Tokaido Series:

The Tōkaidō series, especially, became a mere formality, in the treatment of which there is nothing to choose between a whole group of men, mainly pupils of Kuniyoshi. Ichijusai Yoshikazu is one of the best of these. His Tōkaidō, with humorous scenes, would often be excellent but for the figures. He made also two sets of "Views of Yedo". Yoshitora deserves a note for his curious pictures of London and Paris, and the absolute disregard of truth which those inventive compositions display in the grouping of details. He made a large birds-eye view of the Tōkaidō in nine sheets, and another set of the views in the stereotyped lines. p.108

This last stage of decay in landscape saw all the beauty beaten out of them by mere formalism. The conventional signs are inserted by which the landscape is to be identified, and a procession introduced into the picture to keep out the composition; and, as a rule, that is all. Of this nature are the Tōkaidō series by Yoshitsuya, Yoshimune, Yencho, Kunitsuna, Kunitoshi and even Chikamaro, who under his better known name of Kyosai did work so much more able and personal.... the Tokaido by Yoshitoshi may be mentioned as superior to the productions of the artists last referred to. p.109

Strange : Colour Prints.

Toward Dawn:

The Hundred Views of Mount Fuji (Hokusai).

Hokusai painted other views of Mount Fuji, some of which form the subjects of colour prints; but although book illustration in the ordinary sense of the word hardly enters into the scope of this volume, it is impossible to ignore his other great publication on the subject, Fugaku Hiakkei, "The Hundred views of Mount Fuji", a superb set of compositions in tinted line, published in 1834-35 by Nishimura of Yedo (vols. 1 and 2 engraved by Yegawa Tomikichi and his pupils), and Yeirakuya Toshirō of Nagoya (vol. 3 engraved by Yegawa Sentarō). This work has one hundred and fifty cuts; two other editions of it were published at Nagoya, one in blackonly and another tinted. A reproduction with English text by F. Dickins was also printed at London in 1880.

Strange: Colour Prints. p. 65

The Rembrandt Vincent van Gogh (Rosenau).

Kyōsai: cont.

account of the artist as well as an excellent portrait of him (Promenades). And in his own book, Kiosai Gwaden, he has himself left his autobiography, and illustrated it with sketches of amazing humour and force, the most noteworthy of which -- are those showing him at work. This book was published at Tokyo in 1887; it has four volumes, two of which are devoted to a history of Japanese painting, and two to the life of the artist, all illustrated by himself under the name of Kawanabe Toyaku. The text is by Ueda Masakazu. Kyosai has generally been said to have been a pupil of Hokusai, but --- This statement is without foundation. That he is to be classed with Hokusai above all the other artists of the school is undeniable. His artistic qualities closely resemble those of that master, his independence of tradition, his wonderful facility, his realism, his humour, and in no small degree the technique that he adopted in his paintings at times. He came too late to make many good prints ---. Kyosai also supplied a good landscape to a figure by Kunisada II. --- But in this case the student will find more satisfaction in accepting him as a painter, and studying the fine drawings of fairy tales and illustrated proverbs, and studies in ink. Among illustrated books --- Yehon taka-kagami (hawks), 1870; Kyōsai Gwafu, 1880; Kyosai Manga, 1881; and Kyōsai Sui-Gwa, 1882. Strange: Colour Prints. p. 87.

Eugenie Smith.

Kyōsai:

Kawanabe Gōriki Kyōsai (Shōjō or Shōfu) was born in 1831 on the 7th day of the 4th month at Koga, in the province of Shimosa. As a boy he was under for a short time under Kuniyoshi, but received his chief artistic training at the hands of Kano Tōhaku; soon, however, reverting from the traditions of the Kanō School to the wider and less restricted manner of the Ukiyoye. In his early days Kyōsai used the signature Chikamaro; and, as remarked above, his productions of this period are formal and with little suggestion of the style he afterwards used with so great effect. Kyōsai attained celebrity at an early age; and during the period of ferment which culminated in the revolution of 1867-68, he was three times imprisoned by the authorities of the Shogunate for the political offence of caricaturing them. After the assumption of power by the present emperor, a great congress of painters and men of letters was held at which Kyōsai was present. He, however, found enough to laugh at in the new state of things, and his caricature, inspired by this event, brought him again into the hands of the police. He died in 1889, at the end of a wild life of turmoil and dissipation — always in trouble but always happy. M. Guimet and M. Regamey visited Kyōsai in 1877, and have given us a pleasant

Eugene:

Landscape: Hokkei.

Hokkei, among Hokusai's pupils, made some very interesting essays in landscape. His treatment of it in Surimono is always good, and in Shokoku Meisho — a series of famous views in different provinces — he shows a considerable share of his master's influence, especially in colour and the drawing of the figures. His composition is weak. This set is of unusual dimensions, 6 3/4 inches high only, by 14 3/4 inches wide. One of the subjects represented is an European ship of old and curious rig, saluting as she passes the hill Inasa, at the entrance to Nagasaki Harbour. Strange: Colour Prints. p. 106.

Landscape: Horses.

Horses, among Romania's people, made some very inter-
esting essays in landscape. His treatment of it in
Swimming is always good, as in Afghan Mosaic —
a scene of horses visiting in different provinces — below
a remarkable frieze of fine mustangs in Afghanistan.
cially in colors and the drawing of the figures. His
composition is weak. This set of unusual drawn-
nings, Splendor Gulf only, by 1948 riches riches.
One of the subjects represented is one European
ship of old and unusual rig, believing on the
poorer the Gulf Stream, or the surrender to Negroes
Horsemen. Drawings: Show Bird. p. 109.

