

Kabuki Actors in Erotic Books (*Shunpon*)

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This article aims to establish the publishing history of *shunpon* (erotic books) with actors' "true likenesses" (*nigao-e*) that were issued in Edo, and explore the ways in which the development of actor likeness and the production of *shunpon* were interrelated. It was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that the use of actors' "likenesses" became the norm. Originally, artists had represented actors' faces in a stereotyped or generic way. However, from around the 1760s representations became more distinctive and individualized, taking advantage of the actors' "star" quality.

In this essay, I survey, in chronological order, thirty *shunpon* issued between c. 1773 and 1850 that employ actors' *nigao*. The survey will reveal some crucial points in the development of the relationship between actor likenesses and erotic books. For example, Kunisada produced several *shunpon* in 1826–28 that combine accounts of scandals involving Kabuki actors with the plots of current plays. One question is: Why did Kunisada suddenly become so active in this field immediately after the death of Toyokuni I in 1825?

The practice of *nigao* made the depiction of identifiable actors off stage possible. A small number of books, not all of them *shunpon*, published between 1770 and 1804, showed actors in private life. The exploitation of *nigao* led to a significant enrichment of Edo visual culture. The article hopes to reach a better understanding of the public's intense interest in kabuki actors, and the ways in which artists developed and exploited *nigao* to satisfy that demand.

Keywords: kabuki, actors, actor portraits, *nigao-e*, Utagawa Kunisada, *shunga*, erotic, Katsukawa Shunshō, Utagawa Toyokuni I, sexual icons

Introduction

Among surviving ukiyo-e prints, the percentage of kabuki actor prints is much larger than other genres.¹ Within kabuki culture, ukiyo-e served as an additional, indirect means of expression by the actors, beyond the confines of the theatre itself. Particularly following the development of "likenesses" (originally *nizura* 似面, now generally *nigao* 似顔), kabuki

1 Akama 2009, p. 10.

actors became widely recognized as icons in visual media. The actors too were well aware of the advantages of being depicted in this way, and kabuki and the visual media of the day established a close working relationship that was exploited by both sides.

So how does this apply to the publication of erotic *shunga* 春画 prints and books (*shunpon* 春本)? Quite a few artists who designed actor prints also tried their hand at designing *shunga* and *shunpon*. Bearing in mind the high percentage of ukiyo-e that were actor prints, *shunga* and *shunpon* of actors would surely be an attractive subject for the legions of ardent kabuki fans among the common people of Edo. However, as Hayashi Yoshikazu has pointed out, there are few surviving erotic books that have kabuki as their theme.² According to the examples given by Hayashi, when these books feature recognizable likenesses of actors, there are also sometimes later re-cut editions, in which the actor likenesses have been removed and “conventional” faces substituted.³ Since relations between the artists and the theatre world were close, perhaps the artists shied away from drawing the actors in erotic books, or maybe there was some other kind of pressure to discourage them from doing this.

In this essay I aim to elucidate the publishing history of the lineage of erotic books with actor likenesses in Edo, and come to understand the connections between the development of the actor likeness and the production of *shunga* books. Further, even though the number of surviving titles is small, I would like to analyze the characteristics of books of this type published from the An'ei 安永 (1772–1781) through the Kyōwa 享和 (1801–1804) eras. It should be mentioned here that I have chosen throughout this essay to use the term *shunpon* (literally “spring book,” i.e. erotic book). The word used during the Edo period was more correctly *ehon* 艶本 (erotic book); however this can lead to confusion because it sounds the same as *ehon* 絵本 (picture book), so I have preferred to use *shunpon* instead.

1. The Development of Actor Likenesses

I would first like to review the development of the actor likeness (*nigao*). Actor prints were published in the city of Edo for most of the Edo period, successively by ukiyo-e artists of the Torii 鳥居, Katsukawa 勝川 and Utagawa 歌川 schools. The earliest known book of actor portraits is *Fūryū shihō byōbu* 風流四方屏風 of 1700, by Torii Kiyonobu I 初代鳥居清信 (c. 1664–1729). The periods of activity and roles performed by the actors in this book have been studied in detail by Mutō Junko, who has demonstrated that the actors depicted were mainly active in the 1690s.⁴ Mutō has indentified the existence of single sheet prints that have the same compositions as some of the illustrations in this book, and has suggested that there were probably single sheet prints of a similar kind that predated the book. From this point onwards the distinctive style of the Torii school was perpetuated by pupils; however, the manner of depiction was stereotyped and determined largely by the role. There was no sense that the actors were depicted with a recognizable face.

It is only when we reach the period of activity of Torii Kiyoshige 鳥居清重 (active c.

2 Hayashi 1997, p. 10.

3 Hayashi 1991a, p. 262; Hayashi 1997, p. 30; Hayashi 1989, p. 148. Hayashi has recorded the existence of a later printing of *Shina kagami* 妾名鏡 in which all the actors' faces have been replaced. (See Hayashi 1991b.) In addition, there is *Haru no karine* 春のかりね, an anonymous later printing of c. 1848–1850 of various collected erotic books, in which the actors' faces of *Ehon koi no gakuya* 艶本恋の楽や of 1827 by Kunisada have been recarved.

4 Mutō 1994, p. 10.



Figure 1. *Ehon butai ōgi* 繪本舞台扇, 1770, illustrated by Katsukawa Shunshō and Ippitsusai Bunchō. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase—The Gerhard Pulverer Collection, Museum funds, Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries and the Harold P. Stern Memorial fund in appreciation of Jeffrey P. Cunard and his exemplary service to the Galleries as chair of the Board of Trustees (2003–2007), FSC-GR-780.164.

1751–1772) in the mid eighteenth century that actor prints begin to appear in which there is a recognizable likeness (*nigao*) of the individual performer. Mutō Junko has collected together examples of these, to which Otono Yoshiashi has added one more image to make a total of eight.⁵ These are in various vertical formats, such as *hosoban* 細判, large *hosoban* and *habahiro hashira-e* 幅広柱絵 (wide pillar prints) and feature the single standing figure of an actor, often with a printed inscription in the form of a *hokku* 発句 (haiku) poem. These are drawn with the clear intention to capture a likeness of the individual actor, with the facial expressions given individual characteristics such as the particular shape and angle of the eyes, the wrinkles around the eyes and the shape of the nose. In addition, Timothy Clark has pointed out that it is possible to detect elements of likenesses in painted portraits of actors that were made during the Hōreki 宝暦 era (1751–1764), the same period of activity as Kiyoshige.⁶ It is important to note here that almost all accounts concerning the beginnings of actor likenesses, including those contained in the biographical collection *Ukiyo-e ruikō* 浮世絵類考, cite paintings as the earliest examples. This gives added weight to Mutō's suggestion that even before they became common in prints and illustrated books, actor like-

⁵ Mutō 2005, pp. 43–48; Otono 2006, p. 41.

