

THE IMAGINATION AND EXPERIENCE OF THE BODY IN EDO EROTIC PRINTS

ASANO Shūgō

Chiba City Museum of Art

1. Preface

In recent years, restrictions in Japan on the publication of erotic art published during and prior to the Edo period have been significantly relaxed. This has greatly facilitated research on the subject. It is gratifying that studies are now actively being pursued not only in the field of the history of fine arts, but also in such diverse fields as literature, history, and folk manners and customs.

Along with these developments, there has been growing awareness of a crucial and fundamental problem. And that is the problem of whether our perception of the erotic prints (*shunga*) is correct. In other words, whether our comprehension of the intention of the artists, and our understanding of the environment in which the prints were produced, are authentic and appropriate.

Not only the erotic prints, but also all source materials, contain elements of fiction as well as facts (including facts that are inherited from the past). In viewing an erotic print, one might well declare it to be a product of the artist's imagination, a depiction of his dream world, distinct from reality. Nonetheless, it must also be admitted that even the most absurd erotic print will *in part* represent the real world, including the artist's own recollections and aspirations. Consequently, such prints will undoubtedly reflect, in one way or another, the general value system of the society from which the prints were born, and more particularly its views on social behavior and the human body.

This paper examines a number of related themes that I consider germane to the subject. Although my research is yet far from complete, I hope that my remarks will at least serve to identify some of the problem areas that may merit further study in the future.

2. Sex in the Edo Period

Before going into particulars, I first wish to discuss the degree of sexual freedom that prevailed during the Edo period. *Wakashū asobi kyara no makura* (1675), anonymous but attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu, is a "pillow picture" (erotic print) collection depicting the sexual adventures of young homosexuals. Print No.16 of the collection is a picture of several youths engaged in homosexual play. The following annotation appears in the upper part of the print:

Some youths got together and procured some so-called *kagama* (male prostitutes)-a pastime which has recently become popular. Everyone drank sake and was having a good time. Eventually, they all got staggering drunk. One of the *kagama*, however, abstained from drinking to remain sober, and at the appropriate time, offered himself for intercourse to the youths. The youths engaged him in turn at the side of the room.

Thus one of the *kagama* avoided drinks in order to engage in sex with each of the gathered youths in turn. To the right of the print, youths are shown drinking with the other *kagama*, while in the upper left corner one youth is shown engaged in intercourse with a *kagama*, behind a folding screen. In this manner, although admittedly concealed to an extent by a screen, it was not unusual for sexual intercourse to be conducted in semi-public space at that time.

The partitions for rooms consisted of sliding screens or semi-transparent paper screens, and with no locks on them, others could step in without difficulty. In Yoshiwara and various other brothel districts of Edo (present day Tokyo), one customer and one prostitute to one room was usually the rule. However, there were also cases where rooms were shared by multiple couples (referred to as *waridoko*; such rooms were known also as *mawashi-beya* in Yoshiwara). In such cases only folding screens separated the couples, allowing each to view others in action if they wished. There are countless prints where a courier comes to deliver a message to a customer in bed with a prostitute (such as one of the prints in an anonymous pillow picture collection consisting of 12 large-size, colored prints published around 1820 and attributed to Yanagawa Shigenobu). This was almost certainly a frequent daily occurrence at that time.

However, it was commonly accepted that the sex act was a private affair, and not something to be shown to others. The aversion to having sex in front of others was usually stronger among women. Scenes of a man demanding sex of a woman in the corridor or in the garden are common in erotic prints. Normally the woman is resisting by saying, "Let's do it later since people may see us," or asking the man to hurry "and be done with it before people find us." It must be admitted, nevertheless, that this modesty did not reach much beyond the privacy provided by a single folding screen.

The first volume of *Shokumotsu baka honzō* (1778), a five volume, regular size, black and white pillow picture book by Isoda Koryūsai, is an illustrated erotic novel titled *The Innocent and Exquisitely Beautiful Bride Bringing a Dowry of 1,000 Ryō*. In this story, the bride, the well-bred and innocent daughter of a rich merchant, refuses to sleep with the bridegroom on the night of the nuptials. At the suggestion of the bride's nursemaid, the bridegroom engages in sexual intercourse with the nursemaid in front of the bride, with the expectation that this would change the

bride's mind. During the sex act, the nursemaid, reaching climax, starts crying out, "I'm dying! I'm dying!" At this point, the alarmed bride intervenes and begs the bridegroom to pardon the nursemaid from the torment.

This in itself is just a harmless story. However, it does throw light on contemporary sensibilities regarding the privacy of the sex act. As mentioned above, the consensus was that basically sex was an affair to be conducted in private. Nevertheless, depending on the time and circumstances, people tended to be fairly tolerant towards sex in the presence of others. In numerous erotic prints, as in the print just referred to, sex is being performed while bystanders (usually females) are looking on, or people are passing by. Such pictures were particularly numerous during the early part of the Edo period (There have traditionally also been many prints of sex being engaged in by three or more persons, as well as of sex orgies. However, I shall omit discussion of these in this paper).

The following is the annotation provided in the upper part of Print No. 20 of *Wakashū asobi kyara no makura* cited earlier.