Landscape: Shunsen.

Shunsen is responsible for a series of landscapes, slight, but quite distinctive in colour, green and rose pink being the characteristics of the scheme used. In these, figures play a prominent part, although not so much as to dominate a clever suggestion of outdoor effect, got with the simplest of elements. An almost invariable convention used by Shunsen is the delimiting of his sky a little below the top of the print, with a bar, closed or broken bar of red; in this case a mere trick, though a pretty one, to help the distance. The composition is always very simple, and generally follows parallel lines.

Shaw: Colour Prints. p.105

For understanding Hiroshige's landscape
Cf. Torajhiro.
Shunsen.

Handscape: Blumen.

Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Hokusai)

were published during the years 1823 to 1829. They are about ten by fifteen inches in dimensions, and almost all executed in a characteristic colouring of light blues, greens and yellows, with here and there of note of rich red or brown to give strength and contrast. The signature is generally "Hokusai Tamekazu", with additions; and the series, in spite of its title, consists, when complete of forty-six plates. It is difficult to speak in measured language of this set of prints. As compositions they are unsurpassed, and should for this reason alone, form part of the course of study of every landscape painter. The boldness and vigour of the drawing, the amazing dexterity of the arrangement, and their intense concentration, put them on the very highest level as works of fine art. Above all, the sheer humanity of them — for not one is without its suggestion of pathos or humour — makes an appeal of the strongest. One feels how perfectly the artist takes his audience into his confidence. It is not only a piece of fine landscape that he offers us, but this is presented in such a way that we share with him the intimate pleasure of looking at it.

Strange: Colour Prints. p. 64

Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Hokusai)

Hokusai: Oshiwa Fuji - Ryō

Ukioye artists.

* Buncho
* Choki
** Harunobu
** Hiroshige i
~~Hiroshige ii~~
** Hokusai
* Kiyomasu
* Kiyomitsu i
** Kiyonaga
* Kiyonobu i
* Kiyonobu ii
** Koriusai
* Kwaigetsudo
~~**~~ Masanobu (Kitao
** Masanobu (Okumura
** Moronobu
** Sharaku
* Shigemasa
* Shigenaga
* Shuncho
Shunko (Katsukawa
Shunman
** Shunsho
Shunyei
Sukenobu
Toshinobu
Toyoharu
Toyohiro
* Toyokuni i
* Toyonobu (Ishikawa
** Utamaro i
* Yeishi
Yeisho

Fricke: Chats. p. 408.

Terminology

otsu-e. A rough broadside painting of small size on paper, precursor of the print.

uchiwa-e. A print in the shape of a fan.

hashira-e (pillar-print). A very tall, narrow print, size about 28×5, used to hang on the wooden pillar.

surimono. A print, generally of small size and on thick soft paper, intended as a festival greeting or memento of some social occasion.

koban. A vertical print slightly smaller than

chuban. A vertical print, about 11×8 inches, the "medium size" sheet.

hosoye. A small vertical print, about 12×6.

yokoye. A large horizontal print, about 18×8.

oban. " " vertical " , " 15×10.

Kakemono-e. Very tall, wide print, about 28×10.

sumi-e. A print in black and white only.

beni-e. A print in which beni (a pink dye) is the chief color used; applied to all early two-color prints.

tan-e. A print in which tan (brick-red or orange) the chief or only color; applied by hand.

urushi-e. Lacquer used to heighten color.

diptych
triptych
pentaptych.

Fricke: Chats. pp. 19–21.

Surimono.

The surimono was a type of print not sold in the market; it was made upon special order of private individuals for use as a festival-greeting, an invitation, a congratulatory memorial, or an announcement. Its size was generally small, about five or six inches square; printed on very soft paper, it displays the utmost complexity of the technique of color-printing. The number of blocks was lavishly multiplied; the most subtle gradations of color were contrived; and the effect was heightened by every variety of gauffrage, gold, silver, and bronze powders, and mother-of-pearl dust. Yet in spite of all this effort, the surimono is, in the opinion of many collectors, not as a rule very important as a work of art. In the ordinary surimono the medium employed has outstripped the motive expressed, and what should have been the means has become the sole end. Nevertheless they are unrivalled as specimens of workmanship and printing, and the best of them are highly treasured. Some of Hokusai's pupils excelled their master in this form.

Fricke: Chats. p. 373.

Moronobu.

Hishikawa Moronobu, born probably in 1625, was the son of a famous embroiderer and textile designer who lived in the province of Awa. Moronobu worked at the trade of his father during his youth, obtaining thus a training in decorative invention that is traceable in all his later work. Upon the death of his father, he came to Yedo and took up the study of painting under the masters of the Tosa and Kano Schools. Gradually, however, the Ukioye style, introduced by Matabei some years before, became his chosen province; and from painting he turned to the designing of woodcuts for book illustrations and broadsheets. Later in life he became a monk; and died probably in 1695, though some authorities say 1714. Moronobu's importance in the history of Japanese prints is twofold. He inspirited the Ukioye School with a new vitality; and he turned wood engraving into an art. — Moronobu seized this medium and transformed it. Into his woodcuts he poured that wonderful sense of design which he so notably possessed, creating real pictures of striking decorative beauty. These books and prints, widely circulated, carried to the eyes of the masses a new and delightful diversion, spreading far and near the contagious fascination of the lively Ukioye manner of drawing and awakening in the populace a thirst for more of these productions. — — Moronobu's first books ap-