⁶ Clark 2005, pp. 42–43. Clark gives examples of painted hanging scrolls of Ichikawa Ebizō II 二代目市川海老蔵 as Nitta Shitennō 新田四天王 by Yanagi Bunchō 柳文朝 (active c. 1751–1801) and Ichikawa Ebizō II as Shibaraku, attributed to Furuyama Moromasa 古山師政 (active c. 1741–1748).

nesses were produced in the form of paintings, and that Kiyoshige set out to imitate these in sheet prints in special formats, larger than normal.⁷

From the latter half of the eighteenth century, Katsukawa school artists began to introduce likenesses into their actor prints, building on elements of the likenesses seen in Kiyoshige's works. The actor picture book *Ehon butai ōgi* 絵本舞台扇 (1770; Figure 1) by Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章 (1726–1792) and Ippitsusai Bunchō 一筆斎文調 (active c. 1751–1800) served as a major compendium of these. The actors are each portrayed half-length, within a fan-shaped border. Even before *Ehon butai ōgi*, Shunshō had already designed some *hosoban* actor prints around 1768 in which four different actors were shown within fan-shaped borders on each *hosoban* sheet.⁸ In addition, as has been pointed out by Iwata Hideyuki, Timothy Clark and Asano Shūgō, half-length portraits of actors inside fan-shaped borders had already been designed by Torii school artists in the period before Shunshō.⁹ Among these are two half-length portraits of actors with the titles *Tanzen fū* 丹ぜんふう and *Imayō yakusha fū* 今やうやくしゃふう by Torii Kiyomasu II 二代目鳥居清倍 (1706–1763) and a design of the actor Segawa Kikunojō I 初代瀬川菊之丞 (1693–1749) in his signature role of *Umegae* 梅が枝, by Torii Kiyonobu II 二代目鳥居清信 (active c. 1725–1760). However, these are not drawn as likenesses, and it has proven difficult to identify the particular performance shown, on the basis of the actor's crest alone. Nevertheless, the very act of condensing a close-up portrait of the actor within the fan-shaped borders proved to be an effective means to convey a new sense of expressiveness. The novelty and success of *Ehon butai ōgi* lies in the way that it took the special technique of the actor likeness that had been developed by Kiyoshige beyond the existing style of the Torii school, and combined this with the formal device of the fan-shaped border, to make it even more expressive. As Clark has pointed out, it seems logical to suggest that likenesses of actors were painted on fans for particular patrons.¹⁰ It is because there was such a strong link between actor likenesses and fan-shaped formats that it was natural to adapt this for prints and illustrated books.

The literary historian Nakano Mitsutoshi has shown how, following the restructuring of the city as part of the Kyōhō reforms of the 1720s, Edo by the Hōreki era had become increasingly confident of itself as the dominant metropolis of Japan.¹¹ This was symbolized by the coining of the term “*Edo meibutsu*” 江戸名物 and the publication of books that were critiques of different categories of famous products of the city. The year 1777, in particular, saw a rash of competing critiques of famous Edo products, and Nakano identifies this as the high-point of the fashion for the genre.¹² In *Fuki jizai* 富貴地座位, a critique of the famous products of the three cities of Kyoto, Edo and Osaka published in 1777, the most popular product of Edo, given the highest rank of “*kanjiku*” 巻軸, is “*Edo benizuri-e* 江戸紅摺絵” (Edo multi-color prints), that is to say, an ukiyo-e color print. This period from the

7 Different period sources give variously Furuyama Moromasa, Toriyama Sekien 鳥山石燕, Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章, Yanagi Bunchō, and Ōba Hōsui 大場豊水 as the originator of actor likenesses. See *Ukiyo-e ruikō* 浮世絵類考 (c. 1800); *Chirizuka monogatari* 塵塚談 (1814); *Kanten kenmonki* 寛天見聞記 (date unknown); Saitō Gesshin 齊藤月岑, *Zōho ukiyo-e ruikō* 増補浮世絵類考 (1844); and Shimada 1986, pp. 387–91.

8 Narasaki 1988, no. 68.

9 See Iwata 1998, pp. 152–55; Clark 2001, p. 238; Kokusai Ukiyo-e Gakkai 2008, pp. 95–96.

10 Clark 2005, pp. 42–43.

11 Nakano 1987, p. 415.

12 Three critiques of famous Edo products were published in 1777: *Hyōban Edo jiman* 評判江戸自慢, *Tochi manryō* 土地万両, *Edo han'eimon* 江戸繁栄門.

mid to late eighteenth century, when ukiyo-e became celebrated as the most famous product of Edo, was precisely the same period when Kiyoshige began to experiment with actor likenesses, until the genre was perfected with the publication of *Ehon butai ôgi* by Shunshô and Bunchô. Kiyoshige developed the genre of likeness portraits using larger formats such as large *hosoban* and pillar prints and, as Mutô has pointed out, these must have been more expensive than the more modest *hosoban* format in which actor prints were normally sold. In place of the expected role name and the actor name, many of Kiyoshige's prints have just printed inscriptions, so we can surmise that rather than immediately recording a particular performance, these were produced with the intention that they would have a longer period of sale. Similarly, the half-length actor portraits in fan-shaped borders by the Torii school do not have role names or actor names. Given also that the actors are shown in close-up, it is hard to link them to a specific performance. Rather, they tend to feature the actor's favorite role that he would have repeated many times, and so these designs too could have been sold over a relatively long period. Printed materials, like these two types, which were not limited to recording information about a particular performance surely made ideal gifts not only for the people of Edo, but also—in the context of kabuki and ukiyo-e becoming famous products of Edo—for people who visited Edo from other regions. *Ehon butai ôgi* includes a postscript by one Kangikudô 観菊堂 which states that Tökaku 東鶴 of Osaka, grandson of the famous author Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693), was so impressed by the color prints of Edo that when he returned to Osaka he composed his own celebratory preface to the work. Building on the success of *Ehon butai ôgi*, the Kyoto publisher Kikuya Yasubei 菊屋安兵衛 acquired the printing blocks, converted some of the names and acting crests into those of actors who performed in Kamigata (Kyoto and Osaka), changing some of the faces, and reissued it with the new title *Ehon zoku butai ôgi* 絵本続舞台扇. So we can see that *Ehon butai ôgi* was also read and enjoyed in Kamigata and served to introduce Edo actors there too. Ukiyo-e prints with likenesses of actors, which showed the Edo kabuki stars, were highly prized as “Edo-e” 江戸絵 (Edo pictures) or “*Azuma nishiki-e*” 東錦絵 (Eastern brocade prints). Edo actor prints came to be national icons.

