of installing relics, texts and images inside Buddhist sculpture is an ancient one, and has its origins in the custom of placing objects inside stupas and pagodas. In the case of relics and texts, the presence of the physical remains and quoted words of the founder of the faith inside an image activated it, creating a bond between the sculpture and the Historical Buddha. The inclusion of texts copied by the religious confraternity that commissioned an image established a permanent tie between the devotees and the image. The practice became especially popular in Japan after the invention of the joined-block technique of Buddhist sculpture in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, as the images came with a cavity suitable for relics. The practice apparently had particular currency among the members of the Kei school and their patrons, and they equipped their seated icons with a raised base to hold the objects in place.

Unkei, likely owing to his own deep faith, seems to have been partial to complex arrangements of objects inside his sculptures. The five-element pagoda discussed earlier—each shape of which is associated with a natural element (earth, water, fire, wind, ether) and a color, a direction and a

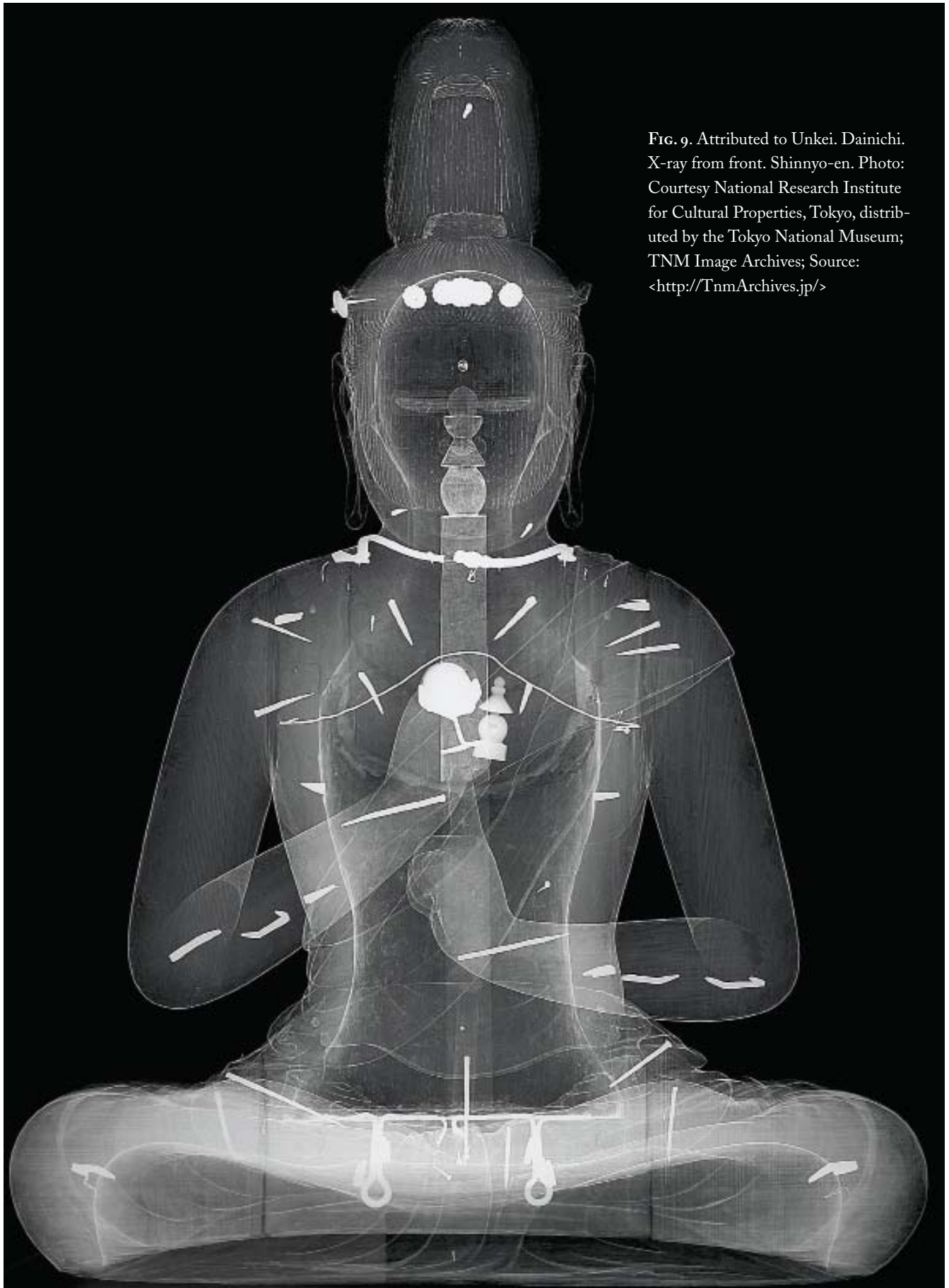


FIG. 9. Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi. X-ray from front. Shinnyo-en. Photo: Courtesy National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, distributed by the Tokyo National Museum; TNM Image Archives; Source: <<http://TnmArchives.jp/>>

FIG. 10. Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi.  
X-ray from left side. Shinnyo-en. Photo:  
Courtesy National Research Institute  
for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, distrib-  
uted by the Tokyo National  
Museum; TNM Image Archives;  
Source: <<http://TnmArchives.jp/>>





FIG. 11. *Principle of the Sanskrit Seed Syllable A (Ajigi)*. Heian period, 12th century. Handscroll (detail); ink, color and gold leaf on paper. 26.1 x 687 cm. Fujita Museum, Osaka. Courtesy Fujita Museum

Buddha—links the image to the cosmos. Carved wooden plaques of the same outline were used for similar ends at gravesites. Careful examination of the x-ray photographs of the Shinnyo-en Dainichi reveals just such a plaque made of thick board extending up into the statue’s head. The upper end of the plaque is much more clearly visible than the lower portion, which has prompted Yamamoto to speculate that the top must be painted and the base left plain wood; the mineral pigments used at the time would be more visible in an x-ray. Based on the practice Unkei followed on similar plaques in the statues at the Ganjōju’in, the circumstances of the commission should be inscribed on the lower end. The plaque also suggests a memorial function for the image, which might correspond with the passage in the Bannaji document.

The x-ray also reveals a semicircular form on a lotiform base with a long stem directly in the center of the chest cavity. Yamamoto is certain that this is a rock-crystal *gachirin* attached to a bronze lotus. As mentioned above, a *gachirin* was meant to represent the disk of the full moon, and was invoked in Esoteric visualization rituals to symbolize the spirit of a religious practitioner that merged with a Buddhist deity, most often Dainichi. That practice is illustrated by images of a Buddhist nun and a courtier, eyes closed in meditation, from the *Principle of the Sanskrit Seed Syllable A*, a handscroll in the collection of the Fujita Museum, Osaka, dating to the twelfth century (fig. 11). The *gachirin* of their enlightened spirits, located exactly in the center of their chests, is inscribed with the Sanskrit seed syllable for Dainichi, and from it emanate miraculous rays of light. In Buddhist sculpture, a *gachirin* was used to represent the spirit of the deity in which the latent power of Dainichi was understood to reside; Unkei favored them in his sculptures as well. In their simplest form, as in the statues at Jōrakuji, he carved them into wooden plaques. On other occasions, such as his 1212



FIG. 12. Reliquary. Kamakura period. Rock crystal. H. 20.5 cm. Private Collection

This reliquary was probably from a small shrine. The finial is a different shape from that of the reliquary inside the Shinnyo-en Dainichi.

seated Miroku for Kōfukuji, Unkei installed a rock-crystal *gachirin* on a lotiform base inside the statue.

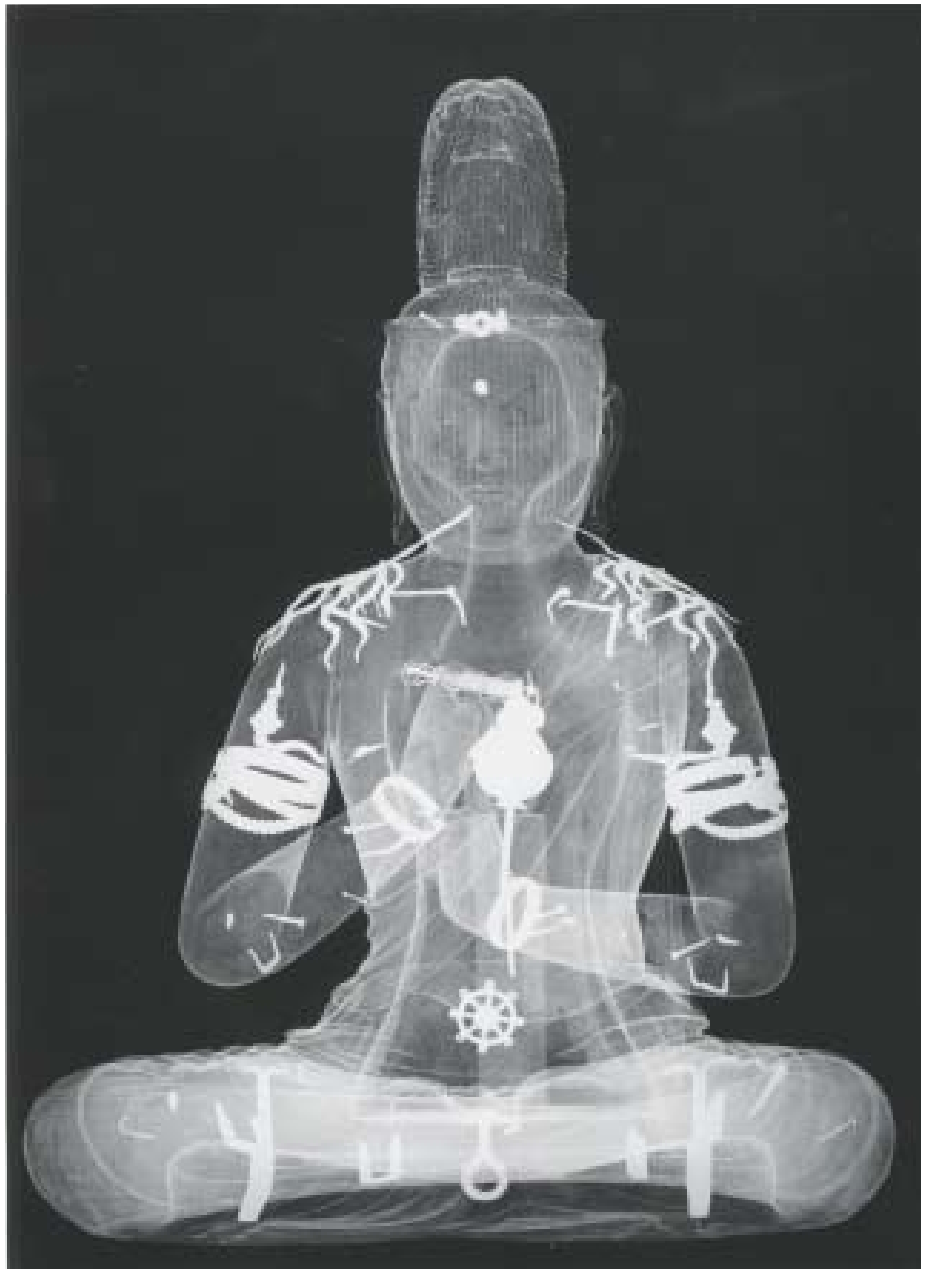
The x-ray of the Shinnyo-en Dainichi reveals a small *gorin-no-tō* just to the right of the *gachirin*. A close-up of the lateral x-ray shows that the *gorin-no-tō* is translucent and shaped from two parts: a base comprising the square and circle, which was hollowed out; and a lid formed by the triangle, half-circle and jewel. The hollowed section contains a relic. Rock-crystal reliquaries, while known from the late Heian period, did not gain wide acceptance until the start of the Kamakura period during the renewed focus on the Historical Buddha, promoted in particular by monks from Nara, including Chōgen (1120–1206), Jōkei (1155–1213) and Eison (1201–1290) (fig. 12). They and others maintained that the worship of the physical remains of the Historical Buddha formed a direct karmic bond with their spiritual leader, thereby ensuring one’s salvation. The inclusion of a rock-crystal reliquary in the shape of a *gorin-no-tō* in the statue of Dainichi associates it both with the cosmos and with the founder of the Buddhist faith.<sup>15</sup>

Equally remarkable is that the sculptor carved the nostrils and the canals of the ears so they would open into the cavity of the head. With rock-crystal eyes that received and reflected light, and ears and nostrils that were open, the artist was seeing his work as more than a crafted block of wood. The artist animated and activated his image in a variety of ways—by adopting a more naturalistic mode of figuration on the exterior, through the installation of dedicatory objects on the interior and through the inclusion of features that blurred the distinction between the inanimate and the animate.

An x-ray of the Kōtokuji statue reveals a similar use of dedicatory objects (fig. 13). A three-dimensional carved wooden plaque, the end of which has

FIG. 13. Attributed to Unkei. Dainichi. X-ray from front. Kōtokuji, Ashikaga City, Tochigi Prefecture. Courtesy Kōtokuji and Soejima Hiromichi

For a recent analysis of this statue using CT-scan technology, see Maruyama Shirō et al., “Kōtokuji Dainichi nyorai zō no X-sen konpyūta dansō satsuei (CT) chōsa hōkoku” (Report on CT-scanned images of the seated Dainichi nyorai statue of Kōtokuji Temple), *Museum*, no. 621 (Aug. 2009): 5–27.



been shaped into a *gorin-no-tō*, is placed in the chest cavity of the statue along with a rock-crystal *gachirin* on a lotiform pedestal. The relics, however, have been placed immediately behind the *urna*, the small tuft of white hair on the Buddha’s forehead. Yamamoto suggested that such a similar use of dedicatory objects on three works sculpted by Unkei and two associated with him by style cannot be accidental, a position with which I definitely agree. Thus, both in terms of style and in terms of the religious context in which the images were made and worshipped, both the small Dainichi at Kōtokuji and the Dainichi now in the collection of the Shinnyo-en can be firmly tied to Unkei.

\* \* \*

Sometime after completing the statue for the Shimo no Midō in 1193, Unkei must have returned to the Kyoto–Nara region, for, by 1196, he was

actively working on the restoration of Tōdaiji. At the same time, he remained closely affiliated with the Minamoto clan and its allies. Not only did he sculpt the Kōtokuji statue, between 1199 and 1201, he and his eldest son, Tankei, produced the triad of Kannon, Taishakuten and Bonten at Takisanji in Okazaki City, commissioned as a memorial to Minamoto no Yoritomo, who had died in 1199. According to the *Legends of Takisanji Temple* (*Takistanji engi*), a lock of Yoritomo's hair and one of his teeth were placed in the central statue of Kannon, an account confirmed by x-ray photographs. Subsequently, in 1216, Unkei carved a statue of the Historical Buddha to serve as the personal devotional image of Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192–1219), Yoritomo's second son and the third head of the Kamakura shogunate. In 1218, he carved a statue of the Healing Buddha for Hōjō Yoshitoki (1163–1224) and in 1219, a set of statues of the Five Wisdom Kings for Hōjō Masako (1156–1225). While none of these seven statues is now extant, in 1998, a damaged image of Daiitoku myōō was discovered at the Kōmyō'in, a sub-temple of Shōmyōji in Yokohama, a sanctuary with strong connections to the Hōjō clan. When the image was restored in 2006, discovered inside was a small packet containing a lotus seed fashioned into a reliquary; six cloves; and a sheet of decorated paper inscribed with Sanskrit seed characters associated with Daiitoku myōō, as well as the incantations (darani) of Thousand-armed Kannon. At the end of the sheet was an inscription dating the statue to 1216, stating that the Daiitoku was commissioned as part of a triad with images of Dainichi and Aizen by Genji Daini Dono and sculpted by Unkei. Daini Dono, also known as Daini Tsubone, was one of the highest-ranking women in Sanetomo's household, and it is assumed that she commissioned the statues to seek protection for him at a particularly troubled time in his tragic political career.<sup>16</sup>

The discovery of the statue of Daiitoku in Yokohama and the statue of Dainichi now in the Shinnyo-en provide new insights into the career of Unkei. The existence of these images reveals that not only did he work for the most powerful patrons in Eastern Japan, the elite of the Hōjō and Minamoto clans, but he also accepted commissions from other patrons to carve images that served their own personal spiritual needs. While the identities of the two brothers who died on the same day in 1193 may never be known, their deaths clearly had a profound effect on Yoshikane, for he sought out one of the most influential sculptors of the day to create an icon that he hoped would ensure the future well-being of their spirits. The Dainichi Unkei created, and the complex arrangement of dedicatory objects that he placed inside it at Yoshikane's behest, bear witness to the deep faith of artist and patron alike.

#### POSTSCRIPT

In March of 2008, the statue of Dainichi, originally at the Shimo no Midō, was purchased at Christie's in New York for \$14,377,000, the highest price ever paid for a work of Japanese art at auction. As mentioned above, the existence of the work had remained unknown until the owner contacted Yamamoto Tsutomu in 2003. Yamamoto studied the work, exhibited it



at the Tokyo National Museum and wrote about it in 2004 for the museum's in-house journal, *Museum*. Despite the absence of the carver's signature or other documentation, Yamamoto was convinced that Unkei was the sculptor of the statue. The attention that the image received at that time was primarily from the scholarly world, although the discovery had been published in both the newspapers *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* in March 2004. Subsequently, the owner offered to sell the statue to the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs, but it could not meet his price. As a private individual, he was able to decline a proposal by the agency to register the work as an Important Cultural Property. When it was learned that the work would be sold at auction, the statue of Dainichi suddenly became the subject of widespread interest, both in Japan and in the West. Although the owner had followed all the proper procedures in order to sell the statue in New York, obtaining an export permit from the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs, many in Japan questioned the reasons that the work had been allowed to leave the country. The head of the cultural affairs office in Ashikaga City, Kusakabe Takaaki, attempted to block the export of the work, an effort that was supported by a petition with more than twelve thousand signatures from the city's residents. He commented to the *Sankei News*, "It is an important asset of Japan. Somehow I would like to keep it in the country. I want to call out to not only the residents of the city or the residents of the prefecture but to all the residents of Japan."<sup>17</sup> When it was discovered that the buyer was the Shinnyo-en—a religious group based on Shingon doctrines, located in Tachikawa, outside of Tokyo, and founded by Itō Shinjō (1906–1989)—the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Tokai Kisaburō, stated, "I am relieved that an important cultural property of our nation did not go overseas. In the future, I hope that this Buddhist statue will be kept in an appropriate environment and will be made accessible to many people."<sup>18</sup> Itō had trained at Daigōji, an important Shingon temple in Kyoto; thus, Shinnyo-en holds Dainichi in particularly high esteem. He was also a self-trained sculptor and adept calligrapher who himself had acquired a small collection of early Buddhist sculpture. A highly publicized exhibition of his work toured Japan, the United States and Italy from 2006 to 2008 and was on view in New York City at the time of the Christie's auction.