Moronobu: cont.

peared about 1660, and from that date to the time of his retirement he brought out more than a hundred books and albums, and an unknown number of broad sheets. In all of these his vigorous, genial, personality and his strong sense of decoration made themselves felt. — — his characteristic simplicity of sweeping line, the masterly use he makes of black and white contrasts, and the vivid force of his rendering of movement. The firm lines live; the composition is grouped to form a harmonious ~~figure~~ picture; a dominating sense of form has entered here to transform the chaotic haggardness of his predecessor's attempts. — — All of Moronobu's work was printed in black and white only, but occasionally the sheets were roughly colored by hand after they had been printed. His designs have little detail; as a rule the scene surrounding his main figures is barely suggested by a few lines; and the figures themselves are hardly more than intense shorthand notations of a theme. But how much life he gives them! Certain of Moronobu's large single-sheet compositions display so fine a power of composition and so unsurpassable a mastery of rhythmic line that there can be no hesitancy in judging him, quite apart from his historical significance, to be an artist of the first order. Nothing that he ever did was undistinguished.

Fiske: Chats — p. 74

Masanobu.

Okumura Masanobu may be termed the central figure of this period: not only does he tower among the great men of his time, but around him revolve the changes in technique, full of far-reaching consequences, which came into being with his invention of Two-color printing. Furthermore, he takes on an additional historical importance as the founder of the Okumura School, which continued parallel to the Torii School, and whose productions are characterized by a finer development of grace and elegance than is to be found in the output of the rival line. Masanobu was born about 1685, and lived until about 1764 — a life of very nearly eighty years, full of varied achievement. During the course of his career he used many names, among which Genpachi, Hōgetsudō, Tanchōsai, Bunkaku, and Kanmyō are the most frequent. Little is known of his life except that he began as a bookseller at Yedo. — It is said that soon after 1707 Masanobu founded a publishing establishment in connection with his bookshop, issuing prints as well as books. — Masanobu's earliest works were book-illustrations and albums, which closely followed the manner of Moronobu. Parallel with them he produced a number of tan-ye, the large single-sheets printed in black and white, which, after printing, were colored by hand with orange pigment. These probably date from about 1720 —. About 1720 he began to do work in a medium which he is said to have invented — the urushi-ye, or lacquer prints, in

which the lacquer gives a new richness and lumin-
-osity to the colors. — The device of heightening
the effect by applying gold powder to certain parts
of the design was also employed by him. A play of
light that is extraordinarily fascinating often
marks his combinations of color. By about 1742
a new technical advance, the most vital in the whole
history of the art, came into existence; and Masa-
-nobu is generally credited with its invention.
This was the employment of two blocks beside the
black key-block to print two other colors upon the
paper. The importance of this step was immeasura-
-ble: when it was taken the doom of the hand-colored
print was sealed, and the way to still further de-
-velopment lay open. At first the colors used
by Masanobu in his two-color works were a
delicate apple-green and the equally delicate
rose called beni, from which the name beni-e
came to be applied to all the two-color prints of
this period. — The combination of these two colors
is singularly lovely, and the fresh charm of
these sheets has led some collectors to prize them
as the most beautiful products of the art. —
Masanobu lived long enough to produce some
three-color prints, when these were devised
about 1755, but the effects he obtained in them
were possibly less fascinating than those of
his earlier process. — — — To the list of Ma-
-sanobu's probable inventions must be added
the pillar-print, that remarkable type, about
4 to 6 inches wide and 25 to 40 inches high,
which was to be an important form of de-

Masanobu: cont.

-sign from that time on. It is possible that we must also attribute to him the invention of the mica background — that silver surface of pow-
-dered mica which gives a curious and beautiful tone to the figures outlined against it. — — Through his work runs that sweeping power of line which he derived from his study of Moro-
-nobu, and, in addition, an elegance and suave grace that is the expression of his in-
-nate grace and spirit. — Masanobu is always mellow and harmonious. His figures, more fully proportioned than most of the figures of the peri-
-od, sway in easy motion — a mixture of sweet-
-ness and distinction characterizes the poised heads, supple bodies, and ample draperies of his women, while every resource of compact and dignified design is expended upon the impressive figures of his men. A certain large geniality, a wide, sunlighted warmth of con-
-ception runs through his work. — Women, out-of-door scenes, and a few actors, constitute the main subjects of Masanobu's work. As a portraitist his few productions — give him rank as the greatest of his time — The landscape backgrounds in some of his smaller prints are a delightful innovation — —. A full and brilliant life stirs in all of Masanobu's work. At no other period in the history of ukiyoye was such an effective use made of the patterns of draperies.

Fickè: Chats —— p. 104.

Harunobu.

For coloring see note - Colors in Ukiyoye.

Most of Harunobu's prints are of small size, almost square. In this form his refinements of form find its most perfect expression. If we would see an aspect of Harunobu that is of more impressive proportions, and realize that scope as well as daintiness was in him, we must turn to certain rare pillar-prints which were done chiefly in the years immediately preceding his untimely death. Here dignity combined with grace, and an exalted sweep of composition adds nobility to that exquisite color which here no less than in his small prints finds place.

Fenollosa: Chats. p. 151

Koriusai.