When it came to the finely detailed expressive potential of the actor likeness, this was largely down to the skill of the artist. *San shibai yakusha ehon* 三芝居役者絵本 (Figure 2)



Figure 2. *Sanshibai yakusha ehon* 三芝居役者絵本, 1772, illustrated by Katsukawa Shunkô. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase—The Gerhard Pulverer Collection, Museum funds, Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries and the Harold P. Stern Memorial fund in appreciation of Jeffrey P. Cunard and his exemplary service to the Galleries as chair of the Board of Trustees (2003–2007), FSC-GR-780.158.

No.	Year	Title	Artist	Other actor picture books and Historical incidents
				1770 <i>Ehon butai ōgi</i> by Shunshō
1	ca. 1773	<i>Shina kagami</i>	Shigemasa & Shunshō	
				1780 <i>Yakusha natsu no Fuji</i> by Shunshō
2	1781	Untitled illustrated shunpon	Unknown	
3	1783	<i>Kyoku banzuke</i>	att. Masanobu	
4	1787	<i>Edo miyage</i> , vol. 1	Shunchō	
				1799 <i>Yakusha gakuya tsū</i> by Toyokuni I
				1800 <i>Yakusha meissho zue</i> by Toyokuni I
				1801 <i>Yakusha sangai kyō</i> by Toyokuni I
				1802 <i>Yakusha sanjūni sō</i> by Toyokuni I
5	ca. 1803	<i>Koi no gakuya</i>	Toyokuni I	1803 <i>Shibai kinmō zui</i> by Toyokuni I
				1803 <i>Yakusha konote gashiwa</i> by Toyokuni I
				1804 <i>Yakusha awase kagami</i> by Toyokuni I
				1804 Toyokuni I is punished for designing compromising prints of the famous military ruler Hideyoshi.
				1804 ban on books printed in multi-colors
6	ca. 1810s	<i>Edo murasaki</i> , vol. 2	Unknown	
				1817 <i>Yakusha hayageiko</i> by Toyokuni I
7	ca. 1825	<i>Tama no ase</i>	Sadashige	1825 Toyokuni I dies.
8	1826	<i>Takara awase</i>	Kunisada	
9	1826	<i>Gotairiki koi no shigarami</i>	Kunisada	
10	1826	<i>Fūzoku suikoden</i>	Kunisada	
11	1826	<i>Yamato yōko den</i>	Kuniyasu	
12	1827	<i>Shita sadame</i>	Unknown	
13	1827	<i>Ehon koi no gakuya</i>	Kunisada	
14	1827	<i>Kamigata koi shugyō</i>	Kunisada	
15	1827–28	<i>Tama no sakazuki</i>	att. Toyoharu II	
16	1828	<i>Suichō ki</i>	Utagawa	1828 <i>Yakusha natsu no Fuji</i> by Kunisada
17	1829	<i>Setsugekka ehon</i>	Sadashige	1829 <i>Santo yakusha suikoden</i> by Kunisada
18	1829	<i>Umegonomi hana no utsuriga</i>	Kunitora	
19	1830, 32	<i>Fūzoku sangokushi</i>	Kunisada	
				1831 Bandō Mitsugorō III dies.
20	1832	<i>Mitsusegawa gokuraku asobi</i>	Kuniyoshi	1832 Segawa Kikunojō V dies.
21	1832	<i>Hanakatsumi iro to yuiwata</i>	Kuniyasu	
22	1832	<i>Ehon jūichidan gaeshi</i>	Kuniyoshi	
23	ca. 1832	<i>Yanagi no arashi</i>	Shigenobu	
24	1834	<i>Ekiro no suzu</i>	Kuniyoshi & att. Yoshinobu	
25	1834	<i>Chinsetsu iro no masago</i>	att. Yoshinobu	
26	1834	<i>Chinsetsu iro no hakidame</i>	att. Yoshinobu	
27	1835	<i>Tōkaidō yotsuya kaidan</i>	Kuniyoshi	1835 <i>Yakusha sanjūrokkasen</i> by Kunisada
28	1835	<i>Sueshiraga myōto gusa</i>	Kunisada	
29	1837–38	<i>Chōchidori</i>	Kunisada	
				1842 Banning of publication of actor prints
				1844 Utagawa Kunisada takes the name Utagawa Toyokuni (III).
30	ca. 1850	<i>Shiki no en</i>	Utagawa	

is a manuscript book, dated 1772, which bears the signature of Shunshō's pupil Katsukawa Shunkō 勝川春好 (1743–1812). It is not known if the book was ever published. It depicts many different likenesses of actors in similar costumes and it is possible to identify which actor is portrayed simply based on the special characteristics of each face. Actor prints were a type of realistic published material that served a purpose similar to theatrical photographs today. Even though it might have been best subtly to alter the actors' facial expression to take account of aging, once the artist had captured the particular features of an actor in a set way—the shape of his eyebrows, the wrinkles around his eyes, the shape of his nose and mouth—then it subsequently became customary to depict the same actor at the same period in the same conventionalized way. Of course, spectators today can never see the actors of the Edo period, but thanks to the likenesses it is possible for us to get an idea of the characteristics of their faces and for us to distinguish one actor from another. In the case of erotic books, the name of the actor is almost never recorded. It is the use of the likeness that so eloquently and efficiently informs us which actor is portrayed. In the next section I will consider the relationship between actor likenesses and erotic books.

2. Erotic Books with Actor Likenesses

Information on erotic books with actor likenesses has been collated in Table 1. This is a work in progress, and the table has been prepared so as to give an overview of the subject. The original works surveyed include those in the collections of Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan 日本浮世絵博物館 (Matsumoto), Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto), International Research Centre for Japanese Studies (Kyoto), British Museum (London), the Freer-Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.) and a private collection in Europe, supplemented by information derived from secondary sources, also from databases.¹³ These surveys are certainly not complete, and it is likely that other titles remain to be discovered. The author will be pleased to hear from any readers who can supply further information. From left to right the columns in the table give year of publication, title, artist—sometimes given as “unknown,” or attributed to a particular school, such as “Utagawa.” The column on the right gives the year of publication and title of other (non-erotic) actor picture books by the same artist, also related historical events such as publishing regulations issued by the authorities.

Based on their content, the erotic books with actor likenesses in the table can be divided into the following five types (A to E).

A. Nos. 1, 3, 5: Contains a double page illustration imagining an erotic encounter among a number of popular actors of the day. None of these illustrations have any connection with the main story of the erotic book.