The statue was taken back to Japan, and in 2008, it was once again briefly put on view at the Tokyo National Museum. It has since been registered as an Important Cultural Property. NHK aired a documentary on the image with the dramatic title, "The Transmigration of a Buddha by Unkei: Searching for the Secrets of the Image of 'The Buddha Dainichi'" (*Ryūten no Unkei butsu: 'Dainichi nyorai zō' no nazo o saguru*). As of October 2009, the image was still on loan to the Tokyo National Museum, but not on public view. The excitement generated by the discovery of the Dainichi has yet to calm down. The January 2009 issue of *Geijutsu shinchō* is titled "Unkei—The Genius Sculptor Who Transcended the Real," with the added comment, "All Thirty-one Extant Images Published in a Single Swoop!" ❀

NOTES

1. Yamamoto Tsutomu, “Ashikaga Kōtokuji Dainichi nyorai zō to Unkei” (Unkei and the statue of Dainichi at Kōtokuji, Ashikaga), *Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan kiyō* (Bulletin of the Tokyo National Museum), no. 2 (Mar. 1988): 5–109; Yamamoto Tsutomu, *Dainichi nyorai zō* (Image of Dainichi), *Nihon no bijutsu* (Arts of Japan) 374 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1997); Yamamoto Tsutomu, “Shinshutsu no Dainichi nyorai zō to Unkei” (Unkei and a newly discovered statue of Dainichi), *Museum*, no. 589 (Apr. 2004): 7–41.
2. I would like to thank Mizuno Keizaburō, Professor Emeritus, Tokyo National University of Arts and Music; Tazawa Hiroshi, Chief Curator, Tokyo National Museum; Professor Soejima Hiromichi, Taishō University, Tokyo; and especially, Julia Meech and Jane Oliver for their help with this essay.
3. Mōri Hisashi, *Sculpture of the Kamakura Period*, Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art, vol. 11, trans. Katherine Eickmann (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha, 1974), 140.
4. Yoshito Hakeda, *Kūkai—Major Works* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 85–87.
5. Yamamoto, *Dainichi nyorai zō*, 55–61.
6. Samuel C. Morse, “Style As Ideology—Realism and Kamakura Sculpture,” in *Realism in Oriental Art—Proceedings of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Art Historical Studies* (Osaka: Taniguchi Foundation, 1994), 27–36; Morse, “Animating the Image: Buddhist Portrait Sculpture of the Kamakura Period,” *Orientalism*, vol. 35, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 2004): 22–30.
7. *Azuma kagami*, entry for the 17th day of the 9th month of Bunji 5 (1189). Kishi Shōzō and Nagahara Keiji, eds., *Zenyaku Azuma kagami* (Tokyo: Shinbutsu Ōraisha, 1976), 117. Although the character for “Un” in this passage is different from the one usually used for Unkei, scholars generally consider the reference to be about the same person.
8. Nishikawa Kyōtarō, *Ichiboku zukuri to yosegi zukuri* (Single-woodblock construction and joined-woodblock construction), *Nihon no bijutsu* (Arts of Japan) 202 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1985), 73–74.
9. Tochigi kenshi hensan iinkai, ed., *Tochigi kenshi shiryōhen chūsei 1* (History of Tochigi Prefecture: Documents, medieval period, 1) (Utsunomiya: Tochigi-ken, 1973), 396–400.
10. Yamamoto, “Ashikaga Kōtokuji,” 56.
11. Yamamoto, “Shinshutsu,” 38.
12. The Kongōkai Sanjūshichison Mandala consists of the Buddhas of the Five Directions surrounded by the Four Paramita Bodhisattvas (Shi haramitsu bosatsu), the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas (Jūroku dai-bosatsu) and the Eight Devotional Bodhisattvas (Hachi kuyō bosatsu).
13. Osawa Nobuhiro, “Suteitasu shinboru wa ike to Unkei” (A pond and Unkei as status symbol), *Geijutsu shinchō*, vol. 60, no. 1 (Jan. 2009): 56–57. Kakuban’s beliefs are explored in H. van der Veere, *A Study into the Thought of Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2000).
14. Yamamoto, *Dainichi nyorai zō*, 60–61.
15. While Unkei frequently installed relics in his statues, he is not known to have used rock-crystal reliquaries in the shape of *gorin-no-tō* as containers; however, his fellow sculptor Kaikei used them on at least two occasions: the 1192 Miroku at Daigōji, Kyoto, and the 1199 Shaka at Bujōji, Kyoto. Given their popularity throughout the period, it is not surprising to find one in an image associated with Unkei as well.
16. Seya Takayuki, “Shōmyōji Kōmyō’in shozō Unkei saku Daiitoku myōō zazō” (A seated image of the Wisdom King Daiitoku by Unkei in the collection of Kōmyō’in, Shōmyōji), in *Kanazawa bunkō no chōkoku* (Sculpture at the Kanazawa Bunkō), ed. Kanagawa Kenritsu Kanazawa Bunkō (Yokohama: Kanagawa Kenritsu Kanazawa Bunkō, 2007), 53–64.
17. <<http://sankei.jp.msn.com/region/kanto/tochigi/080223/tcg0802230224001-n1.htm>> accessed October 20, 2009.
18. <<http://sankei.jp.msn.com/culture/academic/080319/acd080319115006-n2.htm>> accessed May 2009.



博覧会  
川本行

# The Hishikawa Mode

DAVID WATERHOUSE

AS MOST READERS OF *IMPRESSIONS* will be aware, ukiyo-e and poetry are closely connected. Both artists and their patrons dabbled in verse, and classical or contemporary poems frequently appear on traditional Japanese prints and paintings. For full appreciation of such images, we need to take cognizance of allusions made in the poems. I came across references in Japanese secondary sources to the following poems, during work on Hishikawa Moronobu (1631?–1694) for the exhibition catalogue *Designed for Pleasure*:<sup>1</sup>

*Yamashiro no  
Kichiya-musubi no  
matsu mo koso*

In Yamashiro  
with Kichiya sash knots the  
pine trees too are tied.

and

*Hishikawa-yō no  
Azuma omokage*

The Hishikawa mode is  
its reflection in the East!

Japanese writers who quote these above two poems usually neglect to cite their proximate or ultimate source. In fact, they come from a collection edited in 1683 by Enomoto (later Takara-i) Kikaku (1661–1707) under the title *Fruitless Chestnuts* (*Minashiguri*).<sup>2</sup> The earliest of many such collections edited by Kikaku, it contains 414 linked poems, arranged according to the four seasons and divided into nine books. Originally from Ōmi province in western Japan, Kikaku became the leading follower in Edo of the famous poet Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), who had moved there himself in 1672. After Bashō's death, he started his own poetry circle. As well as studying poetry, medicine, calligraphy and Confucianism, Kikaku also dabbled in painting, under the guidance of his friend Hanabusa Itchō (1652–1724).

Kikaku wrote many of the poems in *Minashiguri*, including these above two, which constitute a pair and belong to a sequence of what is known technically as *haikai*, *haikai* [*no*] *renga* or *renku*, a type of linked verse based on medieval Japanese linked verse (*renga*), but with less strict rules about vocabulary and subject matter. In both *renga* and *renku*, a verse of seventeen syllables (five + seven + five) was capped by one with fourteen syllables (seven + seven), which in turn led to another of seventeen syllables, and so on. The word *haikai* translates as “playful,” and, as applied to this kind of poetry, goes back to the late sixteenth century. The initial verse of a *haikai* sequence was the *haikai no hokku*, *haiku* for short; but use of the term *haiku*

< FIG. 1. Hishikawa Moronobu. *Beauty Looking Back*. c. 1694. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. 63 x 31.2 cm. Tokyo National Museum. Photo: TNM Image Archives; Source: <<http://TnmArchives.jp/>>

FIG. 2. Hishikawa Moronobu. *Women at Leisure*, from *A Hundred Women of Japan* (*Wakoku hyakujo*), 1695. Illustrated woodblock-printed book. From Ōmori Tadayuki, ed., *Genroku onna-e-zukushi "Wakoku hyakujo"* (Encyclopedia of pictures of Genroku-era women: "A Hundred Women of Japan") (Tokyo: Iwasaki Bijutsusha, 1979), 17



for independent seventeen-syllable verses dates only from the late nineteenth century, credited to the poet and essayist Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902).

In Kikaku’s first poem, Yamashiro is the old name of the province (now urban Kyoto Prefecture) in which the city of Kyoto is situated.<sup>3</sup> The “Kichiya sash knots” in line two of the poem were named after Uemura Kichiya I, a female impersonator (*onnagata*) popular on the kabuki stages of Kyoto and Osaka. During the 1670s, he had a considerable influence on women’s fashion, being associated not only with a style of fastening sashes (*obi*), but also with a type of basket hat and a type of face powder. The Osaka author Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693) describes how Kichiya had noticed an ugly woman whose *obi* as tied behind made her look very attractive:

“Who is that woman?” he asked. A man who sold salt, going outside the capital and seeking out small houses, recognized her. “That’s the daughter

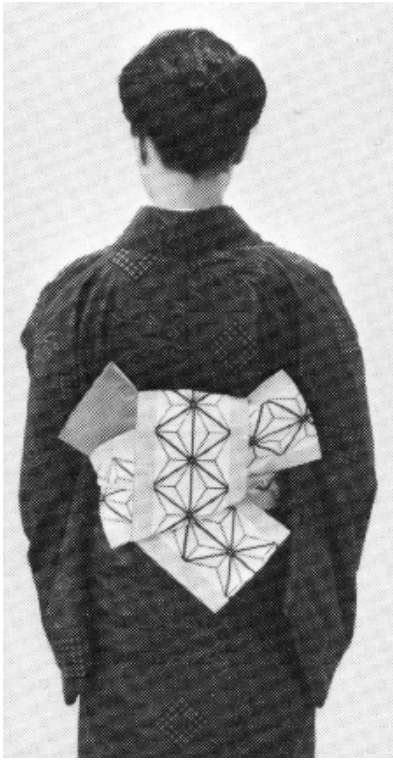


FIG. 3. The modern Kichiya sash knot. From Sasajima Sumi, *Atarashii kitsuke to obi-musubi* (New dressing and obi fastening) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1993), 116

of a fashionable indigo-dyer (*ukiyo kon'ya*) on Higashi no Tōin Street [in Kyoto]. Because of her reputation, they call her 'Shapely Oshun,'" he explained. Kichiya imitated her, and at both ends of a big obi 1 jō 2 shaku in length [about 2.36 meters] hung lead weights inside the hems. This was the beginning of the Kichiya sash knot so popular everywhere today.<sup>4</sup>

The humor in the poem, then, is that Kichiya sash knots are so popular in Yamashiro that even the pine trees are wearing them. This may be an allusion to the custom of attaching written messages to trees, or to love-knots in general (*en-musubi*). Billets-doux inscribed on slips of paper were often attached to trees or poles with a knot resembling the *Kichiya-musubi*.

The answering poem, also by Kikaku, comments that in Eastern Japan (Azuma, "East," implying Edo), this fashion is manifested in art of the Hishikawa school; that is to say, of Hishikawa Moronobu. Yet another, unattributed, poem locates the fashion in Negimachi, the theater district of Edo:

*Kichiya-musubi ni*  
*Negimachi no*  
*share musume*

The Kichiya knots  
on Negimachi are for  
girls of fashion.<sup>5</sup>

According to the textile historian Endō Takeshi, in the late seventeenth century, the Kichiya knot was popular with young women. Because of the lead weights, the loops in the knot would hang like the ears of a *karainu*, or Chinese lion-dog.<sup>6</sup> The *Kichiya-musubi*, a sash tied in a simple bow with ends that droop slightly, is on display in various of Moronobu's works, including both paintings and prints, and, most famously, in his painting of an Edo beauty who is depicted from the rear, glancing back over her shoulder, a familiar pose in the Hishikawa atelier (fig. 1). An example from his posthumously published book *A Hundred Women of Japan* (*Wakoku hyakujo*, 1695), shows a married woman together with two younger women who are wearing sashes secured behind with Kichiya knots (fig. 2). The Kichiya knot has survived into modern times, and numerous Japanese-language websites describe and illustrate how to put it on. There are at least two ways of finishing the knot, and the result looks more complex and neater than in the seventeenth-century examples (fig. 3). Today, the *Kichiya-musubi* is recommended as a way of tying a half-width sash (*han-haba obi*); and while the accompanying text may pay lip-service to its origins in the Edo period, I find no mention of lead weights.<sup>7</sup>

Considerably more information about Uemura Kichiya and his sash knot, with references to both Saikaku and other literary sources, can be found in *Posthumous scripts of Ryūtei* (*Ryūtei ikō*), a nineteenth-century miscellany by Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783–1842).<sup>8</sup> Tanehiko was an Edo samurai who during his long career turned out vast quantities of light fiction and light verse, in various genres. He was not only associated with other writers, but also collaborated with ukiyo-e artists, including Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849), Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769–1825) and, most notably, Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1865). Tanehiko himself had studied painting, and would often supply sketch illustrations for his books, to be worked up by a professional ukiyo-e artist. His best-known work of fiction was *Fake Murasaki: A Rustic* [*Tale of*]



FIG. 4. Ryūtei Tanehiko. *The Kabuki Actor Uemura Kichiya*, from *Ryūtei ikō* (*Posthumous scripts of Ryūtei*). 19th c. Woodcut. From Asakura Haruhiko, ed., *Zoku Enseki jissshū* (*Ten types of Mount Yan gemstones: Continuation*) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1980), vol. 3, 171  
The woodcut is based on an ink sketch that was presumably made by Tanehiko himself.

*Genji* (*Nise Murasaki Inaka Genji*), which appeared serially over fourteen years, remained unfinished at the time of his sudden death and was illustrated by Kunisada, in both books and single-sheet prints.

Many of the additional details about Uemura Kichiya which Tanehiko provides need not detain us, but we learn a little about Kichiya II, who in the later 1680s continued the fashions associated with Uemura Kichiya I, and seems to be confused in some of the sources with his predecessor. The various contemporary sources quoted by Tanehiko include *Manuscript Pickings from Idle Hours in the Yoshiwara* (*Shahon Yoshiwara Tsurezuregusa*), according to which the Kichiya knot was originally known as the *Tamazusa-musubi*, and it is an error to say that Uemura Kichiya I was the first to use it. Another of Tanehiko's manuscript sources, *Scattered Notes of Sawada Okichi* (*Sawada Okichi chirashi-bun*), dating from 1691, describes the *Kichiya-musubi* as having become old-fashioned, and mentions alternative methods of tying the sash: *hana-musubi* ("flower-tying"); *iro-musubi* ("love-tying"); *Fukakusa-musubi* ("Fukakusa-tying," after the Fukakusa district of Kyoto); and *matsumushi-no-tama-musubi* ("pine cricket's egg tying"). One would like to know more about all of these. A third source quoted by Tanehiko is *The Soft*

*Growing Hair of Love* (*Kōshoku ubuge*) (early 1690s), a novelette by Unpūshi Rinkō, who writes: "Continuing on from Shimomura Sagenta, [Uemura] Kichiya II too was in the ascendant with his manner and his appearance was weak."<sup>9</sup> The identity of the Shimomura Sagenta referred to here is unclear; but from the date of *Kōshoku ubuge*, Tanehiko concludes that Kichiya II died in about 1693. Lastly, another of Tanehiko's sources, *Mulberry Hill Collection, Continued* (*Zoku Kuwaoka shū*, 1759), has a *haikai* by the editor, Kaian Heisa, which conveys something of the effect of a Kichiya knot:

<i>Shōsei ni mo</i>	On a small girl
<i>Kichiya-musubi ya</i>	a Kichiya sash knot —
<i>haba no hina</i>	like a chicken with its mother! <sup>10</sup>

For visual evidence of the Kichiya knot, we may turn not only to the work of Moronobu, but also to a sketch of Uemura Kichiya I, which accompanies Tanehiko's description. This was presumably made by Tanehiko himself; but in the first published version of *Ryūtei ikō* (1909), edited by Hayakawa Junzaburō, it appears as a reworked black-and-white woodblock reproduction (fig. 4). According to Asakura, the manuscript source of *Ryūtei ikō*, which was in the old Imperial Library (Teikoku Toshokan), has not survived in the present National Diet Library; so we are unfortunately dependent on the woodblock reproduction, which leaves something to be desired. It apparently depicts the actor wearing his signature knot, but the side profile partly obscures it.<sup>11</sup>

According to the late Andrew Markus, and as is apparent from the passages cited above, Tanehiko had an encyclopedic knowledge of late seventeenth-

century Japanese culture, including the work of Hishikawa Moronobu, and he drew on this in his work.<sup>12</sup> It is not clear if he personally knew Santō Kyōden (1761–1823), a writer of similar scope who produced ukiyo-e prints under the name Kitao Masanobu, but he was certainly influenced by the older man and had access to his writings. In *Ryūtei ikō*, Tanehiko cites the “*Minashiguri* of Kikaku,” but without mentioning our two poems. On the other hand, they are quoted in the entry on Moronobu in *Some Considerations of Ukiyo-e (Ukiyo-e ruikō)*, a multilayered collection of biographies of ukiyo-e artists, and the earliest and most important compilation of its kind. However, they appear not in the original version of this text, which was compiled by Ōta Nanpo (1749–1823), but in the extensive supplementary notes (*tsuikō*), which Kyōden added to it in 1802.<sup>13</sup> Kyōden there credits the first poem to Kikaku, and the second to “Ransetsu,” namely Hattori Ransetsu (1654–1707), a samurai retainer who was born in the Yushima district of Edo, and who was Kikaku’s leading associate in the confecting of *haikai*. Ransetsu indeed composed the next two linking poems in *Minashiguri*. Following proper *renku* form, he begins by quoting Kikaku’s second poem. It must be concluded, therefore, either that Kyōden had read his source a little carelessly, or that he was relying on a faulty manuscript copy.