Koriusai's life is shrouded in those mists prevalent in the case of most Ukioye artists. It is known that he was a Samurai, or feudal retainer of knightly rank; upon the death of his master, Touchiya, he became, as was the custom, a ronin and established himself near the picturesque Ryogoku Bridge in Yedo as a painter. He originally used the name Haruhiro. Shigenaga was his first teacher, Harunobu his second; his work can safely be dated between 1770 and 1781. By the end of this period Kiyonaga was beginning to advance achievements that eclipsed Koriusai's. As Fenollosa points out, it was Koriusai's misfortune to collide with Harunobu at the beginning and with Kiyonaga at the end of his career; could we obliterate these two we might think of Koriusai as "the most beautiful Ukioye designer!" — His characteristic device in color is the predominance of a shining orange pigment based on lead, which when originally applied had the utmost brilliancy. — Combining this orange with a blue of his own design he obtained novel and striking results. Koriusai's small prints have often a beauty almost equal to Harunobu's, but they lack individuality of invention. — But in his larger sheets he produced a few compositions whose elaborate magnificence is a new and individual achievement. — "Designs of Spring Greenery." — But Koriusai's distinctive glory lies in the sphere of pillar-prints. — He is the supreme master — no one else has produced so many fine ones and practically all of his finest work is in this form. Fenollosa: Chats. — p. 168

Shiba Kokan

has already been mentioned as the forger of Harunobu's work. His ability needs no further recommendation when we admit that we cannot with certainty tell his prints from Harunobus. This is his chief title to fame. He was born in 1747 and died in 1818. During his life he signed many names to his work and attempted many manners. From the Dutch at Nagasaki he learned something of the rules of European perspective, and tried, in the eighties, with success but without much beauty, to carry them over into Japanese art. In addition, he introduced shadows into some of his compositions — a device alien to the whole spirit of Chinese and Japanese painting. He was the first Japanese artist to attempt copper-plate engraving. Queer renderings of European scenes by him remain to us. In a hundred different spheres of art, invention and speculation he tried his hand. His intellectual curiosity in every field reminds one of Leonardo da Vinchi. He remains one of the most interesting and puzzling figures of his time — an adventurer, a restless experimenter, a forger, and a man of extraordinary though chaotic genius. A poem written when he was dying has a curious vibrancy: "Kokan now dies, for he is very old; to the passing world he leaves a picture of the world that passes."

Fricke: Chats. p. 172.

Shiba Kokan: foreign influence

Dans leur recherche de réalisme et de nouveauté, les Japonais en vinrent à étudier les sciences et les arts européens chez les Hollandais de l'île de Déci-ma, près de Nagasaki, et cela malgré l'expresse dé-fense éditée par le gouvernement shogunal. C'est ainsi que Shiba Kokan (1747–1818) apprit les lois de la perspective. Il fut aussi le premier Japonais à employer la peinture à l'huile et la gravure sur cuivre au burin et à l'eau forte. La collection Hayashi renfermait de lui une vue prise à Ueno dans Yoshiwara gravée sur pierre et imprimée au trait noir coloré à la main. Admirateur des œuvres européennes il composa l'Oranda Kiko, "Merveilles hollan-daises." Deux de ses Kakemonos qui appartin-rent à la collection Barboutau donnent une bonne impression de ses tentatives d'assimi-lation. — Shiba Kokan fut un initiateur. Hokusai lui doit la connaissance des lois de la perspective qui lui furent enseignées vers 1796.

Tei. Jan: Notes — p. 200.

Shunsho.

Shunso's sense of dramatic composition was keen; and his ferocious actor-faces peer out with a vivid menace, his tense actor-limbs shake with a concentrated and imprisoned fury not the less impressive because of its intentional exaggeration. They have not Harunobu's unreality of perfect grace, but the utterly different super-reality of magnified passion. In repose they are like statues; in action they have the vigor of those natural forces — waves, river currents, storms of thunder — which ~~so often form the~~ background. Shunsho's figures of women, — or rather his figures of men acting the part of women, according to the invariable custom of the Japanese stage at this time — are less violent, but often as tense. — All his figures are dynamic — the stored forces of volcanic force whose existence he suggests by restless line-conflicts. Shunsho's predecessors in actor representation has never equalled the intensity of these figures and faces. Shunsho tears the heart out of a rôle and holds it up for us to see. He gives the passion of the actor such expression as would have been impossible to Kiyonobu, twisting the face into a distorted and grandiose mask beside which the faces of the Primitives seem wooden and meaningless. Ficke: Chats. p. 181.

Shunsho.

Shunsho's work includes a very great number of actor-prints in the narrow upright hosoye form and a few large square prints. He also issued a series of small illustrations for the "Ise Monogatari", an old romantic chronicle which furnished many favorite subjects to the artists. These are quiet in design and soft in color; to them the eye may always turn for rest if wearied by the straining actors. In collaboration with Shigemasa he produced a set of ten small prints representing sericulture, which have considerable charm. In 1776 the same pair of artists brought out a series of book-illustrations called "Mirror of the Beauties of the Green Houses", representing groups of courtesans occupied with the various activities of daily life — in the street, the house, the garden, and the temple. This book has been called the most beautiful ever produced in Japan; when one examines its chief rival, "The Mirror of the beautiful women of the Yoshiwara by Kitao Masanobu, one need have no hesitancy in giving Shunsho's and Shigemasa's the first place. This means, very probably, the first place among the illustrated books of the world. Its pages, printed in rose, purple, brown, yellow and grey, are rich and delicate.

Fricke: Chats. p. 182.