13 Hayashi 1968, pp. 160–210; Hayashi 1970, pp. 178–238; Hayashi 1991c; Hayashi 1997; Shirakura 2007; and Shagan 2011. (i) International Research Institute for Japanese Studies 国際日本文化研究センター, “Enpon shiryō dētabēsu” 艶本資料データベース, <http://db.nichibun.ac.jp/en/category/enbon.html>; (ii) Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University 立命館大学アート・リサーチセンター, Tokubetsu tosho kensaku etsuran shisutemu 特別図書検索閲覧システム, <http://www.dh-jac.net/db1/books/search.html>; (iii) Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University 立命館大学アート・リサーチセンター, “Kinsei ehon sōgō dētabēsu” 近世艶本総合データベース, <http://www.dh-jac.net/db13/ehoncatalogue/FMPro?-db=ehoncatalogue.fp5&-lay=layout2&-format=index.html&-view>.

- B. Nos. 2, 9, 27: Based on a hit play of the day, using actor likenesses in the illustrations.
 C. Nos. 4, 6–7, 15, 18–19, 23, 28: Actor likenesses only used in some of the illustrations. The illustrations in no. 28 are not *shunga*, but borrow compositions from ordinary actor prints.
 D. Nos. 10–14, 16, 20–21, 24–26, 30: Works based on contemporary gossip about actors such as their scandalous love affairs and their deaths.
 E. Other nos.: Erotic versions of books about the theatre; or an erotic parody book (no. 8) in which close-ups of the (supposed) male and female sex organs of actors are paired with likeness portraits of their faces.

When we examine these by period, Type-A erotic books are confined to the period around 1772–1803 and at present no later examples are known. The artists begin with Katsukawa Shunshō, who first standardized the actor likeness, and continue with his pupils in the Katsukawa school, leading finally to Utagawa Toyokuni I 初代歌川豊国 (1769–1825) at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The period of publication of Type-A erotic books coincides with the ongoing publication of a series of actor picture books such as a Shunshō's *Ehon butai ōgi* and *Yakusha natsu no Fuji* 役者夏の富士 and continuing with a succession of titles by Toyokuni I issued between 1799 and 1804. Details of these are given in the right column. It appears that following on from the success of picture books featuring actor likenesses, this same device was then further developed in the genre of erotic books.

After the publication around 1803 of *Koi no gakuya* 恋の楽室 (no. 5), there are no other examples currently known of erotic books of any kind by Toyokuni I until *Ōyogari no koe* 逢夜雁之声 of 1822. This might be related to the *Ehon Taikōki* 絵本太閤記 incident, in which Toyokuni I was punished by the government. After that Toyokuni I and his pupils did not want to take any chances with the authorities. In those years Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (active c. 1779–1849), Kikukawa Eizan 菊川英山 (1787–1867) and other artists produced *shunpon*, but it is not possible to find any actors' faces in their *shunpon*. During this period in the publishing world multi-volume illustrated novels, *gōkan* 合巻, flourished.¹⁴ Satō Satoru has explained the development of the *gōkan* format in the context of the 1804 ban on books printed in multi-colours (*saishokuzuri kinrei* 彩色摺禁令).¹⁵ Thereafter, it became impossible to issue illustrated books that had color printing on every page. As the table above shows, in the period until 1804 Toyokuni I was highly active in producing actor picture books; however, the ban made impossible the publication of any further books of this kind. It is at this point, according to Satō, that *gōkan* took over the role and began to incorporate actor likenesses, leading to a closer relationship between the theatre and popular illustrated fiction.¹⁶ According to *Kumo no itomaki* 蜘蛛の糸巻 of 1846 by Santō Kyōzan 山東京山, the first example of actor likenesses being used in *gōkan* was *Oroku-gushi Kiso no adauchi* 於六櫛木曾仇討 of 1807, with text by Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761–1816) and illustrations by Toyokuni I.¹⁷ And yet it is not possible to identify any true actor likenesses in this work. In *Onna-date mikazuki Osen* 女侠三日月於仙 of the same year, by Toyokuni I, however, there are clearly

14 *Gōkan* were a type of illustrated popular fiction, issued in a small, multi-volume format from the late Edo period into the Meiji era in which text and images were closely intertwined on each page. The opening illustrations were not in color but printed with one or two extra blocks giving shades grey or pale blue. Color covers became a special characteristic of *gōkan* in the 1820s.

15 Satō 2007, pp. 184–85; Satō 2010, pp. 9–14.

16 Satō 2011, p. 7.

17 Iwamoto 1979, vol. 2, p. 300.

recognizable likenesses of the kabuki actors Iwai Hanshirō V 五代目岩井半四郎 (1776–1847), Matsumoto Kōshirō V 五代目松本幸四郎 (1764–1838), Onoe Matsusuke I 初代尾上松助 (1744–1815) and Sawamura Gen'nosuke I 初代沢村源之助 (1784–1812). In *Iwai-gushi Kume no adauchi* 岩井櫛条野仇討 of the following year, 1808, the very title includes wordplay on the actor Hanshirō V's former name (Kumesaburō I 初代桑三郎) and the illustrations include likenesses of Hanshirō and Kōshirō V. From this point onwards, it became a common trope of *gōkan* to incorporate actor likenesses. Works of this kind seem to have had an influence on erotic books such as no. 6 on the list, *Edo murasaki* 會度陸裸咲, which includes likenesses of Hanshirō V and Kōshirō V in some of the illustrations (Figure 3). However, the style of this erotic book is not that of the Utagawa school. So it appears that after 1804, when Utagawa artists were no longer designing erotic books, artists of other schools began to produce erotic works which imitated the style of the likenesses perfected by the Utagawa school.



Figure 3. *Edo murasaki* 會度陸裸咲, ca. 1810s, illustrated by unknown artist. Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan.

Even though Toyokuni I was active in producing *gōkan* that incorporated actor likenesses, apart from *Koi no gakuya*, there are no other erotic books presently known in which he used them. Toyokuni I died in the first month of 1825, and it is only after this that erotic books with actor likenesses by his pupils begin to appear.

The erotic book *Tama no ase* 当麻能安世 (no. 7) by Utagawa Sadashige 歌川貞重 (active c. 1818–1860), of about 1825, includes some illustrations with likenesses of Ichikawa Danjūrō VII 七代目市川團十郎. *Gotairiki koi no shigarami* 五大力恋の柵 (no. 9) of 1826 by Utagawa Kunisada 歌川国貞 (1786–1864) was based on the play *Kamikakete sango taisetsu* 盟三五大切 by Tsuruya Nanboku IV 四代目鶴屋南北 (1755–1829), which had been performed the previous year. The book is color printed and all of the illustrations feature likenesses of the actors who performed on that occasion. *Takara awase* 宝合 (no. 8), also of 1826, deliberately sets out to imitate the compositions of bust-portrait color prints of actors in an erotic book. The contents are: Part 1, actors' faces paired with their penises; Part 2, actors in female roles paired with the vulva it is imagined each character would have had. So it really does seem that the introduction of likenesses of actors into erotic books by pupils of Toyokuni I was precipitated by their teacher's death. Kunisada designed several erotic works (nos. 10–11, 13–14) in which

he featured the scandalous love lives of the actors, and this was during the same period that he was also working on *Yakusha natsu no Fuji*, in which he showed the actors offstage without makeup and in surroundings such as their homes and dressing rooms.