The mistake came to be repeated in the earliest printed edition of *Ukiyo-e ruikō*, edited by Honma Mitsunori in 1889. It was further copied in two chronological compilations on ukiyo-e compiled in the Meiji period: *Annals of Ukiyo-e (Ukiyo-e hennenshi)*, 1891, by Sekiba Tadatake (b. 1838) and *Biographies of Ukiyo-e Artists (Ukiyo gajinden)*, 1899, by Sekine Kinshirō (1863–1923).<sup>14</sup> All three works cite the source of the poems as *Minashiguri*, and the first two correctly identify its date as 1683, which they take as marking the period when Moronobu began producing woodblock-illustrated books in large numbers. People in other provinces called them *Edo-e*, “Edo pictures”; in sum, “The pursuit of block-cutting originated with this man” (*hankoku wo moteasobu wa kono hito ni okoreri*). Quoting the poems, they observe: “*Minashiguri* was printed in the third year of Tenna. We may see that it [i.e., the Hishikawa mode] was in full flower during this period” (*Minashiguri wa Tenna sannen-han nari, kono goro sakari ni okonowaretaru wo mirubeshi*). These words are all taken directly from Kyōden; most of them were again repeated, without attribution, in the first published monograph on Moronobu, by Miyatake Gaikotsu (1867–1955).<sup>15</sup> Much the same words are also quoted from a now-lost manuscript, *Miscellany From a Leisure-lover’s Pavilion (Aikanrō zakki)*, in *Casual Brush From the Miyagarwa Lodge (Kyōsensha manpitsu)*, by Miyakawa Masayasu (b. 1796). The latter was not published until 1862, but the passage implies that the author of *Aikanrō zakki* had access to an early manuscript copy of *Ukiyo-e ruikō* or to Kyōden’s supplementary notes on it.<sup>16</sup>

In his own commentary on *Ukiyo-e ruikō*, Yura Tetsuji suggests that Kyōden’s reference to *Minashiguri* may be taken as a tribute to the breadth of his scholarship.<sup>17</sup> However, in other respects he is not always to be taken on trust; for example, the dates that Kyōden gives for Moronobu have turned out to be completely wrong.<sup>18</sup> It is therefore unfortunate that his simple error about the authorship of one of the poems has been repeated by modern



Japanese writers, who generally quote them without citing any source at all.<sup>19</sup> However, these twin poems offer a window into the social and cultural world of Hishikawa Moronobu, as well as of his heirs in the nineteenth century. Accordingly, it seems worthwhile to point out their source and to examine the allusions contained in them. I have tried at the same time to explore a neglected aspect of Edo fashion history. ☞

#### NOTES

1. David Waterhouse, “Hishikawa Moronobu: Tracking Down an Elusive Master,” in Julia Meech and Jane Oliver, eds., *Designed for Pleasure: The World of Edo Japan in Prints and Paintings, 1680–1860* (New York: Asia Society and Japanese Art Society of America in association with University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 2008), 32–55.
2. This is the commonly used, abbreviated title of *Collection of Fruitless Chestnuts* (*Minashiguri-shū*). For all of Kikaku’s *renku*, with detailed commentaries, see Nomura Kazumi, *Kikaku renku zen chūshaku* (Complete commentaries on the linked verse of Kikaku) (Tokyo: Kazama Shoin, 1976); for the two poems from *Minashiguri*, see pp. 35–36.
3. A map of the Japanese islands published in 1687 by Moronobu’s pupil Ishikawa Tomonobu (or Ryūsen: active from at least 1686 to 1713) identifies within Yamashiro only the Imperial Palace and Nijō Castle, together with sketches of both. Kyoto itself, then more commonly known as Miyako or simply as Kyō, meaning “capital,” is identified by name only in a separate table of distances. Hugh Cortazzi, *Isles of Gold: Antique Maps of Japan* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1983), color pl. 44. Ishikawa Tomonobu, an author, book illustrator and cartographer, also drew maps of Edo, in 1689 and 1713; and he sometimes collaborated with another of Moronobu’s pupils, Furuyama Moroshige.
4. Translated from *Nanshoku ōkagami* (Great mirror of male love), a collection of homosexual tales first published in 1687. See Munemasa Isoo, Matsuda Isamu and Teruoka Yasutada, eds., *Ihara Saikaku shū* (Ihara Saikaku collection) 2, vol. 39 of *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1973), 519–20. The passage is from vol. 6, tale 4. For a slightly different translation, see Paul Gordon Schalow, *The Great Mirror of Male Love* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 239.
5. Quoted by Ōmagari Kuson, *Senryū daijiten* (Great dictionary of *senryū* verse), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Takahashi Shoten, 1962), 470. The source of this poem is not given.
6. A later variation, with longer hanging loops, was the *Mizuki-musubi*, named after the female impersonator Mizuki Tatsunosuke I (1673–1745), who made his first appearance in Edo in 1692, remained there for two years before returning to western Japan, and was portrayed by Torii Kiyonobu I (1664–1729). See Endō Takeshi, “Honkan ni arawareta fūzoku” (Customs which appear in this book), in Narazaki Muneshige et al., *Moronobu*, vol. 2 of *Nikuhitsu ukiyo-e* (Ukiyo-e paintings) (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1982), 120. For Mizuki Tatsunosuke, see Yoshida Teruji, *Ukiyo-e jiten* (Ukiyo-e dictionary), vol. 3 (Tokyo: Gabundō, 1966–71), 283.
7. Sasajima Sumi, *Atarashii kitsuke to obimusubi* (New dressing and obi fastening) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1993), 116–17.
8. For Tanehiko’s *Ryūtei ikō*, see Asakura Haruhiko, ed., *Zoku Enseki jissshu* (Ten types of Mount Yan gemstones: Continuation) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1980), vol. 3, 171–73.
9. Asakura, *Zoku Enseki jissshu*, 173.
10. Satsuki Heisa II (1708–1783), also known as Kaian, was an Edo *haikai* poet and painter, a pupil of Kuwaoka Teisa (Heisa I, 1672–1734). His *haikai* collections *Kurwaoka-shū* and *Zoku Kurwaoka-shū* with illustrations by Katsuma Ryūsui (1711–1796: Fritz Rumpf’s dates; other sources give 1697–1773) and Kō Sūkoku (1730–1804), were both published in 1759. Tanehiko misdates *Zoku Kurwaoka-shū* to 1758.
11. Asakura, *Zoku Enseki jissshu*, 437–38. On internal evidence, Asakura assigns *Ryūtei ikō* to the middle of the Tenpō era (1830–43).
12. Andrew Lawrence Markus, *The Willow in Autumn: Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783–1842* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 89ff.

13. Yura Tetsuji, ed., *Sōgō Nihon Ukiyo-e ruikō* (Some considerations of ukiyo-e of Japan, integrated) (Tokyo: Gabundō, 1979), 59.
14. Honma Mitsunori, ed., *Ukiyo-e ruikō* (Some considerations of ukiyo-e) (Suibaramachi, Niigata-ken: Manshōdō, 1889), 5–6; Sekiba Tadatake, *Ukiyo-e hennenshi* (Annals of ukiyo-e) (Tokyo: Tōyōdō, 1891), 5a; Sekine Kinshirō, *Ukiyo gajinden* (Biographies of ukiyo-e artists) (Tokyo: Shōgakudō, 1899), 7.
15. Miyatake Gaikotsu, *Hishikawa Moronobu gafu* (Hishikawa Moronobu picture book) (Osaka: Gazoku Bunko, 1909), 3.
16. See *Nihon zuibitsu taisei: Dai ikki* (Compendium of Japanese miscellanies, 1st period) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975–76), vol. 16, 318. The passage from *Kyūsensha manpitsu* is also quoted in Yamana Kakuzō, *Nihon no ukiyo-e shi* (Ukiyo-e masters of Japan) (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1930), 82.
17. Yura, *Sōgō Nihon Ukiyo-e ruikō*, 326.
18. Waterhouse, “Hishikawa Moronobu,” 52, n. 3.
19. For example, Takahashi Seiichirō, (*Shinshū*) *Ukiyo-e nihyakugojunen / The Japanese Woodblock Print through Two Hundred and Fifty Years, A Revised Edition* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1961), 20; Ōmori, *Genroku onna-e-zukushi*, 28–29; Kobayashi Tadashi, *Moronobu to shoki ukiyo-e* (Moronobu and early ukiyo-e), *Nihon no bijutsu* (Arts of Japan) 363 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1996), 28; Kobayashi, “Hishikawa Moronobu to sono gagyō” (Hishikawa Moronobu and his artistic work), in Chiba City Museum of Art, ed., *Hishikawa Moronobu ten* (Hishikawa Moronobu exhibition) (Chiba: Chiba City Museum of Art, 2000), 9. Kobayashi, in his essay “Hishikawa Moronobu no niku hitsu-ga” (Paintings by Hishikawa Moronobu), in Narazaki Muneshige et al., *Moronobu*, 127, cites *Minashiguri* as the source of the poems, though he wrongly refers to them as *haiku*. Neither Takahashi nor Kobayashi explains the allusions.



FIG. 1. (Below and left). Dozō Eisū (act. mid-16th century). *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang*. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. 95.6 x 37.1 cm. John C. Weber Collection. Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

Fishermen in the foreground represent “Sunset over a Fishing Village,” and the hamlet on the right with mountains rising in the background corresponds with “Clearing Storm over a Mountain Village.” To the left is the reference to “Descending Geese at a Sandbar,” while boats in a rainstorm in the distance illustrate both “Sails Returning from Distant Shores” and “Night Rain on the Xiao and Xiang.” To the right, a pagoda and temple roof indicate “Evening Bell of a Temple in Mist.” The moon and snow-covered peaks evoke the “Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting” and “Twilight Snow on a River.”



## Dressing Up, Dressing Down: Poetry, Image and Transposition in the Eight Views

HARUO SHIRANE

**I**N ALL THE MAJOR JAPANESE visual and literary arts, there has been a pervasive practice to fix “place” not only in a specific season, but at a specific time of day, such as sunset or sunrise, and in a particular atmospheric condition, and usually in association with water or mountains. These relationships are apparent in poetry and in landscape painting and woodblock prints. A good example is the Japanese adaptation of “The Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang” (*Shōshō hakkei*) in their classical order:

- Clearing Storm over a Mountain Village
- Sunset over a Fishing Village
- Sails Returning from Distant Shores
- Night Rain on the Xiao and Xiang
- Evening Bell of a Temple in Mist
- Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting
- Descending Geese at a Sandbar
- Twilight Snow on a River

The Xiao and Xiang Rivers flow through the modern province of Hunan, in the deep south of China, and empty into Lake Dongting, sprawling at the northern edge of the province, one of the wettest regions of the country. The beauty of the landscape, which changes dramatically during the course of the four seasons, has long inspired poets and painters. The earliest painting praising the Eight Views was by Song Di in the eleventh century. The topic appealed to artists in China and in Korea and Japan as well. The Eight Views theme arrived in Japan by the fourteenth century, the late medieval period, resulting in a proliferation of “famous places” in Japan that combined locale, season and weather (fig. 1).

Except for Xiao and Xiang and Lake Dongting, these eight views are not attached to a specific place, as Japanese poetic places (*utamakura*) and famous places (*meisho*) are. A typical *utamakura*, a place made famous by poetry, is linked to a particular season and a particularly natural motif. For example, Tatsuta River, in the northwest corner of Nara Prefecture, is always associated with bright autumn foliage. The flexibility of place in the Eight Views, by contrast, meant that the Japanese artist, poet and audience could graft their own favorite local places onto them. In Japan, this led to the Eight Views of Ōmi (*Ōmi hakkei*), Eight Views of Edo, Eight Views

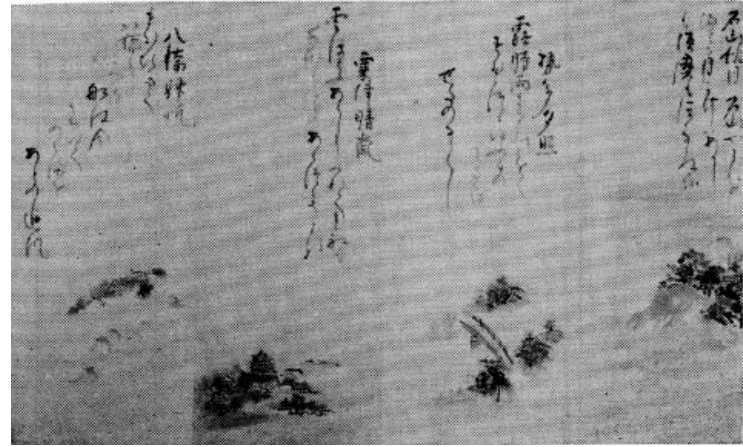
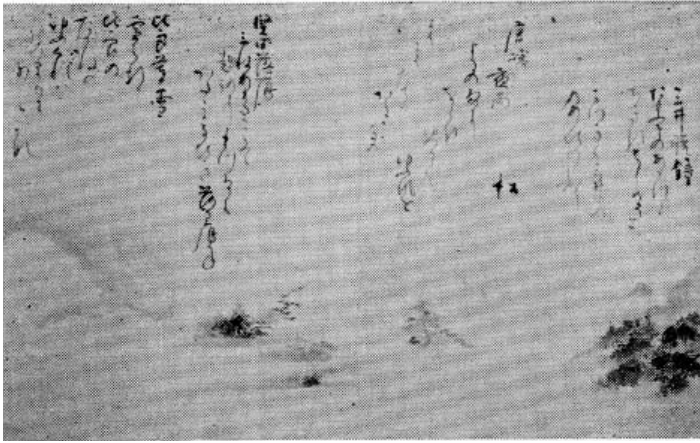


FIG. 2. Konoe Nobutada. *Eight Views of Ōmi*. Early 17th century. Handscroll or album; ink on paper. Dimensions unknown. Ex-Enman-in, Onjōji Temple, Ōtsu. From Hayashiya Tatsusaburō and Asukai Masamichi, eds., *Shinshū Ōtsushi-shi: Chūsei* (History of Ōtsu: Medieval period, revised edition), vol. 2 of *Shinshū Ōtsushi-shi* (Ōtsu City: Ōtsu City Hall, 1979), 512–13

These black-and-white photographs are the only record of the missing original. From right to left the views are: Autumn Moon at Ishiyama; Sunset over Seta; Clearing Storm at Awazu; Sails Returning at Yabase; Vesper Bell at Mii Temple; Descending Geese at Katata; Night Rain at Karasaki; and Evening Snow on Mount Hira.

of Kanazawa and so forth. The Eight Views became so popular in the Edo period (1615–1868) that every province is said to have had its own.

The earliest and most famous of these groupings in Japan was the Eight Views of Ōmi, a province on the southern shore of Lake Biwa, northeast of Kyoto, that includes the following famous places:

- Clearing Storm at Awazu (*Awazu seiran*)
- Sunset over Seta (*Seta sekishō*)
- Sails Returning at Yabase (*Yabase kihan*)
- Night Rain at Karasaki (*Karasaki yau*)
- Vesper Bell at Mii Temple (*Mii banshō*)
- Autumn Moon at Ishiyama (*Ishiyama shūgetsu*)
- Descending Geese at Katata (*Katata rakugan*)
- Evening Snow on Mount Hira (*Hira bosetsu*)

The atmospheric, celestial and temporal motifs are the same as those in the Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang, but the locations are now bridges, temples and famous local sights. As Haga Tōru has pointed out, many of the Eight Views of Ōmi had already appeared not only in famous-place paintings from as early as the Heian period (794–1185), but as *utamakura*, poetic places with specific poetic and cultural overtones that recalled earlier poems on that site.<sup>1</sup> Ōmi, a former capital called Afumi (now pronounced Ōmi), had a long cultural history dating from as early as the eighth-century anthology the *Manyōshū* (Collection of ten thousand leaves). The convergence of poetic, visual and historical associations resulted in a deeply aestheticized, richly cultural landscape.

A pivotal work in the evolution of Ōmi iconography is a scroll of ink paintings of the Eight Views of Ōmi by Konoe Nobutada (1565–1614), a court aristocrat known as one of the three great calligraphers of the Momoyama period (1568–1615). Nobutada inscribed each of his Eight Views with a matching *waka*, a classical poem in thirty-one syllables. The work, formerly in the Enman-in at Onjōji Temple (also known as Mii Temple) in Ōmi, but now lost, represents the earliest known depiction of the views and the earliest poems on them (fig. 2).



FIG. 3. Suzuki Harunobu. *Returning Sails at Yabase (Yabase kihan)*, from the series *Eight Views of Ōmi (Ōmi bakkei no uchi)*. Early 1760s. Color woodcut, *benizuri-e hosoban*. 31.4 x 13.8 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, William S. and John T. Spaulding Collection, 21.4587. Photo © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Nobutada and his imperial patron probably selected the eight places. Nobutada's eight *waka* comprise the unattributed set used over and over by later ukiyo-e artists, including Suzuki Harunobu (1725<sup>2</sup>–1770), in popular representations of the Eight Views of Ōmi.<sup>2</sup>

Of particular focus here is the relationship between *mitate*, or visual transposition, usually treated as a visual trope in ukiyo-e prints and painting, and poetic parody. As Linda Hutcheon defines it, parody is “a form of imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion, not always at the expense of the parodied text.”<sup>3</sup> Through imitation, parody can ridicule the target text, but in the Edo-period ukiyo-e examples examined here, the tone inclines to the ironic and playful. In another useful formulation, parody is defined as “repetition with a critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity.”<sup>4</sup> Like parody, *mitate* exists on two levels: the surface level and the level of the intertext, which it plays off. As we shall see, in the various sets of Eight Views by Harunobu, this parody occurs both textually and visually, inviting multiple, intersecting readings.

### SUZUKI HARUNOBU AND THE EIGHT VIEWS OF ŌMI

Harunobu produced a series of two-color, *benizuri-e* woodcuts on the Eight Views of Ōmi in the early 1760s. *Sails Returning at Yabase*, the most popular of the Ōmi views, plays off the Xiao and Xiang “Sails Returning from Distant Shores,” but the site is now Yabase, a port on Lake Biwa (fig. 3). The *waka* in the upper-right corner is one of the eight by Nobutada:

<i>Maho hikite Yabase ni kaeru</i>	Hoisting its sails and returning
<i>fune wa ima</i>	to Yabase,
<i>Uchide no hama o ato no oikaze</i>	the ship leaves the beach at Uchide,
	pushed by a tail wind.

So popular was the Ōmi views topic that by the 1760s it was the object of visual transposition and textual parody in which seasonal motifs were juxtaposed with contemporary popular culture in extremely clever and playful ways. A classic example is Harunobu's 1766 series, *The Eight Parlor Views (Zashiki bakkei)*, a parodic interpretation of the theme with these titles:

Clearing Breeze from the Fans (*Ōgi no seiran*)  
 Evening Glow of the Lantern (*Andō no sekishō*)  
 Returning Sails of the Towel Rack (*Tenuguiwake kihan*)  
 Night Rain on the Heater Stand (*Daisu no yau*)  
 Vesper Bell of the Clock (*Tokei no banshō*)  
 Autumn Moon in the Mirror Stand (*Kyōdai no shūgetsu*)  
 Descending Geese of the Koto Bridges (*Kotoji no rakugan*)  
 Evening Snow on the Floss Shaper (*Nurioke no bosetsu*)

The eight scenic spots in Ōmi are here transposed to indoor settings, thus creating an implicit exterior/interior juxtaposition. *Returning Sails of the Towel Rack* is a witty variation on “Sails Returning at Yabase” (fig. 4).<sup>6</sup> The towel being dried by the wind on the veranda represents the sails of the ship

returning to harbor. In *Night Rain on the Heater Stand*, a boy arranges the hair of a young woman sitting by a tea kettle on a stand for tea ceremony utensils (fig. 5). Here, Harunobu was drawing on one of two series of *kyōka* (thirty-one-syllable comic poems) written some forty years earlier. As Shimada Tsukuba first discussed, one series was composed around 1722 by Yuensai Teiryū (Taiya Teiryū, 1654–1734), a noted Osaka *kyōka* poet. Another was published in 1725 by Kichijirō, a fourteen-year-old boy and son of a samurai in Owari province (around present-day Nagoya), in a book called *Kyōho-Era Rumors* (*Kyōho sesetsu*). Kichijirō playfully converted the Eight Views of Ōmi into eight contemporary domestic settings, providing the foundation for Harunobu's *Eight Parlor Views* and providing clues to some of the visual allusions. His poem on “Night Rain on the Heater Stand,” for example, reads: “Obscured by the sound of the boiling water, the night rain falls, but no one notices even the leak in the ceiling” (*Wakashiyu no oto ni magirete yoru no ame furu tomo shiranu itama moru made*).<sup>7</sup> It makes clear that in Harunobu's print, the sound of the water boiling in the kettle represents the sound of the “night rain,” one of the standard motifs of the Eight Views. In both text and image, there is an unexpected twist that echoes the past while representing the new and contemporary.