Third Period: Kiyonaga and his Followers

In the period of the Primitives the artistic impulse was almost wholly one of decoration — an attempt to express in line and color the great themes of design that stirred within the brain of the artist. The Primitives were inspired by what Von Seidlitz calls the desire of "presenting single characteristic motives of movement." Their creations had no relation to observed fact or to an exact rendering of Nature; they were the shadows of lofty dreams of form projected by the luminous spirit of the artist against the wall of space. The designs of the Second Period though hardly more realistic than those of the First, were nevertheless nearer life. The delights and passions of real men, even though fancifully regarded, colored the conception of the artist as he approached his work, so that we find in Harunobu the exquisite joys, in Shunsho the terrific revolts, and in Buncho the supersensible longings of the heart. Yet it is all symbolistic, all pictorial, and nothing real is portrayed; the sharply limited world of these prints is a world of imagination from which no paths of communication open to regions of everyday. The perception of these artists did not enter into and interpret the seen earth; absorbed in the creation of a personal dream, it imposed its arbitrary categories upon objects from without, and had little respect for their intrinsic beauty. With magic incantations, the designer shattered the forms of the real world to bits and whimsically remoulded them nearer to the heart's desire.

This attitude — a mixture of adolescence, playfulness, and vision — may be described by the phrase "naively imaginative". The decorative impulse of the Primitives and the naïvely imaginative impulse of the Early Polychrome masters changed in the third Period to a different variety of inspiration — the naturalistic and interpretive. By naturalistic and interpretive, I mean the attempt to seize a number of detached elements of observed life and weave them into a design that reports not only the idiosyncrasies of the artist, but also some sense of the deep nature of the elements themselves. The artists of this period, while mastering the decorative impulse of the Primitives and the imaginative freedom of the Early Polychrome masters, found reality more interesting and more worthy of faithful attention than did their predecessors. Buncho flew off at a tangent to life on the wings of geometrical design, but Shuncho lingers observantly among beautiful women in quiet gardens; Harunobu abandoned the real world for his harmonious dreams of color, but Kiyonaga weaves into harmonies the perfect forms which his creative imagination evokes from the imperfect forms of actual men. The earlier artists has hinted at landscape background; this period was to go farther and relate the landscape pictorially and spatially to the figures. The world of these designs is no longer the world of a lively but private dream; we seem to enter a region as wide and free as life itself, inhabited by groups of superb and gracious figures that are as unforgettable as the Greek gods.

Dike: Chats. p. 209.

Kiyonaga.

No other Ukiyoye artist ever so dominated his period. All earlier print-designers were gradually driven into retirement by his colossal success, and the majority of his contemporaries adopted his style. In him all previously developed resources met; after him began that long decline which led through intermediate stages of such haunting lovely decadence to the final death of the art. The Torii school now awoke from its quiescence, and for the second and final time assumed the dominance it had in the days of Kiyonobu. Little is known of Kiyonaga's life. Born in 1742, he worked as a young man for a bookseller at Yedo. He studied painting under Kiyomitsu, became the fourth head of the Torii school, produced the most important of his work between 1777 and 1790, and not long after 1790 retired from any large amount of print-designing. His death occurred in 1815. Ficke: Chats. p. 258.

The diptych and triptych in Kiyonaga

For other was the impulse that led Kiyonaga to his diptych and triptych compositions. The great triptych of the "Disembarkation", the diptych of the "Night Expedition", the "Serenade" triptych and the whole series of diptychs called "Twelve Months of the South", to which belongs the marvellous "Terrace by the Sea", are all dominated by an indigenous rhythm of line and color. These designs have not Shunsho's startling force, nor Harunobu's minutely detailed grace, nor Koryusai's richness; all these elements Kiyonaga sacrifices for a broader sweep and a more unified pictorial quality. His designs coordinate the elements of line, color, figures, and landscape into total impressions of such large harmony as we have not seen before and shall hardly see again. To overestimate the genius that produced the grouping of his best works is impossible; to realize it fully requires careful analysis, so unobtrusive and inevitable are its effects. Kiyonaga's greatest works are these triptychs and diptychs in which he depicts the holiday life of his Olympian figures. Even single sheets from them are treasures; for though they combine into still greater compositions, each one is a perfect unit that can stand alone. His pillar-prints are ranked among the foremost works in this form.

Fiske: Chats. P. 233

Shuncho.

In many respects like Kiyonaga, Shuncho can hardly be regarded as second even to his master, except in originality. He lacked Kiyonaga's great creative imagination — an imagination which brought into being the Olympian style. But his gifts enabled him to assimilate this style perfectly and turn it to his own slightly different uses. His sense of composition is rather indistinguished when compared with Kiyonaga's; but the delicacy of his drawing, the restrained harmonies of his color and the clean vitality of his line have a beauty that we could ill afford to sacrifice even for Kiyonaga's strength. Kiyonaga brings down the gods in all their noble dignity to walk the earth in calm magnificence; but Shuncho leads us into a secret heaven where the loveliest and most flower-like of the gods have remained behind. His is a softer beauty, touched with remote half-lights, vibrant with faint wistfulness; his superb women turn in mid-joy as though far and grave music had suddenly drifted to their hearing; their perfection passes over into the region where beauty becomes sadness. No women in the whole range of Japanese art so haunt one's memory as do his; no beauty seems at the same time so flawless and so charged with the burden of transitoriness. One cannot but feel that where Kiyonaga's heavenly vision saw only the happiness and brilliance and splendor of the forms that swept by him in the mental procession, Shuncho saw also the ghostly fleetness of their passing and the melancholy of their radiance sunset-bound; and around his figures

This design — flowers a quiet tender light, a suggestion of brooding and caressing sweetness.