The case of Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861), also a pupil of Toyokuni I, is somewhat different. Taking his lead from Kunisada, Kuniyoshi designed a number of erotic books that were based on actual theatrical performances, such as *Futari furisode* 両個振袖 (1829; Figure 4), *Tsukushi matsu fuji no shigarami* 筑紫松藤柵 (1831), and *Ōeyama* 逢悦彌誠 (1831). However, even though these works were based on real performances, none includes likenesses of actors. It is true that one work by Kuniyoshi, *Mitsu Segawa gokuraku asobi* 三津瀬川極楽遊 of 1832, does include actor likenesses. However, this erotic book was prepared as a kind of *tsuizen-bon* 追善本 (memorial volume) to console fans after the successive deaths of the actors Segawa Kikunojō V 五代目瀬川菊之丞 (1802–1832) and Bandō Mitsugorō III 三代目坂東三津五郎 (1775–1831), so the likenesses are not of individuals alive at the time. Needless to say, Kuniyoshi designed many ordinary actor prints, and he was technically quite capable of drawing the actors' likenesses. So there must have been especially strong pressure put upon him as an artist by the theatre world, or by the individual actors themselves, not to design erotic books with likenesses. Conversely, there must have been particular reasons why from 1826–28 Kunisada was active in producing erotic works that treated scandals involving the actors and the content of particular plays. On the one hand, it clearly demonstrated the desire of the fans to see the life of the actors offstage, but it must also partly reflect the powerful position of Kunisada among the Utagawa pupils at the time.

Analyzing the impact of the *Ehon Taikōki* incident and the death of Toyokuni I, the lineage of erotic actor books can thus, broadly speaking, be divided into an earlier period and a later period, with the publication of *Koi no gakuya* by Toyokuni I marking the end of the earlier period. The earlier period is characterized by erotic books that imitated actor picture books, that is, Type-A. The group most characteristic of the later period is Type-D, erotic books that focus on the world backstage, with Kunisada dominating this category. Many works of the later period, which I have listed as Type-D, have been previously introduced in publications by Hayashi Yoshikazu. With the exception of *Shina kagami* 姿名鏡 (no. 1), however, works of the earlier period have only rarely been mentioned, doubtless because the number of surviving copies is so small. In the section that follows I introduce some examples of erotic books with actor likenesses, presented in chronological order from works of the Katsukawa school to those by Toyokuni I, and discuss their characteristics.



Figure 4. *Futari furisode* 両個振袖, 1829, illustrated by Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Private collection.



Figure 5. *Shina kagami* 姿名鏡, ca. 1773, illustrated by Kitao Shigemasa and Katsukawa Shunshō. International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

3. The Period of Faces without Makeup: Principal Works from the Period from Shunshō to Toyokuni I

1) Katsukawa Shunshō and Kitao Shigemasa 北尾重政 (1739–1820), *Shina kagami* 姿名鏡, c. 1773

I have identified the actor likenesses in the main body of the book, and discussed the background to its production in detail in a previous essay.¹⁸ Here I would just like to revisit some of the most salient points. The entire text of this work has been published, with commentary, by Hayashi Yoshikazu.¹⁹ According to Hayashi, the edition with color-printed opening illustrations is the earliest printing, and these were changed to black and white in later printings. In addition, there is an even later printing in which the actors' faces have been altered. The whereabouts of both of these later printings is presently unknown, and we can only rely on the illustrations reproduced in Hayashi's book. I have examined three copies of the earliest printing, those in the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University, and Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan. In all these copies only the opening illustrations are color printed and the other double page illustrations are black and white, featuring scenes of lovemaking between actors and women, twenty scenes in total (Figure 5). In my earlier essay I discussed the likely date of publication: a general comparison of the style of drawing the actor likenesses suggests the early An'ei era. Of particular significance is the inclusion of the actor Tomisawa Tatsujūrō 富沢辰十郎 (active 1741–1772), since this actor gave his final performance before retiring at the opening of the

¹⁸ Matsuba 2012, pp. 65–80.

¹⁹ Hayashi 1991a, pp. 253–82.

season in the eleventh month of 1772, so I have concluded that the date of publication was probably the New Year of 1773.

The artist of the actor likenesses included in the illustrations is, without doubt, Katsukawa Shunshō since his name is mentioned in the text. However, the style of the female figures and the background settings are similar to works by Shigemasa; also, the inclusion in the images of printed waka poems on set themes was a technique already used by Shigemasa in previous erotic books. In fact, it is recorded in *Koga bikō* 古画備考, a collection of biographical notes on artists completed in 1850, that Shunshō received instruction from Shigemasa.²⁰ It was in 1770 just before the publication of the present work that Shunshō produced *Ehon butai ōgi* and gained a high reputation for the skill of his actor likenesses, as discussed in the previous section. We can surmise that this success led Shigemasa to suggest the novel idea for an erotic book in which actor likenesses would be included, and that he encouraged Shunshō, whom he was mentoring at the time, to take this on. It should be pointed out that, until this point, all of Shunshō's likeness portraits had shown actors onstage, wearing costumes and makeup. For an erotic book, however, they had to be shown offstage, without makeup. Later, in 1780, Shunshō would go on to produce the picture book *Yakusha natsu no Fuji*. This later work demonstrates Shunshō's true confidence in his skill as an artist of actor likenesses. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that already in this earlier erotic book *Shina kagami*, he had begun to experiment with portraying likenesses of actors without makeup. There was a general trend in ordinary ukiyo-e prints and illustrated books from the late An'ei era onwards to create more works that featured actors offstage, without makeup. *Shina kagami* demonstrates that this new trend was first initiated in an erotic book, before the production of more publicly sanctioned works.

2) Artist unknown, *Untitled erotic book*, 1782, collection of Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan. A medium-sized book (*chūbon* 中本) with a black cover and printed title slip. The title is not fully legible as some of the characters have been rubbed away: the first two characters can be read as *Tamakatsura*... (玉葛...). This is a previously unrecorded erotic book with actor likenesses. In the first month of 1781, at the Ichimura theatre in Edo, the second part of the program consisted of three different kabuki dances that were repeated successively every three days. The pieces were three love-suicides set, variously, in the cities of Edo, Osaka and Kyoto and all starring the actor Segawa Kikunojō III 三代目瀬川菊之丞 (1751–1810) in the lead female role. Kikunojō performed opposite male leads played, successively, by the actors Matsumoto Kōshirō IV 四代目松本幸四郎 (1737–1802), Bandō Mitsugorō I 初代坂東三津五郎 (1766–1782) and Ichikawa Mon'nosuke II 二代目市川門之助 (1743–1794). It is recorded that the performance was extremely successful, combining as it did the acting talents of the most popular female role specialist, Kikunojō, with the bewitching voice of the chanter Tomimoto Buzendayū II 二代目富本豊前太夫 (1754–1822), who arranged the musical accompaniment. The present work is an erotic book that takes as its theme the performance of these three kabuki dances. It surely responded to the strong desire of the fans to see a performance so celebrated for the seductive dancing of Kikunojō represented in the form of an erotic book. The text includes the phrase “for the first laugh of the new spring...” so the book must have been published at the New Year following the performance, that is, in the first month of 1782.