#### THE ROLE OF *HAIKAI* AND *KYŌKA*

Two prominent types of cultural activities in the Edo period were artistic practice and outdoor seasonal recreation (*kōraku*), such as viewing the harvest moon in autumn or the cherry blossoms in spring. In artistic practice, one engaged in such arts as poetry, incense, painting, koto and noh chanting (*utai*). One joined a school or circle and studied under a teacher. Inevitably, there was a patron who hosted the meetings and helped pay for the teacher and performances or presentations. There was a great proliferation of such schools, with the *kyōka* and *haikai* poetry groups playing a major role in the early development of color woodblock prints.

Popular linked verse (*haikai*) begins with a *hokku*, or seventeen-syllable opening verse, which requires a seasonal word, followed by an added verse that combines with the opening verse to create a single scene. To the second verse is added another verse, which combines with the second verse but pushes away from the opening verse, and so forth. This process of linking and moving away, of combining and pushing off, creates a double vision: one of the newly created scene and the overtone of the previous scene. Indeed, medieval linked verse (*renga*) poets had found the relationship between scenes in paintings of the Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang to be an apt metaphor for the linking of verses, which needed to combine with the previous phrase to create a new scene, but which also needed to push off from the verse prior to the previous verse to create both temporal and spatial movement. Like the lines in linked verse, the Eight Views were physically contiguous but semiautonomous.<sup>8</sup>

The following example is from the middle of a *haikai* linked sequence by Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) and his followers called “Withering Gusts” (*Kogarashi*), composed in 1684:

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FIG. 4. Suzuki Harunobu. *Returning Sails of the Towel Rack* (*Tenuguikake kiban*), from the series *The Eight Parlor Views* (*Zashiki hakkei*). First state with signature and seal of Kyosen. 1766. Color woodcut, *chūban*. 28.7 x 21.4 cm. Clarence Buckingham Collection, 1928.901, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photo © The Art Institute of Chicago







Bashō:	
<i>Chō wa mugura ni</i>	“Butterflies in thick weeds,”
<i>to bakari hana kamu</i>	she wept, blowing her nose.
Jūgo:	
<i>Norimono ni</i>	A palanquin:
<i>sudare suku kao</i>	behind a bamboo blind
<i>oboro naru</i>	faintly a face.
Kakei:	
<i>Ima zo urami no</i>	“Now’s the time!”
<i>ya o hanatsu koe</i>	releasing an arrow of resentment.

The first verse, by Bashō, evokes an aristocratic lady from the Heian period who has fallen on hard times; butterflies now fly in her weed-infested garden. The added verse (*tsukeku*) by Jūgo, which is read in combination with Bashō’s, places the lady in a palanquin, viewed from outside. The third verse, by Kakei, the local *haikai* master, combines with the verse by Jūgo while simultaneously pushing off from the earlier verse by Bashō. In a *haikai* twist, Kakei’s verse dramatically transforms the feminine, aristocratic world of Heian romance that had existed in the previous link into a rough-and-tumble world of medieval warfare. A samurai now sits in the palanquin or is about to shoot into it. The reader delights in the emergence of the new image (of warrior society) that pushes off from the earlier image (of Heian court society), which now hovers in the background.

This *haikai* process of radical recontextualization lies behind the ukiyo-e practice of *mitate*, or visual transposition, in which a classical Japanese or Chinese scene or topic was recast as a contemporary popular scene, resulting in a witty double vision of both present and past. It also lies behind the complex textual transpositions, from classical topics to contemporary (often vulgar) representations, found in the *kyōka* that emerged in the mid-eighteenth century. A “visual transposition” link (*mitate-zuke*) in *haikai* is this following sequence from *Crimson Plum Thousand Verses* (*Kōbai senku*, 1653):

<i>Koganebana</i>	The golden flowers
<i>mo sakeru ya hon no</i>	have also bloomed!
<i>hana no haru</i>	The true flowers of spring.
<i>Shinchū to miru</i>	They look like brass,
<i>yamabuki no iro</i>	The color of the gold coins.

The first verse presents the beauty of the golden flowers, and the second or added verse shifts to gold coins. The two are linked by a pun on the *yamabuki*, or yellow kerria, a spring word, which became, in the Edo period, the name for a gold coin. The *mitate* link takes the yellow of an elegant and poetic flower of high culture and turns it into the yellow money (brass) of plebeian culture. The golden flowers have been replaced by brass, creating a double image of both high culture (now hovering in the background) and popular culture (pushed to the foreground). Classical Japanese poetry had strict rules on the use of diction, restricting everything to elegant

< FIG. 5. Suzuki Harunobu. *Night Rain on the Heater Stand* (*Daisu no yau*), from the series *The Eight Parlor Views* (*Zashiki hakkei*). First state with signature and seal of Kyosen. 1766. Color woodcut, *chūban*. 28.4 x 21.6 cm. Clarence Buckingham Collection, 1928.897, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photo © The Art Institute of Chicago

and refined diction and topics, but *haikai*, or popular linked verse, had no restrictions, allowing it to mix (often in humorous fashion) elegant diction and topics from the classical, court tradition with contemporary, popular (commoner) language and topics. The visual transposition, in short, makes an unexpected connection between two things (usually high and low, classical and contemporary) that are generally unrelated.

The other major characteristic of *haikai* was its emphasis on season and place. The *hokku*, or the seventeen-syllable opening verse, required a seasonal word such as wild geese, bush clover or the full harvest moon for autumn. The rules of linked verse also required that the verses move from one season to another, covering all four seasons, with short sequences for each. *Haikai* thus moved not only from one social world to another; it also moved from one season to another. The importance of the Eight Views of Ōmi and its later variations was that it provided a seasonal and temporal context for popular culture, with particular emphasis on atmospheric conditions.

*Kyōka* poetry came into prominence in the latter half of the eighteenth century. It took the same form as the thirty-one-syllable *waka*, or classical poem, but it could be composed on any topic, from animals to the pleasure quarters. It was ideal for ukiyo-e artists. A *kyōka* often took a well-known classical poem and replaced selected words with contemporary diction, thus parodying or wittily alluding to the base text (*honka*) or a classical topic (*dai*) at the same time that it described something contemporary and new. Parodic *kyōka* hollowed out the base text and filled it with contemporary (and sometimes vulgar) subject matter, parallel to the visual parodies found in ukiyo-e.

The practice of linked verse became popular among aristocrats, warriors and urban commoners in the late medieval period, and penetrated all levels of society in the form of *haikai* (popular linked verse) in the Edo period. *Kyōka* poetry, by contrast, was the domain of elite cultural groups until the 1770s, after which more and more urban commoners joined the ranks. Mid-eighteenth-century *kyōka* poets gathered together under the tutelage of a *kyōka* master and composed together, usually with the backing of a wealthy patron. *Kyōka* masters and their patrons printed collections of their disciples' work, or composed poems for ukiyo-e paintings, prints and *surimono* (single sheet, color prints with poetry commissioned privately by a poetry group or aficionado) that were distributed as gifts, a practice that also occurred with *haikai*, but in a more simplified, less elaborate form.

In 1758, a high-level samurai named Ōkubo Tadanobu, whose poetry name was Kyosen, published a *haikai* poetry collection called *Gleanings of Worldly Sayings* (*Segen shūi*), which he distributed to his circle, and to which he added his own woodcut designs, along with those by Okumura Masanobu (1686–1764) and Ishikawa Toyonobu (1711–1785), two notable ukiyo-e artists.<sup>9</sup> It was Kyosen who commissioned Harunobu's *Eight Parlor Views* a few years later; his name appears on the cover and prints of the first edition (see figs. 4–6, 9).

In short, we have two methods of poetic transpositions: one *haikai*-esque and one *kyōka*-esque. *Haikai*, which took the form of linked verse, effects

transformation by radical recontextualization, by transforming the previous image into a new image, to create a double image (of the new and the previous, displaced, image). The single *kyōka* poem, by contrast, effects transposition by refilling an older, classical container with new, contemporary and sometimes vulgar, contents. *Kyōka* was a more effective genre for direct parody than *haikai*, since *kyōka* was the same thirty-one-syllable length as the classical *waka* poem, the primary target of Edo parody. Like many ukiyo-e artists, Harunobu was drawing on a larger tradition of *haikai* and *kyōka*, most specifically, young Kichijirō's series of *kyōka* on the theme of Eight Parlor Views. Harunobu's *Eight Parlor Views* transforms a classical Sino-Japanese topic into an integral part of Japanese popular culture, taking the monochromatic paintings of the Eight Views, which epitomized a Chinese and late-medieval aesthetic, and turning them into the bright woodblock colors of an Edo-period commoner home. In each image there is, both on the textual and visual levels, an unexpected twist that echoes the past while representing the new and the contemporary. This required active audience participation with only the most sophisticated viewers catching all the nuances and twists.

#### VARIATIONS ON THE DESCENDING GEESE

Many Edo *haikai* poets wrote on the Eight Views of Ōmi. Matsuo Bashō composed the *hokku* “At Katata” as a variation on the “Descending Geese at Katata”:

<i>Byōgan no</i>	A sick goose descending
<i>yosamu ni ochite</i>	into the cold night,
<i>tabine kana</i>	a lodging on the road.

The wild goose has been parted from the traveling flock due to illness, and descends by itself, a direct reflection of the state of the poet who is traveling alone.

In Harunobu's transposition of the theme, *Descending Geese of the Koto Bridges* in his *Eight Parlor Views*, a young woman sits in front of a koto, putting on her ivory finger guards in preparation to play (fig. 6). A companion studies a book titled *Collections of Koto Songs (Kinkyokushū)*, a popular substitute for a classical poetry anthology. The inverted v-shaped bridges beneath the koto strings allude to the silhouettes of descending geese, a familiar autumn topic in Japanese classical poetry. Bush clover blooming in the garden marks the season. Harunobu also plays off the fact that the title “Descending Geese at a Sandbar” was a popular musical piece for the *qin* (koto) in China from the early period.

Around 1769, three years after his initial *Eight Parlor Views*, Harunobu designed the erotic parody *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views (Fūryū zashiki hakkei)* (fig. 7). This series is extremely sophisticated in both its design and in its *kyōka* poems.<sup>10</sup> In the opening image of the series, the young woman kneeling in front of the koto turns back to kiss a young man who embraces her from behind and unties her obi. The bridges beneath the koto strings again allude to the descending geese, which also appear on the screen





FIG. 7. Suzuki Harunobu. *Descending Geese of the Koto Bridges (Kinchū rakugan)*, from the series *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views (Fūryū zashiki hakkei)*. c. 1769. Color woodcut. 19.9 x 27.5 cm. Private collection

painting in the background showing “Descending Geese at a Sandbar” from the traditional Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang. The crimson leaves outside the window, a sign of autumn, match the season. A dog discreetly looks away from the engaged lovers. The cloud at the top gives the series title, the scene title and a *kyōka*:

*Koto no ne ni hikitodomeken  
hatsukari no  
ama tsu sora yori tsurete ochikuru*

Were they drawn to and held by the  
sound of the koto?  
The first geese in the sky,  
descending in a row.

The wild geese represent the young man, who has been drawn to the sound of the woman’s koto and is now undoing her robe. The poem is a variation on the *kyōka* composed by Kichijirō in 1725:

*Koto ito ya hikitomerareshi  
karigane no  
ama wa moto yori tsurete ochikuru*

Were they drawn to and held by the  
strings of the koto?  
Wild geese in the sky, from the start,  
descending in a row.

< FIG. 6. Suzuki Harunobu. *Descending Geese of the Koto Bridges (Kotoji rakugan)*, from the series *The Eight Parlor Views (Zashiki hakkei)*. First state with signature and seal of Kyosen. 1766. Color woodcut, *chūban*. 29 x 21.7 cm. Clarence Buckingham Collection, 1928.899, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photo © The Art Institute of Chicago

Harunobu’s poem repeats the second half of Kichijirō’s poem almost word for word, but replaces “wild geese” (*karigane*) with “first geese” (*hatsugari*), suggesting “first love.” By “Harunobu’s poem,” I mean the poem that Harunobu used. It is unclear if he composed these poems, borrowed them or had someone write them for him. The larger number of visual and



FIG. 8. Katsushika Hokusai. *Autumn Moon at Ishiyama Temple (Ishiyama no aki no tsuki)*, from the untitled series *Eight Views of Ōmi (Ōmi hakkei)*. 19th century. Color woodcut, *chūban*. 23 x 17.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, William S. and John T. Spaulding Collection, RES.21.419. Photo © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

textual hints (including the title) in this series suggest that it was for a more popular audience. Some of the readers were nonetheless educated enough to be able to enjoy the *kyōka*, a sophisticated form that stressed both similarity and difference.

#### VARIATIONS ON THE AUTUMN MOON AT ISHIYAMA TEMPLE

The Eight Views became enormously popular in ukiyo-e in the late Edo period.<sup>11</sup> Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) produced as many as fifty sets of Eight Views, of which about twenty are of the Eight Views of Ōmi. Most of these are accompanied by poetry.<sup>12</sup> In a print by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) titled *Autumn Moon at Ishiyama Temple (Ishiyama no aki no tsuki)*, from *Eight Views of Ōmi (Ōmi hakkei)*, Ishiyama Temple sits on a high cliff overlooking Lake Biwa, reflecting the light of the full moon (fig. 8). The *waka* at the top, one of the eight composed by Konoe Nobutada for his album of the Eight Views of Ōmi, reads:

<i>Ishiyama ya niho no umi teru</i> <i>tsuki kage wa</i> <i>Akashi mo Suma mo hokanaranu kana</i>	Ishiyama—the moon that shines over Lake Biwa, like that of Akashi and of Suma— how extraordinary!
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The harvest moon at Akashi and Suma, on the Inland Sea, had become famous in the Heian period because of *The Tale of Genji*, in which the Shining Prince gazes at the autumn moon from Suma. Even more important was the medieval legend that Murasaki Shikibu, gazing out at the reflection of the moon on Lake Biwa from Ishiyama Temple, had been inspired to write *The Tale of Genji*, beginning from the Suma chapter. Harunobu used the same poem in his version of *Autumn Moon at Ishiyama Temple*, from the *Eight Views of Ōmi* done in the early 1760s (see figure 3 for another print from that set); the pairing had a long history in the Edo period.<sup>13</sup>

In Harunobu's 1766 *mitate* of the Eight Views, the Ishiyama scene becomes *Autumn Moon in the Mirror Stand* (*Kyōdai no shūgetsu*), with a woman looking into a mirror that has the shape of a full moon (fig. 9). The miscanthus grass bending in the breeze outside the window is a seasonal signifier, thus turning the moon represented by the mirror into the harvest moon, and by implication, the moon at Ishiyama Temple. In the fashion of the *mitate*, Harunobu creates a double vision, at once the classical and Chinese landscape of the Eight Views with its specific atmospheric and seasonal associations and the everyday life of commoners in contemporary Edo, which are held together by the visual pun of the mirror reflecting the lovely young woman, much as serene Lake Biwa reflected the harvest moon in the medieval *waka* tradition.

In an erotic variation on this scene in *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views*, Harunobu depicts a man grasping a half-naked woman from behind and fondling her genitals as she dresses in front of a mirror (fig. 10). The poem reads:

<i>Aki no yo no kumo ma no tsuki to</i> <i>miru made ni</i> <i>utena ni noboru aki no yo no tsuki</i>	Moon of an autumn evening climbing the pedestal until it can be seen through the clouds— moon of an autumn evening.
---	--

This again is a variation on Kichijirō's *kyōka* on the theme "Autumn Moon in the Mirror Stand":

<i>Aki no yo no kumo ma no tsuki to</i> <i>miru made ni</i> <i>utena ni noboru kagami sayakeki</i>	Moon of an autumn evening, climbing the pedestal until it can be seen through the clouds— clearness of the mirror.
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Harunobu changed two words at the end: "clearness of the mirror" (*kagami sayakeki*) becomes "moon of an autumn evening" (*aki no yo no tsuki*). Harunobu's poem is unusual in that it begins and ends with basically the same words, "moon of an autumn evening," creating a "mirror" effect in the text. Harunobu's moon refers to the half-naked woman emerging from the robes (clouds) being pulled off by the man embracing her, as well as the round (moonlike) mirror that reflects her image. The moon can also represent the







FIG. 10. Suzuki Harunobu. *Autumn Moon in the Mirror Stand* (*Kyōdai no shūgetsu*) from the series *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views* (*Fūryū zashiki hakkei*). c. 1769. Color woodcut. 20 x 28.5 cm. Private collection

man “climbing” the woman, or pedestal (*utena*), which also means calyx, a metaphor for female genitals.<sup>14</sup> The flowers in the front are pinks (*nadeshiko*), a classical allusion to “a child or girl being stroked or petted.” In short, Harunobu uses both text and image to create a complex, intertwining parody that can be read and viewed on multiple levels.<sup>15</sup>

A related example is Harunobu’s series *Fashionable Eight Views of Edo* (*Fūryū Edo hakkei*), erotic variations on a subgenre called Eight Views of Edo (*Edo hakkei*) that emerged after the Eight Views of Ōmi (fig. 11). Eight Views of Edo included famous places such as Shinagawa, Ryōgoku and so forth, each paired with one of the original Eight Views motifs. Unlike the Ōmi views, each of which became associated with a specific *waka* and had classical associations, the Eight Views of Edo did not have established poetic associations. Rather, as Allen Hockley has suggested, they represented a new cultural topography that allowed for visual experimentation.<sup>16</sup>

Harunobu superimposed eight Ōmi views and their poems on his eight Edo views. *Ecstasy at Shinagawa* (*Shinagawa no kihan*) features a prostitute from the pleasure quarters at Shinagawa, where women were cheaper and of lower status than those in the Yoshiwara. Shinagawa was considered the “southern” (*minami*) pleasure quarters, and Yoshiwara the “northern” (*kita*). The male customer, lying nude on a wave-patterned futon, represents the

< FIG. 9. Suzuki Harunobu. *Autumn Moon in the Mirror Stand* (*Kyōdai no shūgetsu*), from the series *The Eight Parlor Views* (*Zashiki hakkei*). First state with signature and seal of Kyosen. 1766. Color woodcut, *chūban*. 28.8 x 21.8 cm. Clarence Buckingham Collection, 1928.898, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photo © The Art Institute of Chicago



FIG. 11. Suzuki Harunobu. *Ecstasy at Shinagawa* (*Shinagawa no kihan*), from the series *Fashionable Eight Views of Edo* (*Fūryū Edo hakkei*). 1768–69. Color woodcut. 21.9 x 28.9 cm. Photo: Courtesy Sebastian Izzard LLC

ship in the “Returning Sails” (*kihan*) topos in the classic Eight Views. The prostitute rows “the boat” with a broom or mop, and her dress is white, representing the white sails of the ship. The *kyōka* poem reads:

*Ho wo hikite Yahashi ni kaeru  
fune nare ya  
uchinorite ki no yuku wa koi kaze*

Hoisting its sails and returning to  
Yahashi, this ship!  
Riding on top, letting the spirit go,  
following the wind of love.