Fritze: Chats. p. 242.

Shuncho :

In historical importance and in originality Shuncho is secondary to Kiyonaga; in absolute beauty his work deserves a place beside that of the master. As a colorist — his most distinguished rôle — he was perhaps the greater of the two.

Fiche : Chats. p. 245 -

Utamaro.

Utamaro, the central and in some ways the most fascinating figure of this period, has been from the first a great favorite in the esteem of European collectors. His graceful, sinuous women are the images that come most readily to the minds of many people at the mention of Japanese prints. In his own time and land his popularity was equalled by that of no other artist. It was by his portraits of women that Utamaro won his great fame. - - - his characteristic feminine type. Her strange and languid beauty, the drooping lines of her robes, her unnatural slenderness and willowiness, are the emanations of Utamaros feverish mind; as her creator he ranks as the most brilliant, the most sophisticated, and the most poetical designer of his time. - - Utamaro was born in 1753 in the province of Musashi. Early in life he went to Yedo and there studied under the noted Kano painter and book-illustrator Toriyama Sekiyen, whom some authorities say was his father. Almost from the beginning of his career he lived with the famous publisher Tsutaya, who issued his prints; and this relation continued up to the date of Tsutayas death in 1797. In Utamaro's early work, which began with an illustrated book in 1776, the influence of Kiyonaga was strong. Shunsho's and Kitao Masanobu's characteristics are also sometimes

visible -- Some of his early work is signed Toyoaki. In 1780 the first important product of Utamaro's career saw the light — his famous "Gifts of the Ebb-Tide" — a book of exquisitely conceived and delicately printed representations of shells and rocks on the seashore. -- In Tech Book of 1788. -- In the decade between 1780 and 1790 Utamaro produced many additional books. -- The single-sheet prints which he issued during this decade are exceedingly beautiful works of a type that the inexperienced eye would never recognize as Utamaro's. The figures are ~~tine~~ those of Kiyonaga's prime, but drawn with a slenderness of line and restlessness of poise that strikes a different and shriller note. -- With 1790 began the classic period of Utamaro's work. -- During the decade from 1790-1800 Utamaro was, except for the isolated figure of Shunsho, outstandingly the most versatile and brilliant among them. During this last decade of the eighteenth century Utamaro produced the greatest of his works. Among these must be counted the remarkable ~~series~~ figures of half-length ~~portraits~~ on silver background. -- This 1790 decade, when Utamaro was at the zenith of his powers saw many triumphs besides the silver-portraits. He was necessarily busy with experiments of every kind -- he labored incessantly for new effects and

Utamaro: cont.

passed on to new manners. Discarding the type of head that had appeared in the silver-portraits, he devised that more restless, haunting type by which we best know him. The ethereal and supple bodies, the slender necks, the slightly strained poses, all indicate the nervous hyper-aesthetic tension of the hour. Toward the end of the decade his peculiarities grew even more marked. The necks of his figures became incredibly slender; the bodies took on unnatural length; a snaky langor pervaded them. — — — In the year 1806 he died and with him died the great days of the Japanese prints.

Fiske: Chats — p.297

Sharaku.

Few people approach Sharaku's work for the first time without regarding him as a repulsive charlatan, the creator of perversely and senselessly ugly portraits whose cross-eyes, impossible mouths and snaky gestures have not the slightest claim to be called art. At first these strange pictures may even seem mirth-provoking to the spectator - a view of them which he will remember in later years with almost incredulous wonder. To overcome one's original feeling of repulsion may take a long time; but to every serious student of Japanese prints there comes at last a day when he sees these portraits with different eyes; and suddenly the consciousness is born in him that Sharaku stands on the highest level of genius, in a greatness unique, sublime, and appalling. p. 300.

It was therefore with the colossal and tragic gestures of the Nō-dance in his soul, the desolate and monumental intensity of the Nō-masks in his eyes, and the contempt and irony of the Nō-performer for the common actor in his heart, that Sharaku, coming to Yedo, took up his terrible brush to depict the Yedo actors as he saw them. The resulting series of portraits is surely one of the supreme examples of graphic characterization and devastating contempt that the world has ever seen. Fréne: Chats. 307

Renaissance of Landscape.

Like a beautiful island in the midst of a sea of wrecks, the landscape prints of the first half of the nineteenth century stand apart from the general ~~disfigurement~~ debasement of print-designing. The great days of the figure-prints were over; but now, into an art filled with the second-rate followers of Utamaro and Toyokuni, came the fresh and brilliant landscape genius of Hokusai and Hiroshige. Their work did not share in the general decline; it must be regarded as a new shoot sent up by the roots of a tree whose main trunk had already fallen into irreparable decay.

Fricke: Chats. p. 356

Hokusai

Hokusai was born in 1760, the son of a mirror-maker. He lived to the age of eighty-nine years - a long life, crowded with privation that wins our sympathy, and with incessant devotion to his art. When in his seventies, he said: "Ever since the age of six years I have felt the impulse to draw the forms of objects. Up to the age of fifty years I made a great number of drawings; but I am dissatisfied with everything that I created prior to my seventieth year. At the age of seventy three I, for the first time, began to grasp the true forms and nature of birds, fishes and plants. It follows that at the age of eighty I shall have made still greater progress; at ninety I shall be able to create all objects; at a hundred I shall have attained to still higher, unimaginable power; and when I finally reach my one hundred and tenth year, every line, every dot will live with an intense life. I invite those who are going to live as long as I to convince themselves whether I shall keep my word. Written at the age of seventy-five years by me, formerly Hokusai, now called the old man mad with painting". His dying words were: "If the gods had given me only ten years more — only five years more — I could have become a really great painter!"