20 Haga 1999, vol. 63, p. 393.



Figure 6. *Untitled erotic book*, 1782, illustrated by unknown artist. Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan.

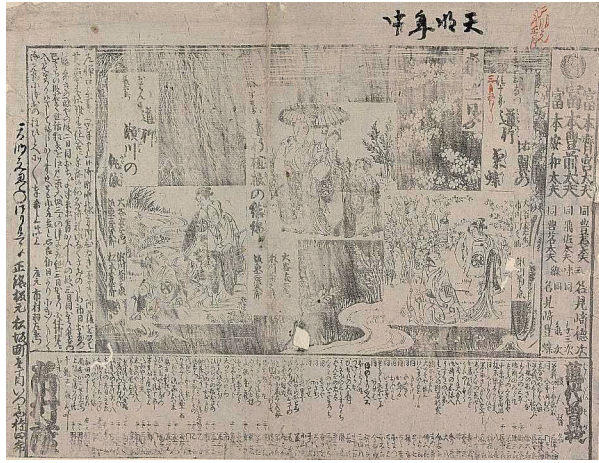


Figure 7. Kabuki playbill 歌舞伎仕番付, 1781, issued by Ichimura theatre. William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.27347. Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved.

Following the success of *Ehon butai ōgi*, there was a general vogue for printed materials incorporating actor likenesses. In the same period, artists of the Kitao and Katsukawa schools were increasingly active in designing *ehon banzuke* 絵本番付 (illustrated kabuki programs) and *shōhon* 正本 (illustrations for the libretti of kabuki dances). These same artists also accepted commissions to design illustrations for popular fiction, and thus the worlds of theatre-related printed materials and popular fiction grew ever closer together.

From the mid-1770s actor likenesses began to be included in the genre of popular fiction known as *kibyōshi* 黄表紙 (yellow covers) and erotic versions were even produced of some of the theatre-related *kibyōshi*. In the example shown in Figure 6, from the collection of Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan, the opening illustration of the book exactly imitates the actual playbill issued for the performance by the Ichimura theatre (Figure 7). The main body of the book is cast in the *kibyōshi* format, mixing the image and the dialogue text on the same page (Figure 8). The content of the three different parts of the original theatrical performance is then given an erotic twist. The illustration reproduced in Figure 8 consciously includes an actor likeness, in this case the double line of the jaw that is characteristic of the likeness of Matsumoto Kōshirō IV. The same actor's likeness is given even more prominence

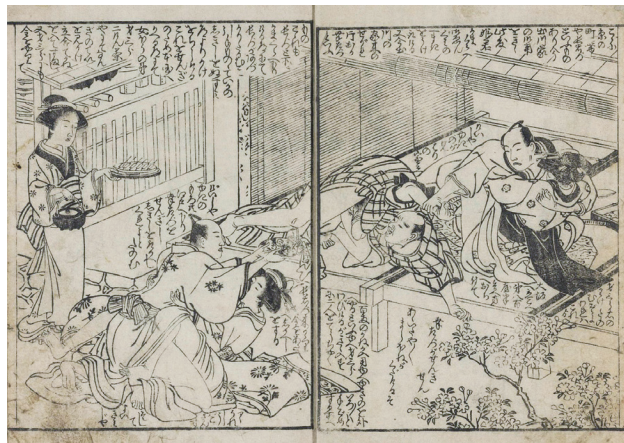


Figure 8. *Untitled erotic book*, 1782, illustrated by unknown artist. Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan.

in the love suicide scene of the same book (Figure 9). This section of the performance was a *michiyuki* 道行 (dance scene) and so little survives of any original stage text (*kabuki daichō* 歌舞伎台帳), which means that the erotic parody has considerable documentary value in indicating the plot either side of the dance and explaining the relationships between the characters portrayed. This erotic parody of an actor *kibyōshi* in Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan seems to be the only surviving example of the genre which incorporates such clear facial likenesses. For example, among a group of erotic parody *kibyōshi* formerly in the Shibui Kiyoshi collection, now in the collection of the Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University, there are several that relate to the *jōruri* 浄瑠璃 (puppet theatre) and other forms of theatre; none of these, however, has such clearly recognizable likenesses.



Figure 9. *Untitled erotic book*, 1782, illustrated by unknown artist. Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan.

3) Att. Kitao Masanobu (1761–1816), *Kyoku banzuke* 曲番附, 1783

Ishigami Aki has advised that no copies of this title can currently be located. However, the contents can be ascertained from censored photographs of the entire book published in the journal *Kikan ukiyo-e* 季刊浮世絵,²¹ no. 69 (1977). The illustrations show scenes of lovemaking between actors and women (Figure 10), and in that respect the book is like *Shina kagami*. In all, actors are featured in thirteen of the illustrations and these have been identified by Ujiie Fuyumi. However, I would like to make the following corrections: Illustration no. 10 in the book features Ichikawa Danzō IV 四代目市川団蔵 (1745–1808) and not Ichikawa Danjūrō V 五代目市川団十郎 (1741–1806). Conversely, Illustration no. 13, which Ujiie identifies as Danzō IV, is in fact Danjūrō V.



Figure 10. *Kyoku banzuke* 曲番附, 1783, illustrated by att. Kitao Masanobu. Courtesy of Gabundō.