The word *kihan* 帰帆, which usually means “returning sails,” is replaced in the title by the homophonic compound *kihan* 喜悦 (usually read *kietsu*), meaning “ecstasy.”<sup>17</sup> The poem parodies Nobutada’s classical verse on the “Returning Sails at Yabase,” cited earlier. Harunobu follows Nobutada’s poem almost word for word, but replaces the place name Uchide with the erotic verb *uchinorite*, “riding on top,” and substitutes *koi no kaze* (wind of love) for “tail wind” (*oi no kaze*). Inserting visual and textual clues, Harunobu parodies both the Eight Views of Edo and the Eight Views of Ōmi.

### TRAGIC LOVERS AND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

In the late eighteenth century, the Eight Views were combined with social topics such as beautiful women of the pleasure quarters and famous lovers.

Of particular interest for its complexity and sophistication is a print by Kitagawa Utamaro (1753?–1806), *Tears of Meeting for Ochiyo and Hanbei* (*Ochiyo Hanbei no yoru no ame*), from the series *Eight Pledges at Ōmi/Lovers' Meetings* (*Ōmi bakkei 逢身八契*), which puns on the title of the Eight Views of Ōmi (fig. 12). The subtitle, in the upper right corner, is a reference to Chikamatsu Monzaemon's last domestic play, *Love Suicides on the Night of Kōshin* (*Shinjū yoigōshin*, 1722). Hanbei, a former samurai son adopted into a grocer's family (the word for grocer, *yaoya*, appears on the lantern), is married to Ochiyo, who is disliked by her mother-in-law. While Hanbei is away, Ochiyo is forced into a divorce by her mother-in-law. When Hanbei returns home, his mother-in-law refuses to allow him into the house, and he and Ochiyo decide to commit double suicide. The subtitle, tears of meeting (*yoru no namida*), is a pun on the phrase “tears of the night” (*yoru no namida*), while the small kana gloss beside the subtitle gives an alternative reading of *yoru no ame*, or “night rain,” one of the “Eight Views of Ōmi,” namely “Night Rain at Karasaki,” which is depicted in the cartouche at the upper left as night rain over the large pine at Karasaki.

In the fifteenth century, Zen priest-poets composed Chinese poems (*kanshi*) on the topic of the Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang and transcribed them onto poetry sheets (*shikishi*) that were attached to a painting surface. As Suzuki Hiroyuki has pointed out, for the “Night Rain at the Xiao and Xiang,” they often wrote of the Chinese legend in which the death of Emperor Shun caused his consort to shed tears on bamboo, marking it with, and resulting in, speckled bamboo, symbolically represented by a bamboo thicket in Chinese versions of Eight Views paintings.<sup>18</sup> The umbrella and lantern in Utamaro's print echo that tragic love story.

### HIGH IN THE LOW, LOW IN THE HIGH

The Eight Views, which started as a Chinese poetic and pictorial topic, became a major painting and poetic topic in late medieval Japan, particularly among Zen priest-poets and linked-verse poets, who were attracted by the verbal and visual poetics of atmosphere, particularly the changing light and weather, which was so important in the late medieval high aesthetic. In the Edo period, this painting and poetic topos took on new life in the form of domestic Eight Views, particularly the *Eight Views of Ōmi*, the most popular of the Eight Views variations in ukiyo-e. By the late 1760s, the Eight Views were domesticated further by setting them indoors (or on the veranda or near an open window or door), and by using them in erotic prints or fusing them with the beauty-print genre, which centered on beautiful women in the pleasure quarters and famous lovers in other settings. As the close connection to Kichijirō's *waka* reveals, the parodic target of Harunobu's *Eight Parlor Views* and *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views* was not the Xiao and Xiang Eight Views but the Japanese views of Ōmi and their associated poems. Harunobu's *Eight Parlor Views* format, which was imitated by Isoda Koryūsai (1735–1790) and others, served as a crucial means of maintaining the atmospheric and seasonal context that lay at the heart of Japanese arts and culture. Even in domestic interior scenes, the seasonal associations

and related atmospheric conditions of the outside world remained critical. In traditional Japanese architecture, with its removable paper sliding doors, the interior becomes continuous with the exterior.

As we have seen, poetry plays a major role in the Eight Views. First, the poem can provide the source of the *mitate*, helping the viewer to identify the classic context. Tanabe Masako, a noted Harunobu scholar, has traced the changes in Harunobu's ukiyo-e from the "early period," around 1766, when he first developed the multi-colored calendar prints (*egoyomi*) for Kyosen and his private audience of highly educated samurai-*haikai* poets, to the "late period," around 1769, shortly before his death in 1770, when he produced multicolored prints for commercial purposes and for a wider audience. Tanabe uses the example of the *Transposed Three Evening Poems* (*Mitate sanseki*), of which Harunobu did at least four different versions.<sup>19</sup> The "Three Evening Poems" were three famous *waka* by Fujiwara Teika, Priest Saigyō and Priest Jakuren found together in the thirteenth-century *New Anthology of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times* (*Shinkokin-shū*, about 1205). Each poet wrote about a different autumn evening scene: Teika about a bayside hut; Jakuren about a mountain with black pines; and Saigyō about snipes rising from a marsh. The early Harunobu version of the *Transposed Three Evening Poems* includes no poems, forcing the viewer to guess which poet and poem the scene refers to. The late versions for wider release have both the poems and the poets' names attached to the scene.

A similar difference exists between the first edition cover of Harunobu's *Eight Parlor Views*, containing no titles, which appeared around 1766 for distribution within Kyosen's circle, and the wrapping of the second edition, which appeared around 1769 and gives the titles of all eight prints. For Kyosen's private *haikai* circle, the excitement of the visual transposition in *The Eight Parlor Views* lay in the challenge of being able to solve the puzzle without titles or poems. Kyosen's urbane *haikai* circle and Edo sophisticates (*tsū*) reveled in the discrete allusions. Commercial audiences needed aids for identifying the allusion or reference, so the *waka/kyōka* or the title of the later editions provided the critical difference. The shift also can be seen in Harunobu's 1766 *Eight Parlor Views*, which has no poems, and the later erotic *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views*, which has *kyōka* at the top.

The second major function of poetry, especially of *kyōka*, was that it could amuse by modulating and parodying the classical source, connecting it in unexpected ways to the contemporary scene, as in *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views* or *Fashionable Eight Views of Edo*. As a communal form that required a shared body of knowledge, poetry provided the cultural foundation and social nexus for the participants as well as the textual model for the visual transpositions (*mitate*), even when the poetry did not appear on the print itself. As we have seen, the dynamics of *haikai* linked verse lay behind both the visual and textual transpositions. Straddling both popular and elite culture, *haikai* essentially moved in two fundamental directions: it could either seek out the high in the low, or it could seek out the low in the high. Like *kyōka*, *haikai* often reduced the high to the low—reduced a bodhisattva or

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FIG. 12. Kitagawa Utamaro. *Tears of Meeting for Ochiyo and Hanbei* (*Ochiyo Hanbei no yoru no ame*), from the series *Eight Pledges at Lovers' Meetings* (*Ōmi bakkei*). c. 1798–99. Color woodcut, *ōban*. 38.3 x 26 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, William S. and John T. Spaulding Collection, 21.6488. Photo © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



遊仙八契

お舟の  
お乃  
お乃  
お乃

舟  
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elegant seasonal topic to a lowly figure, using scatological or vulgar imagery. A noted Muromachi-period *haikai* turned elegant spring mist into the urine of the goddess of spring. By contrast, Matsuo Bashō in the seventeenth century exemplified a new kind of *haikai*, which sought out spiritual and aesthetic value (the high) in everyday, commoner (low) topics.

The movement to find the high in the low, or the elegant in the popular, may be called “dressing up.” As we have seen, this occurs in landscape, with the Eight Views of Ōmi, which were dressed up by being associated with the Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang. The Eight Views of Edo, which shifted the focus from the Kansai area, the region of the imperial capital, to the east, likewise brought cultural attention to places that had no poetic (*waka*) associations. In *mitate* ukiyo-e, noted courtesans appear in the guises of Murasaki Shikibu, Ono no Komachi or famous female characters from *The Tale of Genji* (such as the Third Princess), or of bodhisattvas and other Buddhist figures or gods. This process of “dressing up” helped to raise these high-ranking prostitutes to the status of cultural icons.

The movement to find the low in the high may be called “dressing down.” *Yatsushi*, one of the terms used for *mitate*, means “dressing down,” or going in disguise, hiding one’s high social identity, which is a familiar device used for the down-and-out male protagonists in kabuki. Essentially, the “dressing down” occurs in two ways. The first mode of “dressing down” is elegant. (This is probably why many *mitate* series have the title *fūryū*, meaning “fashionable” or “elegant.”) Harunobu’s *Eight Parlor Views* exemplifies witty and elegant “dressing down.” In place of the high culture of the Xiao and Xiang, Harunobu gives us the popular, everyday culture of urban commoner women whose lives resonate with the past through the *mitate*. The second mode of “dressing down” is erotic or pornographic. The Harunobu erotic woodblock prints discussed above can be read or viewed on multiple levels; for more sophisticated audiences, they contain witty variations on earlier poems or on well-known visual conventions. In the case of the *Eight Parlor Views*, we find the original Ōmi *waka* chosen by Konoe Nobutada, the Eight Views *kyōka* by Kichijirō, Harunobu’s *kyōka* parodies of those poems, which parallel the Xiao Xiang and Ōmi views, and then the *mitate* (and Edo variations) on those, with text and imagery intersecting. In fact, part of the entertainment of Harunobu’s *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views* and *Fashionable Eight Views of Edo* depends on picking up both the visual and poetic associations and linking them together. In the erotic prints, which were for private enjoyment, both brains and loins are being teased at the same time. One can seek out the high in the low, find the low in the high or have it both ways. ☸

NOTES

1. Haga Tōru, “Fūkei no hikaku bunkashi: ‘Shōshō hakkei’ to ‘Ōmi hakkei’” (Comparative cultural history of landscapes: The Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang and Eight Views of Ōmi), *Hikaku bungaku kenkyū* (Research on comparative literature) 50 (Nov. 1986): 14.
2. For the eight *waka* on Ōmi inscribed by Konoe Nobutada, see Haga, “Fūkei no hikaku bunkashi: ‘Shōshō hakkei’ to ‘Ōmi hakkei,’” 13.
3. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), 6.
4. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 6.
5. Isoda Koryūsai (1735–1790), in his *Returning Sails in the Hand-Bucket* (*Takake-oke no kiban*), from the series *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views* (*Fūryū zashiki hakkei*), uses the exact same poem, indicating that this was the standard poem for the “Returning Sails” scene in the “Eight Views of Ōmi” at this time. For an illustration, see David Waterhouse, *Harunobu and His Age: The Development of Colour Printing in Japan* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1964), 220–21.
6. For the full set of Harunobu’s *Zashiki hakkei* in the Art Institute of Chicago, see Julia Meech and Jane Oliver, eds., *Designed for Pleasure: The World of Edo Japan in Prints and Paintings, 1680–1860* (New York: Asia Society and Japanese Art Society of America in association with University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 2008), 88–89.
7. Shimada Tsukuba, “Extra notes,” *Ukiyo-e no kenkyū* 1 (Research in ukiyo-e 1) no. 4 (Sept. 1922): 24.
8. Tsurusaki Hiroo, “Rengashi no egokoro: Renga to suiboku sansuiga, toku ni Shōshō hakkei-zu ni tsuite” (*Renga’s* visual aesthetics: *Renga* and ink landscape painting, with particular attention to *The Eight Views of Xiao and Xiang*), *Geinōshi kenkyū* (Research on performance history) 43 (1973): 38–49. Tsurusaki points to the *renga* treatise by Sōchō called *Renga hijūshū*, in Ijichi Tetsuo, ed., *Renga ronshū ge* (Collection of *renga* treatises 2) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1956), 179.
9. Tanabe Masako, “Suzuki Harunobu no zugara shakuyō: Mitate no shukō toshite no saihyōka” (Suzuki Harunobu’s design borrowing: Reevaluation of *mitate* as a design device), *Bijutsushi* (Art history) 39 (1) [no.127] (Feb. 1990): 66–86.
10. See Kobayashi Tadashi, *Suzuki Harunobu, Fūryū zashiki hakkei* (Suzuki Harunobu, *Fashionable Eight Views of the Parlor*), in Hizō ukiyo-e shūsei (Ukiyo-e masterpieces collection), ed. Kobayashi Tadashi (Tokyo: Gakushū Kenkyūsha, 1994). The full set of *Fūryū zashiki hakkei* was not discovered until 1994.
11. On the growth of the *hakkei* as an ukiyo-e topic, see Allen Hockley, *The Prints of Isoda Koryūsai: Floating World Culture and Its Consumers in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 55–68.
12. Haga, “Fūkei no hikaku bunkashi: ‘Shōshō hakkei’ to ‘Ōmi hakkei,’” 1–27.
13. Suzuki Harunobu, *Autumn Moon at Ishiyama Temple* (*Ishiyama shūgetsu*), from his series *Eight Views of Ōmi* (*Ōmi hakkei no uchi*), early 1760s, *benizuri-e*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, William S. and John T. Spaulding Collection, 21.4584.
14. I am indebted to Okuda Isao for this insight. I am also grateful for his assistance in tracking down the early Edo-period paintings with *waka* on the Eight Views of Ōmi.
15. Ishigami Aki, “Suzuki Harunobu ga fūryū zashiki hakkei kō: Gachū kyōka no riyō to zugara no tenkyō” (On Suzuki Harunobu’s *Fashionable Eight Parlor Views*: Its use of *kyōka* in painting and design), *Ukiyo-e geijutsu/Ukiyo-e Art* 156 (2008): 69–87.
16. Hockley, *The Prints of Isoda Koryūsai*, 55–86.
17. The *furigana* gloss on the *kanji* guarantees that the reader gets the homophonic joke.
18. Suzuki Hiroyuki, “Shōshō hakkei no juyō to saiseisan: Jūgo seiki o chūshin toshita kaiga no ba” (The reception and reproduction of the *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers*: Painting settings around the fifteenth century), *Bijutsu kenkyū* (Art research) 358 (Dec. 2003): 299–319.
19. Tanabe Masako, “Edo no koibitotachi” (Lovers of Edo), in Asano Shūgō and Yoshida Nobuyuki, eds., *Harunobu: Ukiyo-e o yomu* 1 (Harunobu: Reading ukiyo-e 1), (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1998), 62–64.





# The Cultural Environment of Edo *Shunga*

DAVID POLLACK

**D**ESIRE AND EROTICISM—the aura of desirability—are the common subjects of all ukiyo-e paintings and prints, ranging from the oblique and suggestive to the most explicit depictions of sex. While it is understandable that the latter images, generally known in the West as *shunga* (literally, spring pictures), should have come to be treated as a separate genre, in their own time and place *shunga* were simply part of the broad spectrum of ukiyo-e.<sup>1</sup> This essay investigates how erotic images were understood, produced and consumed in Edo Japan by examining the cultural environment of desire in three contexts: its legal status; its economy; and its staging in the theater.

## THE LEGAL STATUS OF DESIRE

The Edo authorities issued strict laws governing what could be published, so it is often assumed that *shunga* were illegal. In actual practice, little, if any, legal distinction was made between *shunga* and other ukiyo-e. Edo literature and art are full of references to, and representations of, bodily functions, whether sexual or scatological, and what we might consider a legal notion of “obscenity” appeared only after the collapse of the shogunate in 1868, with the Meiji era’s anxiety to adopt an appropriately modern sense of Victorian prudery—publication of Edo-period *shunga* in Japan has been permitted in unexpurgated and unbowdlerized form only in the last twenty years.<sup>2</sup>

Edo print art after 1790 usually bears officially mandated “censors’ seals” (*gokuin* or *kaiin*). One might conclude that the authorities were on the lookout for “dirty pictures.” We don’t know precisely how *shunga* were sold, but believe they were produced and marketed by the same persons handling non-erotic ukiyo-e, hence from the same studios and shops. The Kyōhō Reforms of 1722 required the signature of the artist and name of the publisher on all books and prints that were displayed and traded publicly; because *shunga* were displayed and sold privately—under the counter, so to speak—they did not need to carry either the artist’s signature or the censor’s seal.

The numerous publication laws enacted during the Edo period occasionally do apply the term *wai* or *midara* (obscene, indecent, lewd, immoral) to books and pictures that were included in the categories of printed matter subject to censorship. On the whole, however, the authorities were concerned

< Fig. 4. (Detail; see page 77)



FIG. 1. Yoshida Hanbei (act. 1664–89). *A Roofer Uses His Tool Based on the Model of the Lifestyle of the Wealthy* (*Yaneya utoku naru hito no ichigi o mihon no kozarwa*), from *Flowering Grasses of Passion* (*Kōshoku hana susuki*), vol. 2. 1705. Woodblock-printed book. 26.2 x 17.9 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Source unidentified, 2007.68.2. Photo © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

which the wearer was not entitled (“forbidden colors,” *kinjiki*) was treated as a serious moral and civil offense. In the restricted lexicon of aristocratic court poetry, *iro* was the only permissible term for sexual love, along with the equally opaque *omoi*, or “thoughts” (of sexual passion). The long and complex history of the term before the Edo period, then, is one of moral and civil prescription and proscription; as an ideal, it was all too human and inevitably destructive.

In the entirely secular philosophy of the Edo period, the failed ideal disappears, and the word *iro* (now read alternatively as *shoku*) comes to denote simply “sex” or “lust.” The common word for extramarital or otherwise unlicensed sex, *irogonomi* or *kōshoku*, means literally “a fondness for ‘color.’” Books on this theme constituted the popular literary genre of *kōshokubon* (fig. 1). The most popular theme of bourgeois fiction, unlicensed sex, was the most obvious form of “luxury” and so a term of official opprobrium.

The Edo government’s official concern for the regulation of public morality is obvious in the laws that brought into being the worlds of private immorality: the thriving theaters and licensed entertainment quarters of the large cities. Edo’s Yoshiwara is the one seen most often in prints though a latecomer among licensed quarters, established in 1617, little more than a decade after the city’s official founding. Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), the last hegemon of the chaotic period preceding the Tokugawa polity that ruled Edo Japan, had officially chartered the Yanagimachi entertainment district in Kyoto in 1589, and rather than attempt the impossible task of rooting out immorality from society, the subsequent Tokugawa rulers contented themselves with continuing the more practical efforts of confining it. One result of the official assignment of sexual life to the private

with different sorts of transgression, especially what the laws termed “extravagance” or “luxury” (*shashi*), an indulgence that was viewed as evidence of moral degeneration. The general term in use during the Edo period for the appearance of luxury in human life was “color” (*iro*). An alternate reading of the same word, *shiki*, had been for more than a millennium the technical Buddhist term for the seductive but illusory sensory phenomena that lead people astray. In the secular world of the court nobility, *shiki* referred specifically to the color-coded gradations of court rank, and the wearing of colors to

realm in Edo Japan was that it could legitimately be regarded as having nothing to do with “morality” that was, properly speaking, limited to the official public realm.