Fiske: Chats. p. 363

Hokusai.

His figures are drawn with a swift and sure realism that is generally tinged with humour and often with vulgarity. His vigorous power of observing and recording faces and attitudes is almost unparalleled. Fantasy, whimsical conceits, irony, grotesqueness animate them; always they have superabundant life. The play of his brush is miraculous. His landscapes are his greatest works. In the best of these he shakes off his trifling mood, and creates designs whose stark brilliance and originality of composition is unsurpassed. And at least once in the noblest of his prints — the rare and monumental series of "The Imagery of the Poets" — he achieves a high seriousness that will always be impressive

His work may be divided roughly into three periods. In the first he followed the traditions of Shunsho, Shunyei, Utamaro, and others of his contemporaries, with great skill but no special originality. His countless book-illustrations of this time were all conceived with lively fancy and vigour; but perhaps the finest work of this, his conventional period, are the very wide prints and surimono in which, against a delicately suggested landscape, move extraordinarily graceful women's figures not unlike those of Utamaro. Already he was a master of drawing; but he kept incessantly at his studies under many teachers, learning anew

Hokusai: cont.

other things, European perspective from Shiba Kokan. His work was done in this and the following periods under a dozen different names, of which Sori, Koko, Shunro and Taito are the most important.

In 1812 began his second or realistic period, with the publication of the first book of his fifteen-volume series of drawings, the "Mangwa". In this epoch he turned from the styles of his predecessors and launched into a hitherto unknown journalistic realm. With a lively sense of the comic and the burlesque, and an insatiable interest in the homeliest details of life, he threw overboard all formal stylistic quality and set sail on a riotous voyage of naturalistic discovery. — — — Hokusai himself did discover. In his third period, the stylistic one, the greatness that was in him transcended his petty instinct in the trivial idiosyncracies of seen things and he created those visions which constitute his lasting glory. Between 1823 and 1830 he issued those series "The Thirty-six Views of Fuji," "The Bridges," "The Waterfalls", "The Loochoo Islands," and "The Imagery of the Poets" in which we hail him as master. No longer the dupe of realism, he brings us his dream.

Even his latest years were crowded with continued efforts. In 1849 at the age of eighty-nine years, he died.

Fiske: Chats. — p. 370.

Hiroshige.

Hiroshige takes rank by unanimous consent as the foremost landscape artist produced by the Ukiyoye school --- less right in his treatment, seems chiefly intent upon the more delicate and transitory appearances of cloud and mist, rain and snow, sunrise and dusk, that give to a landscape at each moment so much of its specific character. These atmospheric effects of his are justly famous. --- Hiroshige's great strength lay in his genius for strikingly effective composition, and in the skill with which he adapted his designs to the limitations of the color-print technique. He reduced the pictured scene to a few simple elements of a highly decorative character, and managed to make them so symbolic and suggestive that we do not miss the multitude of details which he purposely omits. A strongly dominant impression of unity is the result. One curious characteristic of these prints at once strikes the western eye — the use of a band of dark color along the top of the picture, which is shaded gradually down into the clear white of the lower sky. This convention serves several purposes. It provides a mass to balance the color at the bottom of the design, bringing the whole sheet into the picture and not leaving the upper portion as a mere margin above the landscape proper. It also creates ~~width~~ depth and atmosphere, setting the bright foreground part of the design, the middle, back into the space created by the upper and lower masses. And, finally, it renders with peculiar accuracy the effect of gradual vanishing which we actually experience as we look at a landscape: in our

Hiroshige: cont.

visual field, the sky does not end in a sharp line, but blurs and darkens at the upper edge of the space that our eyes survey.

Hiroshige's bird and flower designs are works of extraordinary freshness and loveliness; a unique and idyllic charm emanates from them, and as compositions they take high rank. — — — —

Hiroshige was born in 1796, just as the great period of figure-designing was drawing to its close. As a youth he attempted to gain entrance to the studio of Toyokuni; but the fortunate fact that there was no room for him forced him to enter the studio of the less popular but more subtly gifted Toyohiro. Here he studied landscape, a branch in which he was destined far to outstrip his master. That delicate genius which was Toyohiro's cannot but have produced its effect upon the pupil; and it pleases one to fancy that it is some echo of Toyohiro's inarticulate refinement of feeling that gains at last full expression in some of Hiroshige's most beautiful landscapes. In 1828, Toyohiro died and Hiroshige became independent. — — Toto Meisho or earliest series of Yedo views, distinguished by curious long red clouds in each plate. — — —

Shortly after 1830 Hiroshige found occasion to travel from Yedo, the northern capital, to Kyoto, the southern capital, along the great post-road which he has immortalized — the Tokaido. There resulted his series of horizontal plates, "The Fifty-three stations of the Tokaido", completed about 1834. This remains his best known and

unsurpassed work. Each picture record with unfailing vividness and originality some famous scene along the crowded national highway. For reasons unknown to us, Hiroshige prepared new designs for some of the plates after the original publication of the series; and these variation plates are of great interest to collectors. --- In this, which we may call the Kisokaido Period of Hiroshige's work, he abandoned to a certain extent the delicate drawing of his great Tokaido and Yedo Pl. and employed larger unbroken color masses, aiming at broader effects. In the fifties, Hiroshige abandoned almost entirely the horizontal or lateral prints of his earlier days and adopted the upright shape. ---

In the year 1858, just after the publication of the "One Hundred Views of Yedo," Hiroshige died. He did not live to see the plates for his "Thirty-six Views of Fuji" completed. One of the collector's treasures is a striking memorial portrait by Kunisada that was issued shortly after Hiroshige's death. The old man is represented with a finely shaped head, powerful, quiet features, and eyes as piercing as an eagle's. The number of Hiroshige's different designs runs into at least three or four thousand, not counting his illustrated books.