21 Ujiie 1977, p. 52.

The preface is signed “Deibetsushi” 泥鼈子, and Ujiie has suggested that this is a literary name used by Kitao Masanobu 北尾政演 (also Santō Kyōden). Ujiie also attributes the illustrations to Masanobu. Hayashi Yoshikazu comments on the stylistic mannerism of Masanobu when drawing the erect penis to add a vertical line of dots on the underside of the organ, and he identifies this mannerism in the opening illustration in which a male sex organ is made to look like the seating area for the audience in a kabuki theatre.²² Shirakura Yoshihiko has subsequently attributed the work to the author of popular fiction Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春町 (1744–1789).²³ Against this is the fact that additional stylistic similarities can be observed with other erotic books by Masanobu, such as *Takarabune* 泰佳郎婦寐 (c. early 1780s) and *Ehon makura kotoba* 艶本枕言葉 (1785). In particular, in *Ehon makura kotoba* several leading poets, writers, and artists of the day such as Tōrai Sanna 唐来参和 (1744–1810), Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749–1823) and Katsukawa Shunshō make an appearance under their real names, as do actors as well. This is something we might expect from an artist such as Masanobu, who was uniquely well connected in these various cultural circles of Edo. Furthermore, Masanobu was well known as an illustrator of *kibyōshi*. As an example, Iwata Hideyuki has introduced and analyzed Masanobu’s *Akushichihenme Kagekiyo* 明矣七変眼景清 of 1786, in which he wove into the plot elements of the bad feeling between the rival actors Ichikawa Danjūrō VII 七代目市川團十郎 and Matsumoto Kōshirō IV 四代目松本幸四郎, and also included likeness portraits of the two actors in his illustrations.²⁴ *Akushichihenme Kagekiyo* is noteworthy, therefore, for the manner in which it combines an interest in theatre world scandals of the day with the use of actor likenesses in the illustrations. This demonstrates just how strong was the interest of Masanobu, his publisher, and their cultural circle in the world of the theatre, and it should come as no surprise that Masanobu would also have been involved in the production of an actors’ erotic book such as *Kyoku banzuke* as well.

Nevertheless, lingering doubts remain concerning the artist of the actors in *Kyoku banzuke*. As previously mentioned, it is certainly true that Masanobu produced illustrations for kabuki dance libretti and for illustrated theatre playbills and programs. However, he is only known to have done a very small number of actor prints, and the likeness portraits in these have none of the power of those by artists of the dominant Katsukawa school. In addition, in *Ehon makura kotoba*, as mentioned above, several men of letters appear as characters and so do kabuki actors; yet, not a single illustration includes an actor likeness. This can be contrasted with the case of Katsukawa Shunshō, the most active artist of actor likenesses of the period, who in the later 1770s designed a series of prints showing actors in their dressing rooms, culminating in the illustrated book *Yakusha natsu no Fuji*. Following this lead, Torii Kiyonaga 鳥居清長 (1752–1815), too, did a series of prints featuring actors without makeup. There was clearly a vogue at this time, led by Shunshō, for showing the private lives of the actors. We have seen how Masanobu’s teacher Kitao Shigemasa, inspired by the success of Shunshō’s *Ehon butai ōgi*, joined forces with Shunshō to produce the erotic book with actor likenesses, *Shina kagami*. We should keep in mind the possibility that *Kyoku banzuke* too may have been a collaboration planned, and put together by Masanobu, with the likeness portraits supplied by Shunshō or another Katsukawa school artist.

²² Hayashi 1975b, p. 41.

²³ Shirakura 2007, p. 130.

²⁴ Iwata 1990, pp. 84–85; Iwata 1993, pp. 5–7.

4) Katsukawa Shunchō 勝川春潮 (active c. 1781–1801), *Edo miyage* 艶図美哉花, 1787
This book is Type-C (an actor likeness mixed with generic faces). It is interesting that we sometimes find an actor's face in just one illustration in some of these Type-C *shunpon*.

Complete censored photographs of *Edo miyage* were published in *Kikan ukiyo-e* 4 (April 1964). At the time Yoshida Teruji attributed the illustrations to Katsukawa Shunkō.²⁵ Later Hayashi Yoshikazu corrected the attribution to Katsukawa Shunchō.²⁶ The book is in three volumes, and an actor likeness appears in just one illustration in the first volume (Figure 11). The purple kerchief worn on the forehead makes it clear that this is a kabuki actor and the likeness, with the half-open mouth and long narrowed eyes, is consistent with that drawn by Katsukawa school artists for Segawa Kikunojō III (compare Figure 12). This identification is further confirmed by the pattern of chrysanthemums on the robe, alluding to Kikunojō's acting crest. Hayashi recorded that he had only seen the originals of volumes two and three, and surviving copies of volume one are extremely rare. The only complete sets of all three volumes currently known to me are in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan, and a private collection in Japan. Of the remaining surviving copies, most seem to consist of just volumes one and two, or the contents of volumes one and two combined



Figure 11. *Edo miyage* 艶図美哉花, 1787, illustrated by Katsukawa Shunchō. Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan.



Figure 12. Actors Matsumoto Kōshirō IV and Segawa Kikunojō III 四代目松本幸四郎と三代目瀬川菊之丞, 1781, illustrated by Katsukawa Shunshō. The British Museum. © Trustees of the British Museum.

²⁵ Yoshida 1964, p. 55.

²⁶ Hayashi 1976, pp. 132–34.

into a single volume. In addition, volume one also contains another recognizable face, that of Tanikaze 谷風 (1750–1795), who was a famous sumō wrestler of the period. If the inclusion of these two likenesses of particular persons led to the book quickly being banned, then it would make sense that volume one, containing the likenesses, would be particularly rare.

5) Utagawa Toyokuni I, *Koi no gakuya* 恋の楽室, c. 1803

Two images from this book have previously been known, which were introduced by Hayashi Yoshikazu in his *Edo makura-e shi shūsei: Toyokuni* 江戸枕絵師集成: 豊国 (Kawade Shobō, 1994). This is a three volume work in the *kohon* 小本 (small book) size, which imitates the format of the so-called “books for sophisticates” (*sharehon* 洒落本). It follows the same format as the erotic book *Ehon mime katachi* 会本三女歌多智 of 1798 by Kitagawa Utamaro 喜多川歌麿 (d. 1806), and the influence of Utamaro can be detected in some of the illustrations.

The surviving copies known today are: (1) a color-printed copy of volume one only (Ebi Collection); (2) a line-only copy of all three volumes bound in one volume with most of the text pages removed (both of these are in a private collection); and (3) a complete line-only copy in the original format of three volumes (Nihon Ukiyo-e Hakubutsukan). It appears that the copy known to Hayashi was the line-only copy now in a private collection, which is missing the preface. Hayashi thought that the “Sakkyō Sanjin” 作茎山人 of Shiba mentioned in the text was the popular author Sakuragawa Jihinari 桜川慈悲成 (c. 1762–1833), and surmised that he was also the author and artist of the whole work. However, the two complete copies of the first volume have a preface that is signed “Sukitei-shujin” 好亭主人. The name Sukitei is found, in addition, in an erotic book in small, square format by Toyokuni I, thought to date from c. 1794–1795, also introduced by Hayashi.²⁷ Given that the content of this square erotic book imitates that of a work by Kyōden, Hayashi ascribed the name Sukitei to the popular author Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776–1822), who was a disciple of Kyōden. The style of calligraphy of *Koi no gakuya* and the preface of the small, square erotic book are the same, so if Hayashi’s theory that Sukitei = Shikitei Sanba is correct, then Sanba was also the author of the preface to *Koi no gakuya*. Sanba and Toyokuni I were jointly responsible for a succession of actor picture books published during the period 1799–1803: *Yakusha gakuya tsū* 俳優楽室通 (1799), *Yakusha sangai kyō* 俳優三階興 (1801), and *Shibai kinmō zui* 戲場訓蒙図彙 (1803). *Koi no gakuya* can be seen as an erotic book with actor likenesses that built upon the success of these actor picture books. So it seems likely that Sanba, one half of the famous duo that produced actor picture books, was in fact the author of *Koi no gakuya*. Furthermore, the style of calligraphy of the erotic books is similar to that used by Sanba in his actor picture books, so it does indeed seem that Sukitei is the erotic penname used by Sanba.