Laws prohibiting the publication of “immoral” works were aimed at their supposed injurious effects on the puritanical Neo-Confucian ideology of social relations as conceived by the Edo authorities. Such laws were actually a minor component of much farther-reaching attempts to reverse a perceived relaxation of moral order. Erotic literature and art were never pursued by the authorities with anything like the zeal with which they dealt with politically sensitive subjects: the deeds of past and present rulers and their families, government figures and affairs of state; current scandals; and thought and religion that were deemed unorthodox.<sup>3</sup> As long as artistic works were not perceived as advocating political or social heterodoxy, they were viewed as a relatively harmless form of release in an otherwise rigidly hierarchical and harshly repressive social order. As Sarah Thompson notes in her study of Edo censorship, impropriety was a more serious offense than obscenity, for which there are no notable arrests.<sup>4</sup>

The existence of an official licensed quarter obscures the fact that Edo was full of unlicensed brothel areas, known colloquially as “hill places” (*okabasho*), beginning with the heavily trafficked “four post-stations” (*shishuku*), where the great roads in and out of the city intersected its boundaries—Shinagawa (referred to as “south”) on the Tōkaidō, Naitō Shinjuku (“west”) on the Kōshūkaidō, Itabashi on the Nakasendō/Kisokaidō and Senjū (“north”) on the Ōshūkaidō/Nikkōkaidō—as well as popular gathering places such as Asakusa, Azabu, Fukagawa (“east”), Hongō, Honjo, Ichigaya, Mita, Shiba, Tsukiji and Yotsuya (all but the four post-stations were, at least in theory, abolished by the Tenpō reforms of the 1840s). The hill places teemed with more easily available “inn girls” (*meshimori-onna*), “tea-shop girls” (*chakumi-musume*), “bar girls” (*shakufu*), “signboard girls” (*kanban-musume*), “archery-stall girls” (*yaba-onna*), “bathhouse girls” (*yuna*), “boy actors” (*kagama*), down to the unregulated streetwalkers known as “street-corner princesses” (*tsujigimi*), “night hawks” (*yotaka*) and “hells” (*jigoku*), all of whom figure in ukiyo-e art and literature, mostly anonymously. Hill places catered to the majority, whose needs ran to less expensive, formidably ritualized and predominantly heterosexual entertainment than that on offer in the Yoshiwara licensed quarters. One of the most notorious areas of Edo was centrally located in the heart of the Kan’eiiji Buddhist temple district surrounding Ueno’s Shinobazu Pond, where cozily concealed “lotus-viewing inns” (*hasumi-chaya*) enjoyed the regular patronage of “floating-world monks” (*ukiyo-bōzu*) and their women and boys (the name “Shinobazu no ike” can be translated as “Pond of Uncovered Secrets”) (fig. 2).

*Shunga* were occasionally victims of the three major Edo reforms of the 1720s, 1790s and 1840s, caught up as innocent bystanders along with more serious economic, political and social offences. Kept out of sight in the rear of bookstores, *shunga* were not a problem. One of the most notorious acts of official repression in the Edo art world is the punishment of Kitagawa Utamaro (1753?–1806), who had goaded the authorities with



FIG. 2. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858). *Lotus Pond at Shinobazu in Ueno* (*Ueno Shinobazu hasu ike*), from the series *Famous Places in the Eastern Capital* (*Tōto meisho*), c. 1843–47. Color woodcut, *ōban*. 24.5 x 37.6 cm. William S. and John T. Spaulding Collection, 1921, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 21.9850. Photo © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

publication in 1626 of Oze Hoan's (1564–1640) *Chronicle of the Chief Minister* (*Taikōki*), but also included real names in a cartouche beside each figure. The government ordered all unsold copies of this work seized and the artist jailed for three days and confined to house arrest in manacles for fifty days.<sup>6</sup> Utamaro's demise less than two years later, at fifty-three, is understood to have resulted from the shock of his punishment.<sup>7</sup> The authorities were not bothered by the forty gorgeous *shunga* albums Utamaro turned out in the years preceding this incident.

### THE ECONOMY OF DESIRE

Japan in the Edo period was driven by a pervasive capitalism that the state tried with varying success to regulate. The astonishing mercantile world of Edo offered something for every persuasion and purse. The popular 1824 catalogue *Your Personal Shopping Guide to Edo* (*Edo kaimono hitori annai*) details some twenty-six hundred merchants, crafts and eating/drinking establishments.<sup>8</sup> In its density and intensity, Edo consumerism promoted a commodity fetishism whereby goods and people swapped roles. In Santō Kyōden's (1761–1816) comic graphic novel (*kibyōshi*) *Those Goods You Know So Well* (*Gozonji no shōbaimono*, 1782), books take on human appearance and attributes, while in his *Forty-eight Holds in Buying Whores* (*Keiseikai shijū-hatte*, 1790), women are consumer goods to be bought and sold.

Defined not merely in physical terms but in terms of expenditure and consumption, Edo sex seems quite modern. By the late seventeenth century, sexuality was being translated entirely into material terms, as illustrated by the unprecedented detail devoted in art and fiction to “material” in its most literal sense. The ukiyo-e parody by Keisai Eisen (1790–1848) of the kabuki play *Love Letter from the Edo Brothels* (*Kuruwa azuma bunshō*) is revealing—illustrations typically contain a wealth of luxury items: a fur-lined quilt, a

a woodcut triptych of 1804 entitled *Hideyoshi and His Five Wives Viewing the Blossoms at Daigoji* (*Taikō gosai Rakutō yūkan no zu*) (fig. 3).<sup>5</sup> Stories and pictures of Hideyoshi, known as the Taikō (“Chief Minister”), tended to be viewed with caution by the government, which demanded deference to all authority, even when actual names and events were conventionally masked. Utamaro not only selected a very public figure, popular with the masses since the



FIG. 3. Kitagawa Utamaro. *Hideyoshi and His Five Wives on an Excursion to the East of Kyoto (Taikō gosai Rakutō yūkan no zu)*. 1804. Color woodcut, *ōban* triptych. 37 x 76.4 cm. William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 1911, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston II.14509-II. Photo © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Hideyoshi is seated at the center. He and his concubines are identified by name.

thick mattress with checked cover matching the green of a woman's outer robe, a sake-warmer lacquered with maple leaves (fig. 4). The original play's sentimental and highly poetic dialogue between the courtesan Yūgiri and her lover, the disinherited young merchant Izaemon, is replaced by the prostitute's shrewd calculation of exactly how many orgasms her otherwise impoverished lover has provided her that year:

*Izaemon*: I may be so poor that I have to wear paper robes, but that just makes it easier for a hot babe like you to set me on fire! Ahhh, I'm coming!

*Yūgiri*: Oh, pipe down and get moving—there, to the right, ahhh, now up, ohhh, yes! Yes! There, I came, too! Now, let's see, how many orgasms does that make? It's been a whole year since last New Year's, so that comes to over three hundred sixty. . . .



FIG. 4. Keisai Eisen (1790–1848). *Love Letter from the Edo Brothels (Kurawa azuma bunshō)*, from the series *The Ten Openings Illustrated: The Path of Humans (Jukkai no zu: Jindō)*. 1818–29. Color woodcut, bound as a folding album. 22.8 x 34.5 cm. Collection of Michael Fornitz

The series title is a parody of the fifth of the Buddhist “Ten Realms,” or *jukkai*.

FIG. 5. Katsushika Hokusai. *Sexual Aids*, from *The Ten Thousand Gods of Matrimonial Harmony* (*Manpuku wagōjin*), vol. 1. 1821. Color woodblock-printed book. 22.2 x 15.5 cm. Courtesy Sumisho Art Gallery

The twelve sexual aids are, from right to left, top to bottom: penis stiffening cords; double-headed dildo; vagina balls; penis stiffening attachments resembling armor and helmet; penis rings; incense container with female genitalia; musk incense; hollow dildo; aphrodisiac pills; artificial vagina; aphrodisiac of eggs and arrowroot; paired large and small dildos.



And as a visual icon of the equation of sex and money, little beats the last scene of *Coupling Among the Cedars of Izumo: Excess Forever* (*Enmusubi Izumo no sugi*, 1822) by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849), where a lusty widow is seen smoking her pipe while rewarding her three exhausted hired lovers according to the number of strings of coins their still-erect members can support.

But gorgeous clothing in *shunga* invariably functions as a stage for the main actors, the performing genitals. In the long history of Japanese art, there has been famously little interest in the nude body as an object of either aesthetic or erotic interest. Even in their most contorted and enthusiastic states, the only parts of bodies in *shunga* with real definition are the faces and genitals. The realm of the entirely unclothed body is not the bedroom, but the public bathhouse—and *shunga* bathhouse scenes are as a rule not sexy but bawdy, as the familiar neighborhood institution is portrayed by Shikitei Sanba (1776–1822) in his humorous novel of manners, *The Floating-World Bathhouse* (*Ukiyoburo*, 1809–13).

In Edo's economy of desire, the ability to produce and consume, no matter how vital and prodigious, is eventually exhausted and comes at least temporarily to a halt. Perhaps the main objection to the theory, proposed by Timon Screech, that Edo *shunga* were intended for “reading with one hand” by the young men of Edo is that it is not usually young men who require such visual stimulation.<sup>9</sup> Desire's cycle of production and consumption hinges upon the ability to restimulate flagging desire as an endless series of discrete moments, which may be schematically represented this way:

... -> desire -> production -> selling -> buying -> consumption -> satiation -> advertising -> stimulation of desire -> desire -> . . .

What turns an otherwise one-time linear process into a continuous loop is the restimulation of exhausted desire: the crucial and familiar function played by advertising. Rather than the narrow definition of “advertising” today, I use the word here to signify the cultural process by which the all-important but inchoate desire to consume is made to undergo perpetual restimulation at the point of satiation. Hokusai’s erotic illustrated story *The Gods of All Conjugal Happiness* (*Manpuku wagōjin*, 1821) begins with a detailed illustration depicting and naming the numerous sexual aids featured in the ensuing story, constituting both part of the story and an embedded product-placement ad (fig. 5).<sup>10</sup> “Dear reader,” is the implied message. “If you plan to try this at home, you’ll certainly want to buy *these!*”

Women’s limited life choices were generally portrayed in Edo culture as those of the wife’s domestic “mommy-track” or the courtesan’s worldly “career-track.”<sup>11</sup> In the respective antithetical and complementary roles these two types of women play in the drama and fiction of the Edo period, the domestic housewife is obviously the duller if legitimately sanctioned of the two, epitomizing the safe but boring world of “obligation” (*giri*), in contrast to the prostitute’s insecure but exciting world of “passion” (*ninjō*). And yet, there is a dramatic shift toward the domestic world in the years before 1800, perhaps as a response to the Kansei Reforms, perhaps also to the need of merchants of kimono and other materials to appeal to the interests of the growing numbers of middle-class women with disposable income who had become their main customers. *Shunga* prints even feature scenes of commonplace domesticity including the joys and frustrations of conjugal sex—Utamaro’s humorous vision in 1800 shows a husband trying to distract an infant with a rattle so that he can make love to his wife (there is nearly always a “wife with lover” plate in *shunga* albums) (fig. 6).<sup>12</sup>

We should also observe that the Edo period’s exuberant “economy of desire,” considered on the model of a market economy based on excess consumption, flourished in the context of its opposite condition, a sober public “economy of thrift”—the static puritanism promoted by the authorities in

the interests of the moral improvement of society. This official ideology, in which Chinese yin-yang thought was, eunuchlike, neutered for official state purposes, held that males possessed only a limited sexual capital, which the good bourgeois must not wastefully “spend,” but hoard, invest and preserve, especially against depredations by women, whose very nature is to shop till men drop. This attitude is well illustrated in a dual view by Utagawa Toyokuni (1769–1825): the first shows a man making love to an ordinary woman, the second reveals that he is squandering his limited sexual capital on a vitality-draining female skeleton (fig. 7a, b).

FIG. 6. Kitagawa Utamaro. *Entertaining the Baby*, from *Erotic Book: Plum of the Bedchamber* (*Enpon: Toko no ume*) with text by Shikitei Sanba. 1800. Color woodblock-printed folding album. 12.6 x 18.8 cm. British Museum, 1972,0724,0.7 © The Trustees of the British Museum

The wife says: “This kid won’t keep still and nurse! Kids just don’t understand a parent’s needs.”





FIG. 7a. Utagawa Toyokuni. *What We Think Is Happening*, from *An Erotic Book: A Mirror of Openings (Ehon kaichū kagami)*, vol. 2. 1823. Color woodblock-printed book. 22.2 x 15.5 cm. Courtesy Sumisho Art Gallery

The title is a pun on “portable mirror” (*kaichū kagami*).



FIG. 7b. Utagawa Toyokuni. *What Is Really Happening*, from *An Erotic Book: A Mirror of Openings (Ehon kaichū kagami)*, vol. 2. 1823. Color woodblock-printed book. 22.2 x 15.5 cm. Courtesy Sumisho Art Gallery

The prose text reads: “The wind of mutability comes to destroy the living body, and this is what becomes of the lustful man.”  
The poem reads: “Eaten away to the bones / all flesh is left / to wander in delusion.”



## THE STAGING OF DESIRE IN THE THEATER

The entertainment quarters (*kuruwa*) and the kabuki theater (*shibai*) were the original and most enduring subjects of the “floating world.” The semiotics of *shunga* and the stage are alike in at least three ways: first, both dealt in the dramatic physical staging of the most powerful human passions; second, both were circumscribed by an attractive aura of the disreputable and the forbidden; third, both were driven by an insatiable appetite for excess.

In both erotic art and theater, scene, gesture and text are united in performance, each of these elements sustaining its own formal mode of expression.

### SCENE

*Shunga* prints frequently comprise erotic parodies or “behind-the-scenes” depictions of well-known scenes from plays, and even of the famous actors associated with those plays (fig. 8). Kabuki originated in the scandalous 1603 “song and dance” performances in Kyoto of Izumo no Okuni, and was early identified with the sexual availability of its performers. Even as it evolved under pressure from the government and the (by default) truly dramatic puppet theater into a more “legitimate” dramatic art, the kabuki theater continued to retain its powerful erotic subtext. Audiences contributed by voyeuristically associating the famous actors of the day with their roles onstage and by lionizing them as figures of erotic fascination.<sup>13</sup>

The “frivolous” private world of the erotic was also used to parody the “serious” public one, a way of translating lofty concerns into the vernacular. In a standard print version of *The Syllabary Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (*Kanadehon chūshingura*), Japan’s most famous dramatic embodiment of samurai ideals, the victorious loyal retainers carry the heads of their slain enemies across Eitaibashi Bridge in Edo to their feudal lord’s burial place at Sengakuji Temple; in an erotic parody of the same scene they are shown

carrying their foes’ penises instead. The effect of such a parody is to revise officially promoted samurai values in metaphors that appeal to the interests of ordinary bourgeois, to whose lives samurai precepts of honor and revenge, even if of great fascination, were irrelevant, if not alien. The many ribald parodies of this sort were referred to as both “humorous pictures” (*warai-e*) and “dangerous pictures” (*abuna-e*). The union of sex and humor as social and political satire was an aspect of art and popular literature that kept the authorities alert to the possibility of seditious overtones.

FIG. 8. Torii Kiyonobu (1664?–1729).  
*The Actor Dekishima Kozarashi with a Lover*, from an untitled series of homo-sexual erotica. c. 1702–03. One of a set of 12 woodcuts. 22.5 x 30.8 cm.  
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FIG. 9. Torii Kiyomitsu I (1735–1785). *The Actor Ichikawa Ebizō II (Danjūrō II) as Yanone Gorō in the play Koizome Sumidagarawa*. c. 1758. Color woodcut. 41.5 x 28.7 cm. Honolulu Academy of Arts, Gift of James A. Michener, 1988 (20501). Photo: Tim Siegert



FIG. 10. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *Reflections in Mirrors*, from *A Pillow Mirror (Makura kagami)*. c. 1830–43. Color woodblock-printed folding book (*orichō*). 18 x 12 cm. From Fukuda Kazuhiko, *Fūzoku ehon ukiyo-e* (Sexual practices in erotic books of the floating world) (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1991), 138–39

#### GESTURE

The extravagant gestures of the characters depicted in *shunga* often resemble those of actors onstage. The stylized gestures of *shunga* prints draw from the range of kabuki styles: the softer, more sophisticated gestures of the erotic *wagoto*, or “gentle” style, of domestic dramas about the loves of townsmen; and the flashy physical exaggerations and contortions of the bombastic and more violent Edo *aragoto*, or “rough” style, of plays about warriors and mythical heroes. The two styles were eventually conjoined in plays about the adventures of dashing townsmen heroes, delicate and dandified characters capable of great feats of both erotic and martial valor, qualities famously united in the kabuki play *Sukeroku, The Flower of Edo (Sukeroku yukari no Edozakura)*, first performed in 1713 by the actor Ichikawa Danjūrō II.

One obvious and striking feature of the combination of passion and excess is the exaggerated genitals that dominate erotic imagery. This familiar hyperbole can be compared to the kabuki *aragoto* style; for example, the impressive swagger by the actor Ichikawa Ebizō II (Danjūrō II) brandishing an enormous arrow as Yanone Gorō (fig. 9).<sup>14</sup>

The distinctive exaggeration of genitals in ukiyo-e has been interpreted in a variety of ways.<sup>15</sup> The introduction of lenses into Japan by the Dutch during the Edo period, for example, led to the popularity of magnified views both telescopic (as seen in Saikaku's *Life of a Man Who Loved Love*) and microscopic. Many *shunga* prints play on these visual novelties in both closeup "in-your-face" and distant "what-the-telescope-saw" frames. "Mirrored pussy pictures" (*kagami ni utsutta tsubi-e*) pun on "head pictures" or "portraits" (*kubi-e*) that show beauties at their toilettes before the looking glass. Women are often shown in ukiyo-e prints using mirrors while engaged in their toilettes; Utagawa Kuniyoshi's (1797–1861) *Pillow Mirror* (*Makura kagami*) parodies the genre by replacing the women's faces with their genitals.<sup>16</sup> The clinical nature of Kuniyoshi's view might appear to reflect a literal interest in Western anatomical studies that had been developing in Japan for a half-century (fig. 10).<sup>17</sup> But we find in the final image of *Pillow Mirror* a humorous conversation among six vaginas, ranging in appearance and speech from an inexperienced young virgin ("I'm so ashamed! My heart is pounding!") to an experienced older woman ("You idiot! Do girls really talk like that today?"), each shown in a different mirror whose relative simplicity or ornateness indicates the appearance and personality of its increasingly older and experienced possessor.

The enlargement of genitals in *shunga* might also be understood as an extension of the convention in ukiyo-e of making the principal figure in a group larger than the others. And finally, we may consider Fukuda Kazuhiko's suggestion that the exaggeration of genitals in *shunga*, along with the often extreme contortion of bodies, may be an artistic reaction to an official contention that physical bodies, especially physical desire, simply did not exist.<sup>18</sup>

The acting in *aragoto* plays such as *Shibaraku* is reduced to the broadest of traditionally stylized gestures, or *kata*: the frozen climactic pose and glare (*mie*), seen in figure 9 together with the elaborately choreographed fighting or grappling (*tate*, *tachimawari*), the spectacular stylized entrances and exits (*roppō*) and the like. Sexual activity depicted in *shunga* is similarly distilled to stylized and exaggerated *kata*, collectively known by the term "the forty-eight holds" (*shijūhatte*), as in Kyōden's novel *The Forty-eight Holds in Buying Whores*. The gestures and language of *shunga* are, of course, far more sexually explicit than anything that could be employed on the stage, where such gestures are limited to the likes of one actor's throwing a leg suggestively over that of another or groping inside the bosom of a kimono (fig. 11).<sup>19</sup> But the shared conventions of the two genres place the viewer in the position of reading and appreciating *shunga* in terms of the stage.