Fricke: Class. — p. 394

The Three Religions

"Three saké tasters": picture by Okumura Masanobu (circa 1710) Anderson: Japanese Wood Engraving. p. 18.

Japanese Wood Engraving: Periods.

First: 9th° (?) to 1608.

Chiefly portraitures of divinities, engraved in the Buddhist temples.

Second: 1608–1680.

Early illustrated books, with roughly-cut pictures, sometimes hand-colored, names of artists and engravers unknown.

Third: 1680–1710.

Artistic albums – illustrated books – pictorial broadsides – panoramic views. Rudimentary chromoxylography.

Fourth: 1710–1828.

Artistically illustrated books of all kinds, especially copies of old pictures, and volumes for instruction of artisans. Chromoxylography in books and broadsides. The second half of this term, from 1765 to 1828 is the best period of chromoxylography.

Fifth: 1829–1849.

Signalized by the later works of Hokusai, the topographical handbooks of Hiroshige, and the landscapes of Hiroshige. Decline of chromoxylography.

Sixth: 1849 to Present Day.

Continued decline of single sheet chromoxylography. Decline of original book illustrations. Book illustrations in imitation of "European" manner.

Anderson: Japanese Wood Engraving: pp. 76–78.

Surimono

The surimono or New Year's cards, which came into fashion in Yedo in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, are gems of chromoxylography, and display the technical resources of the engraver at their best. They are usually of quarto or octavo size, printed with great care on thick creamy paper, adorned with designs by well-known artists of the popular school, and bearing some little conceit in the form of a verselet or proverb. The best period is between 1800 and 1840.

Anderson: Jap. Wood Eng. p. 30.

Tani Bunchō

1763 – 1830.

Illustrated works of Fiction.

The early volumes, often works of some pretension, were of octavo size, but they were soon followed by others of a less imposing and more popular type. One set of these, consisting usually of semi-historical stories, were of oblong shape and duodecimo size, embellished by whole page or two-page pictorial woodcuts; the other was a still smaller publication issued on very thin fasciculi, each with an ornamental wrapper and bearing cuts on every page. These novelettes or Kusazoshi as they were called, were essentially popular literature — heroic, tragic or humorous — and they were characterized by the strange admixture of text and illustration upon the same page, the lines of the text occupying the spaces in the picture that would usually be filled with background or accessories. The personages introduced into the scene were moreover distinguished by little character labels, generally placed upon some part of the dress, in order to relieve the reader from any difficulty in interpreting the composition.

Anderson: J. W. E. p. 50.

A very early specimen, dated 1662 is now in the British Museum. - - - list of artists included all the best names in the popular school -- T. Kiyonobu, T. Kiyomitsu, Nishigawa Sukénobu, T. Kiyonaga, T. Kiyotsuné, Tomikawa Ginsetsu, Kitawo Masanobu (Kioden), Rantokusai Shundō, Kitagawa Utamaro, Utagawa Toyohiro, U. Toyokuni, Yeishi, Hokusai.

Color Prints.

There are no colored engravings in the world that may be compared with those of Japan in the long period from the coming of Torii Kiyonaga to the passing of Utagawa Toyokuni; the eye is beguiled by a brushstroke of ineffable calligraphic beauty and by a tender harmony of color that cheers but never wearies the senses. In most of the popular broadsides of this time an almost feminine gentleness pervades the choice of motive and its treatment, and it is but rarely, as in some of the earlier work of Toyokuni and his pupil Kuniyasu, that a stronger chord is struck. As schemes of dramatic decoration they are scarcely to be surpassed and have rarely been equalled; and the time is not far distant when the sheets which brought ~~to the~~ artist and engraver the pittance of a mechanic, and were sold for a vile price in the streets of Yedo, Osaka and Kyoto will rank in the estimation of the collector with the masterpieces of the engraver's art.

Anderson: Jap. Wood-Eng. p. 38.

Shiba Kokan (Shiba Gokan).
1747 — 1818.
Books illustrated with perspective (1780 - 1800).
Gwato Saiyu dan, a book of travels, 1781.
Anderson;

Kokan Koku-ki, book.

An artist who is best known as a clever imi-
-tator of his master, Harunobu, whose signature
he forged upon a number of prints. He also used
the go or studio name of Harushige in signing
prints in the Harunobu manner. In later years he
painted pictures in semi-European style, and made
copper-plate engravings which were colored by hand
F.W.G. p. 39.

Kikuchi Yōsai.

Lastly must be mentioned an entirely independent artist, originally attached to the Naturalistic school of painters, Kikuchi Yōsai, whose drawings of the worthies of ancient Japan in the twenty volumes of the book called the Zenken Ko-jitsu, are superior in refinement and truth to anything of the kind produced by Hokusa, or his school. The portraitures of Yōsai were actually types of the patrician order, while those of the popular artists were either purely imaginary, like the women of Utamaro, or modelled upon stage impersonations, adjusted to the tastes of an audience from which, unfortunately all the representatives of culture and gentle birth were excluded by the social law of the age.

Andersen: Jap. Wood-Eng. p. 38.