27 Hayashi 1975b, pp. 27–35.

Moving on to the issue of the date of *Koi no gakuya*, Hayashi suggested that the hairstyles of the women depicted was typical of the late Kansei 寛政 era (1789–1801). The actor depicted in the illustration reproduced here (Figure 13) can be identified as Iwai Kiyotarō II 二代目岩井喜代太郎 (1772–1844). Comparing the likeness with Toyokuni I's portraits of the actor in *Yakusha konote gashiwa* 役者此手嘉志和 of 1803 (Figure 14), we see the same narrow face with long nose and a double line used for the eyelids. It is known that in the eleventh month of 1802, Kiyotarō II switched from performing female to lead-male roles. In *Koi no gakuya* all the female-role players are portrayed with their adolescent forelocks intact, as in Figure 15. The actor depicted in Figure 15 is the female-role player Iwai Kumesaburō I 初代岩井桑三郎 (also known as Iwai Hanshirō V, 1776–1847), and his hair style shows us his youthful features. In *Koi no gakuya* Kiyotarō II is shown after he had switched to lead-male roles. Combining this with the fact that from 1804 onwards, no other erotic works by Toyokuni I and the Utagawa artists are known, then we can conclude that *Koi no gakuya* was published around 1803.

In the preceding survey of erotic books with actor likenesses from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, we have seen that the most distinctive kind were titles such as *Shina kagami*, *Kyoku banzuke* and *Koi no gakuya*, in which the work consisted of a continuous sequence of images of several actors making love. It is clear here that the presentational devices of ordinary actor picture books of the period were being applied to erotic books. The middle of the eighteenth century witnessed the final maturity of Edo as a metropolis, and it was in this context that the “brocade [i.e. color] prints of Edo” developed as a famous



Figure 13. *Koi no gakuya* 恋の楽室, ca. 1803, illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. Private collection.



Figure 14. *Yakusha konote gashiwa* 役者此手嘉志和, 1803, illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase—The Gerhard Pulverer Collection, Museum funds, Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries and the Harold P. Stern Memorial fund in appreciation of Jeffrey P. Cunard and his exemplary service to the Galleries as chair of the Board of Trustees (2003–2007), FSC-GR-780.744.1.



Figure 15. *Koi no gakuya* 恋の楽室, ca. 1803, illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni. Private collection.

product of the city. In the same period, the techniques of drawing actor likenesses were passed on from the Torii school artists to Shunshō, and actor picture books with likenesses and ukiyo-e prints came to serve the role of guide books to the Edo actors. The period of the publication of actor picture books began with *Ehon butai ōgi* of 1770 and continued through the publication of the actor picture books by Toyokuni I, until 1804. Following the ban that year on books with extensive color printing, however, actor likenesses saw new developments in the genres of *gōkan* multi-volume novels and single-sheet head and shoulder actor portraits (*ōkubi-e* 大首絵). Consequently, the publication of actor picture books dwindled. The erotic books listed above may be few in number, but the course of their development mirrors closely the publication of regular actor picture books. As shown in Table 1, in the later period, following the death of Toyokuni I in 1825, Kunisada created many erotic books which included actor likenesses. However, after the publication of *Koi no gakuya* around 1803, no further titles were issued with the earlier kind of structure (that is, a continuous sequence of images of several actors making love).

Since erotic books—unlike publicly issued actor picture books—were specially commissioned to show scenes of actors making love, they can surely be said to have reflected the psychology of theatre fans of the day. The actors, including minor actors, who appear in erotic books are all shown without makeup, as if they have just stepped down from the stage. This was a revolutionary experiment. As previously stated, *Shina kagami* is not just an erotic book with actor likenesses; it is also the earliest known example of a book in which actors are shown without makeup, predating regular actor picture books in this respect. Publication of erotic books with actor likenesses was closely linked to the publication of regular actor picture books. Produced by artists who were active in both genres, and mutually influencing one another, they served to further increase interest in the appearance of actors without their makeup.

Conclusion

Since its earliest beginnings, kabuki was closely linked to the world of sex. The Torii school artists who created early *shunga* images also produced many other theatre-related materials such as kabuki sign boards, playbills, and single sheet prints. At that time, the creation of actor likenesses was not attempted; instead, artists used crests to identify each actor. The representation of an actor in a sexually explicit scene was generally introduced into a series of twelve erotic images. It is very common to find a scene in these early *shunga* in which a kabuki actor is participating in male-male sex.

As time progressed, however, kabuki actors were increasingly transformed into stars, and took on a new role in erotic books. Thus in *Yakusha makura gaeshi* 役者枕がへし, published in 1719, while there are no actor likenesses, and all the male characters of the story resemble the most popular kabuki actors of the period, and these men are coupled with generically beautiful women who are happily having sex with them. Such books demonstrate the public's enthusiasm for kabuki actors most vividly: actors are presented as fantasy lovers for women rather than as sexual commodities.

We can see the same development in *yakusha hyōbanki* 役者評判記 (actor critiques), printed texts which review theatrical performances. There was a steady shift away from comments mainly about the actors' physical appearances to comments increasingly focused on their technical skill as performers. This parallels the shift in erotic books from depicting actors as sexual commodities to presenting them as clearly identifiable fantasy lovers. This change helps us to understand the way in which the interest of the general public in actors evolved.

Theatres normally provided publishers and artists with the information included in actor prints. Actor prints were one means of spreading this vital information widely in the public sphere. Erotic books sometimes incorporated elements of successful performances into their content, but the main impetus for their production came from fans, who were keen to see their favorite actors in all sorts of intriguing contexts. It is possible to read the texts in the erotic books as an indication of how the fans regarded each actor as a person. There is also the possibility that all kinds of real stories were woven into these texts that would have been understood by a close group of friends and associates who were "in the know." We should continue to investigate erotic prints and books, in conjunction with related theatrical materials, in the expectation that evermore real and rounded images of the actors of Edo kabuki will become apparent.

(Translated by Timothy Clark)

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