The term "forty-eight holds" has its origins in that other spectator sport: sumo wrestling. Sumo wrestling, the entertainment quarter and the

FIG. 11. Sakurahime (Bandō Tamasaburō) being groped by Gonsuke (Kataoka Takao), in the play *Sakurahime*, *Love-letters from the East* (*Sakurahime azuma bunsho*). 1980s. From *Taiyō* (The sun), special issue no. 76 (Feb. 1992), 136





FIG. 12. Isoda Koryūsai. *A Sumo Compendium* (*Sumō taizen*). c. 1770. Color woodcut, *chūban*. From Fukuda Kazuhiko, *Ehon ukiyo-e sen* (A collection of erotic prints) (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1990), pl. 179



FIG. 13. Katsushika Hokusai. *Prostitute and Customer*, from *Edo Brocades* (*Azuma nishiki*). c. 1811. One of a set of 12 color woodcuts. 25.3 x 36.6 cm. From Hayashi Yohikazu and Richard Lane, *Teihon ukiyo-e shunga meihin shūsei* (Collected masterpieces of the erotic works of ukiyo-e), vol. 7 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1996), pl. 3

theater are regularly portrayed in ukiyo-e prints as the three favorite venues of townsman life. As in sumo, the mighty grappling of two well-endowed people may even have been thought pleasing to the gods as living examples of the harmonious interaction of yin and yang. In a wonderfully literal example of this genre, Isoda Koryūsai (1735–1790) depicts a man and woman, dressed only in sumo wrestlers’ *marwashī* loincloths parted to reveal their ready genitals, crouching determinedly to take one another on (fig. 12). The *shijūhatte* also refer to sexual positions, even if the terms used in *shunga* are quite different from those in sumo.<sup>20</sup>

#### TEXT

*Shunga* exist both with and without narrative and/or dialogue texts. Through the time of Suzuki Harunobu (1725–1770), narrative or poetic texts were frequently located on separate panels or “cloud-shaped” (*kumogata*) cartouches above the pictures. Later, illustrated *shunga* books typically include the text within the picture itself, most often in stretches of narration and dialogue that fill up the space near or around the characters. Such text is entirely matter-of-fact and chatty, often contrasting ironically with the activity going on in the picture. In a scene from Hokusai’s *Edo Brocades* (*Azuma nishiki*), a tea-shop prostitute reminds her jealous boyfriend that sex is, after all, money (fig. 13):

Woman: Y’know, Busa gave me enough money the other day to buy myself new sash cords and a pair of fancy sandals and even get my samisen fixed.

Man: You mean you did him for it! He’d only have done all that for sex. Tea-shop girls like you may be for sale, but keep putting out your best stuff day after day and you’ll wind up a dried-up old teapot. Maybe you should hang out a sign saying “out of water”!

Woman: Oh, you’re so hateful! Shut up and put that nasty mouth of yours to good use. You want water? Here’s a whole watermelon, and I guarantee it’s juicy! If you didn’t have any rivals, I’d never make any money. Women have to use sex to get money.

“Dialogue” in some works consists of little more than the utterances of

FIG. 14. Attrib. Yanagawa Shigenobu (1787–1832). *Gang Rape*, from *An Illustrated Book of Ancient Words for Flowers [Complete] (Ehon hana kogo zen)*. c. 1815. Color woodcut, album leaf. 26 x 38.4 cm. Photo courtesy Sebastian Izzard LLC

The dialogue is gruesome. The first man, for example says: “Hey Matsu, hold her still! Look lady, we’re gonna party, so just keep still! I’m the one who’s gonna start the partying off, but the whole crowd’ll join in the dancing soon enough!”

FIG. 15. Attrib. Yanagawa Shigenobu (1787–1832). *Dutch Couple Make Love*, from *An Illustrated Book of Ancient Words for Flowers [Complete] (Ehon hana kogo zen)*. c. 1815. Color woodcut, album leaf. 26 x 38.4 cm. Photo courtesy Sebastian Izzard LLC

The dialogue here is quite remarkable. Each speaks first in a “Dutch” version that is really just Japanese slang rendered in a humorous “foreign” pronunciation that is perhaps intended to render the speech of Edo courtesans. This is followed by a more standard Japanese version. She begins, “*Mārasūki-sama nēchongaru insui pyōrobyōro piiriderekiru suru iikiimāsuru yōsu . . .*” and her Japanese version follows, “You can call me horny, but when I look at your cock my clit gets hot and I come all by myself. . . .”



lovmaking, and can create a truly stunning onomatopoeia. On a single page of one story, Hokusai produces a symphony of such sounds: “*pit-chapitcha gobogobo sūsū fūfū gishigishi giragira tsuppotsuppo zubozubo gobogobo yusayusa mishimishi gasagasa*,” each word carrying its own specific meaning (*pitchapitcha* is the sound of slurping, *gobogobo* of liquid pouring, etc.). This resembles the great variety of vocal effects in kabuki, especially the calls exchanged back and forth between actors at moments of great passion; like music and song, written narrative and dialogue fill up otherwise unfigured space as the unfolding of passion over time, and control how plot and emotion are united and experienced.<sup>21</sup>

This cursory overview has inevitably glossed over some potentially important contexts of *shunga*: Kuniyoshi’s *Pillow Mirror* only begins to suggest the remarkable flowering of anatomical and taxonomical studies in the Edo period of everything including genitalia, for example; or, as the years went by, the ever-increasing fascination in Edo print art, as in the culture in general, in the supernatural and the violent side of human nature (fig. 14); or, finally, of the ever-present, if always suspect, curiosity for the officially disapproved subject of foreigners and their alien ways, Chinese and Western alike (fig. 15). ☘



NOTES

1. In this essay, I use the word ukiyo-e in its original sense of prints and paintings depicting the urban world of entertainment and fashion, and not in its modern extended sense that includes such popular genres as landscape, famous places, nature scenes and *surimono*.
2. See Henry Smith, "Overcoming the Modern History of Edo 'shunga,'" in Sumie Jones, ed., *Imaging Reading Eros: Sexuality and Edo Culture, 1750–1850* (Bloomington: Indiana University East Asian Studies Center, 1996), 26–34.
3. Sekine Masatada, "Tokugawa jidai no shuppanhō to shokeijin" (Edo-period publication law and its executors), in Haga Noboru, ed., *Edo no asobi* (Play in the Edo period) (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1981), 96–107.
4. Sarah E. Thompson, "The Politics of Japanese Prints," in Sarah E. Thompson and H. D. Harootunian, eds., *Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1992), 47. The small part that *shunga* occupies in this brief but comprehensive study on Edo censorship in ukiyo-e publishing signals its relative insignificance in the view of the law. Thompson notes that while the authorities tended to investigate well-known figures over trifles, greater transgressions by relatively unknown figures regularly passed unremarked (39).
5. See discussion by Thompson in *Undercurrents in the Floating World*, 44–45.
6. This was only the most notorious of several offences that prompted sweeping injunctions against military tales and prints of every sort, and resulted in similar punishments meted out to other well-known ukiyo-e artists such as Toyokuni, Shuntei, Shun'ei, Tsukimaro and Ikku. See Suwa Haruo, *Shuppan kotohajime: Edo no hon* (The origins of publishing: Edo books) (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1978), 172–75. Julie Nelson Davis proposes that works such as Utamarō's were seen as "appropriating the right to write Tokugawa history." Davis, "The Trouble with Hideyoshi," *Japan Forum* 19: 3 (2007): 281.
7. In similar fashion, Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783–1842) and Tamenaga Shunsui (1790–1843), two of the most famous literary men of the period, were imprisoned in 1842 during the Tenpō reforms; Tanehiko died the same year and Shunsui the next, both at relatively young ages. The arrest and execution of the popular storyteller Baba Bunkō in 1758 is discussed in Katsuya Hirano, "Social Networks and Production of Public Discourse in Edo Popular Culture," in Elizabeth Lillehoj, ed., *Acquisition: Art and Ownership in Edo-period Japan* (Warren, CT: Floating World Editions, 2007), 113–16.
8. The preface is by Ōta Nanpo (Shokusanjin, 1749–1823). The entire work is reproduced in Nishiyama Matsunosuke, "Edo kaimono hitori annai kaitai" (An analysis of *Your Personal Shopping Guide to Edo*), in Nishiyama, *Edo chōnin no kenkyū* (Studies on Edo townsmen) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1977), vol. 3, 431–550. (See online at <<http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/directory/sumita/00018117>>). The work prominently features the crest of each establishment; the fact that many disparate businesses appear to share the same crest suggests one way to trace the extensive commercial networks that permeated Edo. See David Pollack, "Marketing Desire: Advertising and Sexuality in Edo Literature, Drama, and Art," in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, eds. Joshua Mostow, Norman Bryson and Maribeth Graybill (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 75.
9. Timon Screech, *Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Images in Japan 1700–1820* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), ch. 1.
10. For a detailed description of these sexual aids and study of this work, see David Pollack, "Manpuku wagōjin, The Gods of Myriad Conjugal Delights: An Illustrated Erotic Story by Katsushika Hokusai," in *Hokusai and his Age*, ed. John T. Carpenter (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005), 272.
11. One extreme example of the trouble that could ensue when these separate worlds intersected is the Ejima-Ikushima affair of 1714, in which a high-ranking lady of the shogun's harem was discovered in a scandalous relationship with a kabuki actor.
12. Richard Lane hypothesizes that such domestic *shunga* scenes were intended to appeal to an audience of married women; see Hayashi Yoshikazu and Richard Lane,

*Teibon ukiyo-e shunga meihin shūsei* (Collected masterpieces of the erotic works of ukiyo-e), vol. 7 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1996), 43.

13. See, for example, the materials included by Fukuda Kazuhiko from erotic parodies of the popular play *Kanadehon chūshingura*, in *Ehon: Miwaku no ukiyo-e* (Erotic books: Fascinating ukiyo-e) (Tokyo: K. K. Bestoserazu, 1988), 32–63 and 122–47. Especially noteworthy is a scene from Kunisada's *A Syllabary of Night-shining Jewels* (*Kanadehon yakō no tama*, c. 1818–29); in a parodic twist of Act VI of *Chūshingura*, it is Hayano Kanpei, rather than Ōboshi Kuranosuke, who has absconded to the Kyoto entertainment quarters, leaving his wife, Okaru, alone at home to give birth to their child. As Fukuda notes, this spectacular print may well be the only childbirth scene in all of Japanese art, and it is an extraordinarily detailed one. Fukuda, *Ehon: Miwaku no ukiyo-e*, pl. 112.

14. The dramatic style of *aragoto* acting and *shunga* are also visually linked in Utagawa Kunisada's (1786–1865) matching portraits in *Treasure Contest* (*Takara arwase*) of actors and their “jewels,” i.e., genitals; in the portraits of the great Ichikawa Danjūrō and his “treasure,” it is not Danjūrō but his “treasure” that wears the actor's trademark face paint. See Hayashi Yoshikazu, *Utagawa Kunisada: Edo no makuraeshi* (Utagawa Kunisada: Edo *shunga* artist) (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1989).

15. Richard Lane, “The *shunga* in Japanese Art,” cites as an early example of genital exaggeration the mid-thirteenth-century work *Notable Tales Old and New* (*Kokon chomonjū*); in Philip S. Rawson, *Erotic Art of the East: The Sexual Theme in Oriental Painting and Sculpture* (New York: Putnam, 1968), 303.

16. See Fukuda Kazuhiko, *Fūzoku ehon ukiyo-e* (Sexual life in illustrated floating-

world books) (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1991), 138–39.

17. For example, the popular *New Text on Anatomy* (*Kaitai shinsbo*, 1774) by Sugita Genpaku (1733–1817). See Timon Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 190–91.

18. Fukuda Kazuhiko, *Ehon: Miwaku no ukiyo-e*, 5. Notwithstanding the large number of *shunga* that are almost clinically anatomical, Hayashi Yoshikazu claims that, at least in terms of proportion, “*shunga* artists were not obsessed with anatomical correctness.” Hayashi Yoshikazu, *Ukiyo-e no kiwami: Shunga* (*Shunga: The zenith of ukiyo-e*) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1989), 62.

19. For an example of an erotic homosexual gesture, see the photo of Danjō and Hidetarō in *Narukami Fudō: Cherry-blossoms of Kitayama* (*Narukami Fudō Kitayama zakura*), in James R. Brandon, *Kabuki: Five Classic Plays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), unnumbered photo illustrating p. 117, inserted after p. 124.

20. Seven of the “forty-eight holds,” such as “exchanging pledge cups on the night of as-signation” (*au yo no sakazuki*) and “exchanging thoughts of love” (*omoikurabe*), do not depict actual sexual intercourse.

21. The musical score of a film achieves this same purpose today, but it is to the modern comic book and graphic novel that a Western reader must turn for an idea of the phenomenology of this union of text and image in Japan. See Adam L. Kern, *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan*, Harvard East Asia Monographs 279 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), especially 29–95.





通稱  
俗水計傳豪傑百人之一人

花和尚魯知深初魯達

長五尺  
重六十二斤  
の渾鐵の  
鏡禪杖と遣ふ  
滄州の路  
松を折し董超

一勇  
燭  
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画

## Kuniyoshi and Chinese Subjects: Pushing the Boundaries

ELLIS TINIOS

< **FIG. 1.** Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *The Tattooed Priest Lu Zhishen, former name Lu Da* (*KaoshōRochishin, shomei Rotatsu*), from the series *One of the 108 Heroes of the Popular Tales of the Water Margin* (*Tsūzoku suikoden gōketsu hyakuhachinin no hitori*). 1827. Color woodcut. 38 x 25 cm. American Friends of the British Museum (The Arthur R. Miller Collection) 10036

Lu Zhishen, a monk turned brigand, smashes a pine tree with his iron staff as a warning to the guards not to mistreat his friend Lin Chong as they escort him into exile. The text in the top left corner gives the weight and length of Lu Zhishen's great staff. This is one of the first five prints in the series to be published.

**FIG. 2.** Katsushika Hokusai. *Lu Zhishen* (left) and *Yang Chun* (right), from *Newly Edited Illustrated Tales of the Water Margin* (*Shinpen suiko-gaden*), text by Kyokutei Bakin. Part one, vol. 1, sheets 5b/6a. 1805. Woodblock-printed book. 22 x 15 cm. East Asia Library, Yale University

These full-figure portraits are from a group of nine that form part of the prefatory material for the book. They introduce the most important of the heroes to the reader.

**U**TAGAWA KUNIYOSHI (1797–1861) chose to represent Chinese subjects for different reasons at different times during his career. In the late 1820s, guided by an enterprising publisher, he designed prints of a heroic band of Chinese brigands, the chief protagonists of a Chinese vernacular novel that was then all the rage in Japan. Inspired by the dramatic material, he succeeded in cashing in on the popularity of the novel, and at the same time, established himself as a major ukiyo-e artist. The defiant brigands whose exploits he illustrated with such verve must also have appealed to his own independent spirit. By the 1840s, chafing against what he regarded as excessively restrictive government regulations, he created two “ambiguous” sets of prints devoted to a Chinese text the authorities expressly identified as fit for public consumption: *Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety*. The ambiguity arises from Kuniyoshi's presentation of this most orthodox of Confucian, moralizing subjects in heterodox Western style. He showed off his knowledge of Western art at a time when anyone who took too keen an interest in any aspect of the West was regarded with suspicion by the authorities. I contend that he designed these two sets in order to challenge and mock authority, just as he did in other prints he designed in the 1840s and 1850s.



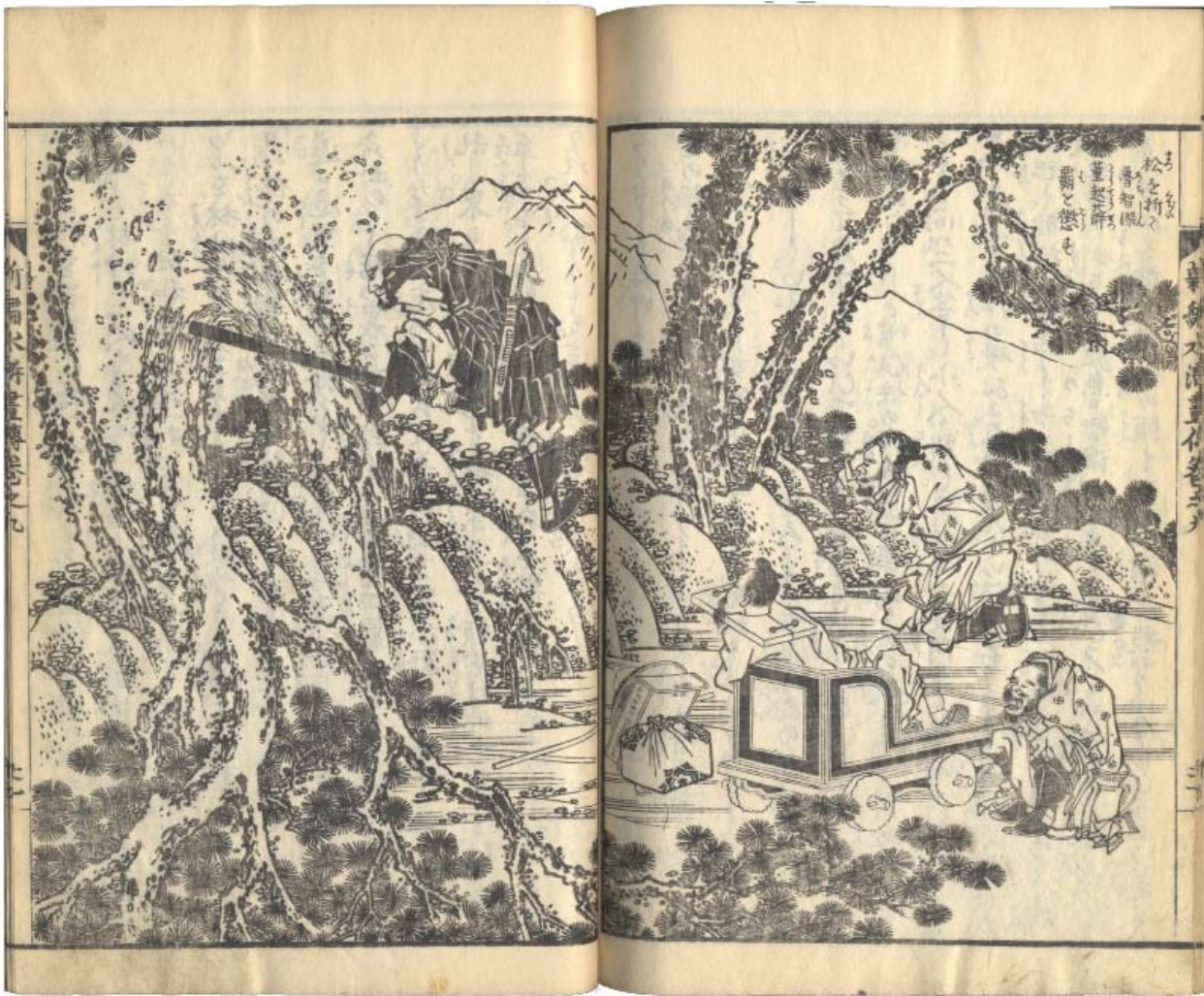


FIG. 3. Katsushika Hokusai. *Lu Zhishen*, from *Newly Edited Illustrated Tales of the Water Margin* (*Shinpen suiko-gaden*), text by Kyokutei Bakin. Part one, vol. 9, sheets 21b/22a. 1805. Woodblock-printed book. 22 x 15 cm. East Asia Library, Yale University

Lu Zhishen, a monk turned brigand, smashes a pine tree with his iron staff as a warning to the guards, seen cowering on the right, not to mistreat his friend Lin Chong, whom they are escorting into exile. Lin Chong is seated in a cart with a canque around his neck.

### TALES OF THE WATER MARGIN

Kuniyoshi had his first great success as a print designer in 1827 with a set of illustrations depicting the heroes of the Chinese vernacular novel *Shuihu-zhuan*, known in Japanese as *Suikoden* (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The title is translated into English as *Tales of the Water Margin*. This rambling work tells of the bold and often bloodthirsty deeds of brigands in Shandong province in the first quarter of the twelfth century. Chinese editions of the *Water Margin* had reached Japan by the early eighteenth century; the first translation into Japanese appeared in 1757. Fifty years later, the prolific Edo author Kyokutei Bakin (1767–1848) was commissioned to rework existing translations of Part One of *Water Margin*. His version was published serially in 1805 and 1807 under the title *Newly Edited Illustrated Tales of the Water Margin* (*Shinpen suiko-gaden*). The book is in *yomihon* (reading book) format, which means that pages of solid text are interrupted every six or eight openings by a double-page illustration. The illustrator was Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849), who receives equal billing with Bakin in the front matter of the book.

Hokusai's illustrations for this book comprise the first significant group of *Water Margin* images to be produced by any Japanese artist (figs. 2, 3). The pictures were so critical to the publication that reference to them was even



FIG. 4. Utagawa Kuniyasu. [Lu] Da, from *Prostitutes' Tales of the Water Margin* (*Keisei suikoden*), text by Kyokutei Bakin. Part two, vol. 2, sheets 33b/34a. 1826. Woodblock-printed book. 17.5 x 12 cm. East Asia Library, Yale University

Chinese brigands, the chief protagonists of Hokusai's *Newly Edited Illustrated Tales of the Water Margin* (fig. 3), are transformed into daring Japanese women. Only the lowly guards remain men. The monk turned brigand Lu Zhishen has his counterpart in a lapsed nun, shown here, who does not fall short of him in strength or boldness.

incorporated into the title: the phrase “illustrated tales” (*gaden*) in the title emphasizes their inclusion in this edition. These exciting images are not widely known today.

After the publication of Part One of *Newly Edited Illustrated Tales of the Water Margin* in 1805 and 1807, Bakin withdrew from the project because of a disagreement with the publisher over money. A long hiatus followed before publication resumed. Another prolific Edo author, Takai Ranzan (?–1838), took up the tale where Bakin left off. Hokusai remained the illustrator. Part Two (*nihen*), which is in ten volumes, was published in 1829.<sup>2</sup>

Now out of the project, Bakin wrote a *Water Margin* parody entitled *Prostitutes' Tales of the Water Margin* (*Keisei suikoden*) in *gōkan* format with Japanese female equivalents of the Chinese heroes. In *gōkan*, the images and text are intertwined on every page of the book, unlike *yomihon*, in which images and text are presented separately. In addition, *gōkan* volumes are smaller and therefore less expensive than the larger *yomihon* volumes. Bakin's parody was released in thirteen parts between 1825 and 1835. Utagawa Kuniyasu (1794–1832) provided the bulk of the illustrations (fig. 4). The publisher was Kagaya Kichibei, who also issued Kuniyoshi's *Popular Water Margin* prints. He published the Kuniyoshi prints and the Bakin/Kuniyasu novel serially over approximately the same period. Kuniyasu's illustrations

FIG. 5. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *Zhang Heng (Chōō)*, Fourth in a Lineup of Five Brine Collectors (*Shiokumi goban-tsuzuki, sono yon*), from *Elegant Women's Tales of the Water Margin: One of the 108 Heroes (Fūzoku onna suikoden: Ipyakku-hachinin no uchi)*. 1828–30. Color woodcut, *surimono* (fourth sheet from right of a five-part composition) with embossing, mica and metallic pigments. 21 x 19 cm. American Friends of the British Museum (The Arthur R. Miller Collection) 21802

The print title identifies this brine maiden with the *Water Margin* hero Zhang Heng, ferryman and prodigious swimmer. Kuniyoshi designed the five-part design for the Taiko (“Drum”) club of *kyōka* poets. The three poems do not make a link between the woman and the hero. They refer to spring tides, the rising sun of the New Year and budding willows.



for *Prostitutes' Tales of the Water Margin*—as we would expect in a parody—play off Hokusai's *Illustrated Water Margin* illustrations.

The *Water Margin* craze spread to verse. The 1820s saw the publication of a number of illustrated verse anthologies that took the *Water Margin* as their organizing conceit. In the 1820s, *Water Margin* also figured in the titles of erotic books and in books of theater scenes. Some *surimono*—privately produced New Year cards in which poetry and images were combined in witty, complex ways—also took up *Water Margin* imagery, as we see in a fine example by Kuniyoshi (fig. 5).

*Water Margin* and its derivatives were marketable commodities in the 1820s. Artists and authors approached the world of *Water Margin* from many angles; the work was firmly in the consciousness of a broad public. The choice of *Water Margin* heroes for a set of prints in 1827 represents a clear attempt on the part of Kuniyoshi and his publisher to cash in on this widespread popularity. The search for novelties, for fresh treatments that would open new markets for prints, is characteristic of the entire history of the ukiyo-e print industry in Edo.

Kuniyoshi's prints, bearing the title cartouche *One of the 108 Heroes of the Popular Tales of the Water Margin* (*Tsūzoku suikoden gōketsu hyakuhachinin no hitori*) (see figure 1) comprise the first large set of warrior prints to be produced by any artist, but it is unlikely that the publisher, Kagaya, intended to commission 108 designs. Kagaya began by releasing just five images. The public took to them, and over the following years, he invited Kuniyoshi to add to the set but stopped at seventy-four designs. This, in itself, is not unusual in ukiyo-e publishing. We often find disparity between the number of prints indicated in a set title and the number of prints actually produced. In many cases, the publisher terminated a project before reaching the promised number of prints to cut his losses if the prints were not selling well. In other cases, because of a set's success, more than the number promised by the title were produced. The most famous instance of the latter is Hokusai's landscape series, *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*; in all, forty-six prints of Fuji bear the series title.

There were, as far as I have been able to ascertain, no earlier single-sheet prints of *Water Margin* heroes. Surveying warrior prints before Kuniyoshi's *Popular Water Margin* set, we encounter very few Chinese heroes. Those we do find are figures from history, not from fiction. Images of Chinese warriors were available to ukiyo-e artists from two sources: the first, illustrated woodblock-printed books imported from China; the second, manuals on Chinese painting produced by Japanese artists. Some of the best known of the latter were compiled by Tachibana Morikuni (1679–1748) in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Hokusai drew upon the Chinese imagery he encountered in both the imported and domestic books when he worked on the Bakin/Ranzan *Illustrated Water Margin*. Kuniyoshi, in turn, had access to the imported Chinese books, Morikuni's manuals and Hokusai's illustrated books. It is not always possible to distinguish their individual contributions to Kuniyoshi's designs, but it is obvious that Kuniyoshi had studied Hokusai's *Illustrated Water Margin* pictures with care when he set about designing his first *Suikoden* prints, as the following comparison will show. Hokusai's treatment of Lu Zhishen, a monk turned brigand, can be seen in figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 is from a sequence of individual portraits of the most important *Water Margin* heroes that appears at the beginning of the first volume of Part One of the *Illustrated Water Margin*. Hokusai presents Lu Zhishen as muscular, hairy and aggressive, stripped to the waist and wielding a great club. Kuniyoshi adopts the same physical characteristics and attributes for his *Popular Water Margin* portrayal of Lu Zhishen. In figure 3, Hokusai places Lu Zhishen off-center and in profile on the left sheet of the double-page spread, smashing a pine tree with one blow of his great staff. Lu is warning two guards (seen cowering to the right) not to mistreat his friend Lin Chong, whom they are escorting into exile. In figure 1, Kuniyoshi depicts the same moment in his print of Lu Zhishen. He has rotated the figure of the monk ninety degrees so that he faces the viewer and zooms in on him, with his body filling the image field, pushing against the boundaries of the print. Kuniyoshi omits the other figures, but an informed viewer would be aware of their presence just out of view.



FIG. 6. Katsushika Hokusai. *Lu Zhishen* attacking *Zhou Tong* (right); and *Lin Chong* in straw hat and raincoat and *Chai Jin* facing away (left), from *Picture Book of the Loyal Heroes of the Tales of the Water Margin* (*Chūgi suikoden ehon*), sheets 5b/6a. 1829. Woodblock-printed book. 23 x 15.5 cm. Private Collection

Hokusai here appears to respond to rival artist Kuniyoshi by demonstrating the “correct” way to depict warriors and heroes.

Kuniyoshi’s borrowings from Hokusai by no means diminish his accomplishment. He used his sources to create new and vibrant works of art in the color-print medium. The fullness, richness and extravagance in Kuniyoshi’s *Popular Water Margin* designs transcend what he achieved in the best of his earlier warrior prints. His *Water Margin* figures burst out of the picture frame. The images are lavish, elaborate, exciting, violent, sometimes cruel and, above all, exotic. Some of the exoticism comes from the Chinese subject matter, some from Kuniyoshi’s decision to introduce Western elements into his designs. The latter include subsidiary figures lifted from Western book illustrations and prints, volumetric shading on the main figures and the distinctive representation of clouds based on Western models.

Hokusai appears not to have welcomed Kuniyoshi’s successful foray into his territory. He expressed his displeasure in a book published in 1829, *Picture Book of the Loyal Heroes of the Tales of the Water Margin* (*Chūgi suikoden ehon*). This book has no text, aside from a short introduction and very brief captions for the illustrations. It was printed in black and white only, and beautifully produced. In it, Hokusai portrays all 108 *Water Margin* heroes, along with two evocative landscapes (fig. 6).

In the short preface Hokusai wrote in Chinese for this book, he explains that he felt obliged to prepare this volume in order to transmit the proper portrayal of heroes. He observes that many years’ study has made him



FIG. 7. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *Guo Ju*, from the series *Mirror of Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety for Children* (*Nijūshi-kō dōji kagami*). c. 1843. Color woodcut. 25 x 38 cm. American Friends of the British Museum (The Arthur R. Miller Collection) 16909

Guo Ju was struggling to support his mother, along with the rest of his family. He suggested to his wife that they “bury their infant” in order better to provide for his mother. He began to dig the child’s grave, and his devotion to his mother was rewarded when his spade hit a pot of gold. In this case, Kuniyoshi based his design on a copperplate etching of the Sumida River in Western style by Aōdō Denzen (1747–1822).

aware of the limitations of both Japanese and Chinese illustrations of warriors and heroes. Although Yuan and Ming-dynasty illustrations were minutely drawn, he asserts that the actual forms of the heroes were weakly done and lacking animation; Japanese illustrations of warriors might appear stouthearted, but on closer examination would be found to be lacking in true spirit.

I consider Hokusai’s brusque criticism to be aimed above all at Kuniyoshi, whose *Popular Water Margin* prints were attracting so much attention at that time. Whatever Hokusai’s feelings, Kuniyoshi and his publisher hit upon a successful formula for a new category of warrior print. The subject inspired Kuniyoshi and opened out his career.

#### TWENTY-FOUR PARAGONS OF FILIAL PIETY

If we jump ahead some fifteen years, we arrive at Kuniyoshi’s second important group of Chinese-subject prints, those illustrating the popular Yuan-dynasty *Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety*, compiled by Guo Jujing (J. Kaku Kyokei, 1279–1368). I will consider two sets of these canonical paragons: the incomplete horizontal *ōban* set *Mirror of Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety for Children* (*Nijūshi-kō dōji kagami*) of around 1843 (fig. 7); and the smaller, vertical *chūban* set *China’s Twenty-four Paragons of Filial*



唐土并穴孝

一重帝  
國古子画  
印

関子齋  
孔子の事  
孝の事  
...



種貞記  
印

*Piety* (*Tōdo nijūshi-kō*) that was issued around 1848–50 in folding album format (fig. 8).

Who are these twenty-four paragons? They include individuals from all stations of life, from emperors to the poorest peasants, and range over millennia of Chinese history. All are venerated for their profound devotion to their parents. Many editions of the Chinese text, as well as translations and commentaries, were published in the Edo period.

In both of these “filial piety” sets, Kuniyoshi uses Western imagery more extensively and overtly than just about anywhere else in his work. Here, it is not a subsidiary element as it was in the *Popular Water Margin* set begun in 1827. Entire compositions are now derived from Western sources. In recent years, Japanese scholars have tracked down the most important of these sources in illustrated books published in Holland during the last half of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The larger horizontal set (see figure 7) was never completed. Just fourteen of the expected twenty-four prints were published. This is curious, because at the time of their production, the government had ordered the print industry to devote itself solely to the publication of edifying and morally uplifting designs, rather than images of those dregs of society—actors and prostitutes. The *Twenty-four Paragons* provided a perfect “moral” subject fit for the children who, along with women, were identified by officials as the prime consumers of ukiyo-e prints.

The smaller set (see figure 8), which followed some five years later, shows an equal debt to Western sources.<sup>4</sup> Some impressions even have what appears to be surface burnishing to imitate the glazed surface of Dutch oil paintings. This set was first issued in folding-album format with an introductory, two-page opening presenting a Chinese inscription on the right page and a preface, also in Chinese, on the left. Both are printed white-on-black, as though they were rubbings taken from a carved inkstone and an inscribed stele, respectively. Rubbings of inscribed texts were the means by which classical writings were disseminated in China before the invention of printing. The inscription on the right page quotes a line from the *Classic of Filial Piety* by Confucius. It is printed in seal script, the earliest of all Chinese scripts, and reads: “The body, hair and skin, all have been received from the parents, and so one doesn’t dare damage them—that is the beginning of filiality. Establishing oneself, practicing The Way, spreading the fame of one’s name to posterity, so that one’s parents become renowned—that is the end of filiality.” The preface on the facing left page is presented in scribe script, which was also handed down from antiquity. After such an orthodox, erudite, Chinese opening, imagine the reaction when the reader turned the page to confront Kuniyoshi’s so blatantly heterodox illustrations.

If viewers could read the convoluted language of the Chinese preface, they would have had some hint of what was to follow. The unidentified author of the preface judges that the heroes of the *Water Margin* had been guilty of unfilial acts. He then explains that by creating this volume of the *Twenty-four Paragons*, which has such an important lesson to teach all,

< FIG. 8. Utagawa Kuniyoshi. *Min Ziqian* (Bin Shiken), from the series *China’s Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety* (*Tōdo nijūshi-kō*). 1848–50. Color woodcut, *chūban*, originally issued as part of a folding album. 25 x 19 cm. American Friends of the British Museum (The Arthur R. Miller Collection) 17001–04  
As a child, Min Ziqian, who in later life became a disciple of Confucius, was ill-treated by his stepmother. She dressed him in light, poorly insulated clothing while providing her own two sons with thickly padded garments. When Min’s father realized what was happening, he threatened to divorce her. Min pleaded with him saying, “It is better that one son should suffer from the cold than three children be motherless.” His father relented, and his stepmother came to be filled with affection for him. In Kuniyoshi’s design, Min sweeps the ground while his stepmother reclines on a “European” couch.

and by making use of Dutch coloring and figures, the artist, block cutter and publisher hope, on the one hand, to inspire others, and, on the other, to benefit themselves from the project!

A dizzying array of cultural crosscurrents is at work here. Kuniyoshi illustrates a Japanese translation of a popular Confucian text imported from China. He introduces it in what is superficially the most “authentically” Chinese manner imaginable, but then presents the *Twenty-four Paragons* to his audience in an uncompromisingly Western visual idiom. He lifts the poses and dress of his figures from imported Western books, prints and paintings, and employs shading to give them volume. And he derives the low horizon of his landscape backgrounds and the clouds that fill his skies from Western practice. Is Kuniyoshi seeking to convey the “otherness” of China through the “otherness” of the Western idiom in which he depicts these Chinese scenes? Or is he up to something else here?

He is, I believe, playing games with the authorities in his extravagant use of Western imagery in these sets. In the 1830s and 1840s, there was growing official unease over the probing of Japan’s perimeter by an increasingly belligerent West. There was also intense suspicion among officials of anyone who took an interest in Western matters. *Twenty-four Paragons* was precisely the sort of moralizing text the government condoned. So Kuniyoshi was presenting an entirely legitimate subject. But by unashamedly westernizing his illustrations, Kuniyoshi was deliberately flaunting his familiarity with “heterodox” Western art.

“China” provided a means for commoners and samurai to escape—however briefly—from the rigidities of Tokugawa society, either by adopting a Chinese literati aesthetic in their private lives or by devouring escapist literature and printed images representing the fantastic deeds of Chinese warriors and heroes. Further, “China” as a counter-example utopia also played an important role in the expression of political dissent in the Edo period. Against such a background, images of China could provide fertile ground for political gestures.<sup>5</sup>

Kuniyoshi repeatedly tested the limits that the authorities sought to impose on ukiyo-e artists. For example, while the prohibition of the depiction of actors was still being enforced in the mid-1840s, he defiantly worked actor faces into prints of warrior portraits, anthropomorphized animals and even graffiti on storehouse walls. He also appears to have delighted in producing designs that could be read as critiques of current politics. The authorities questioned him on more than one occasion about the intent behind some of his print designs, and in 1853, they even placed him under police surveillance. Among the designs that prompted official inquiries were the 1843 triptych *The Earth Spider Conjures Up Demons at the Mansion of Minamoto no Raikō* (*Minamoto no Yorimitsu-kō no yakata ni tsuchigumo yōkai o nasu zu*) and the 1853 diptych *Miracle of Masterpieces by Floating-world Matabei* (*Ukiyo Matabei meiga no kidoku*). After close questioning, he and his publisher were released without charge with regard to the former, but they were fined for producing the latter.<sup>6</sup>

Kuniyoshi's willingness to push the limits placed upon him by the authorities suggests to me an explanation for his flaunting of his knowledge of Western art in prints devoted to the most orthodox of subjects. I believe that these prints are best understood if they are regarded as another example of the readiness of this most imaginative and creative of ukiyo-e artists to challenge and to mock authority. ☛

#### NOTES

1. The entire set is reproduced in Inge Klompmakers, *Of Brigands and Bravery: Kuniyoshi's Heroes of the Suikoden* (Leiden: Hotei, 1988).
2. Seven more parts, each also in ten volumes, followed: Parts Three and Four in 1833; Parts Five through Nine in 1838.
3. Timothy Clark, *Kuniyoshi: From the Arthur R. Miller Collection* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2009), 23–24.
4. All twenty-four designs are reproduced in Clark, *Kuniyoshi: From the Arthur R. Miller Collection*, 218.
5. See Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
6. See Clark, *Kuniyoshi: From the Arthur R. Miller Collection*, 29–30.