This person decided to engage in homosexual play with a male prostitute. Meanwhile, he asked for an errand boy to come and pound his hips to relieve his hip pain. While in this posture, his wife happened to pass by. Blushing at the sight before her eyes, she left in a hurry. She can certainly be said to have a kind heart, allowing her husband thus to satisfy his desire, without showing any sign of jealousy.

The print shows the husband engaged in sex with the male prostitute, while the errand boy is pounding on his hips, and his wife is passing by. This situation certainly cannot have been a normal one, even at that time. However, the absence of any hint of repugnance toward such a situation suggests that a considerable distance separates the accepted view of the body at that time and our own.

At present, there are striptease theaters where what are called "black-and-white shows", or some such name, are performed. These are shows where volunteers from the audience are invited to engage in sex with the performers on the stage. This may possibly be regarded as a vestige of the accepted view of the body in the Edo period.

Enshi gojū yōjō (ca. 1835), a three volume, medium-size, colored pillow picture book by Utagawa Kunisada, has annotations in elegant Japanese prose, offering guidance to bridegrooms on behavior during the wedding night. The following statement appears in the annotations of the first volume of the book. "In ancient times, the situation may have been different. However, in recent years, girls of 15 or 16 who have not had sexual intercourse with a man are rare". We cannot make responsible presumptions on the sexual mores of the times on the basis of this single statement. Still, judging from recent research in social history and other fields, a

critical reassessment of our notions of sexual behavior in the Edo period may be called for. In certain circumstances, there may have been considerably more sexual freedom than commonly believed.

Fūryū enshoku maneemon (ca 1770) is a representative double volume, medium-size, colored pillow picture book by Suzuki Harunobu. In Print No.4 of the first volume, a chaotic brawl is under way: the wife in the last stages of pregnancy has discovered her husband engaged in sex with another woman. Judging from the annotation for the print, it appears that the other woman is the daughter of a relative, whom the expectant mother had asked to come and help in the delivery. Such behavior would clearly be unacceptable today, but the print betrays no sense of a serious breach of morals having been committed.

In the *Shokumotsu baka honzō* referred to earlier, the following statements appear in the annotation provided in the upper part of the print of an expectant mother:

Where there is a pregnant woman, there will invariably be a female around to entertain the husband in bed....

The husband should abstain from engaging indiscriminately in sex with such a female, since that will disturb the peace in the household.

For the husband to have sex with either the elder or younger sister of the expectant mother is a distasteful act.

Judging from the above, it seems that it was not pure imagination for sisters of a pregnant woman to entertain her husband in bed. It is also clear, however, that this was not common practice at that time.

There is a three volume, medium-size, black and white pillow picture book by Kitao Kanamasa titled *Ehon haru no akebono* (ca 1771), a representative work from his earlier period. In Print No. 3 of the first volume of the book, a man is shown pushing down and forcing himself on a virgin girl. A woman (possibly her elder sister) is looking on and mumbling to herself, "I remember when the same thing happened to me, and oh, what a wonderful feeling it was!" Despite the (seemingly weak) resistance shown by the victim, the woman offers no help. Instead she just stands there, watching the proceedings, and reminiscing about the pleasure she herself had enjoyed as a maiden. The print seems to reflect a society with substantially greater tolerance towards sex than what prevails today.

The scene in the last print in the earlier cited *Shokumotsu baka honzō* is the storefront of a thread-and-yarn merchant. The print shows the bridegroom Sashichi embracing Ofusa, the elder daughter of the merchant, while the younger daughter Koito is eyeing them with jealous envy. The scheme for this print is presumed to have been taken from a play titled *Honchō sodachi ukina no hanamuko*, performed at the Nakamura-za theater in Edo in May 1777. The play itself, in turn, was an

adaptation of a Jōruri (puppet) play titled *Itozakura honchō sodachi*. In the final scene of this Jōruri play, Sashichi decides to make Ofusa his formal wife, and Koito his concubine, to the satisfaction of all, and a happy ending for the play.

In the Jōruri play, however, there is a scene in which Sashichi laments his ill fortune at having developed relationships with both Ofusa and Koito, indicating that having relationships with both the elder and the younger sisters concurrently, was not necessarily considered desirable by society. It is interesting to note, however, that the solution that made one of the two sisters Sashichi's wife, and the other his concubine, was accepted by the audience as a happy ending. Even in fiction, such an arrangement is unlikely to be condoned today, except possibly in an X-rated film.

A similar, although somewhat more complex relationship can be found in *Itoyanagi*, a four-section, twelve-volume novel published in 1841 (author, Tamenaga Shunsui; illustrators, Utagawa Kunimichi and Keisai Eisen). In this story, the hero Naokichi ends up keeping two women, Ochiyo and Otane, at his side, who then vow to serve him as sworn sisters. A further twist to the story is that Ochiyo had in the past borne a girl child, named Okane, by Kanaya Sakubei, a one-time benefactor of Naokichi. Naokichi venerates Okane as his mistress, and serves her as her guardian. What we glimpse here is the resourceful versatility of Edo society, and the way in which male-female relationships could flexibly accommodate and harmonize conflicting interests—the need to preserve the family line, to maintain social reputation, and to satisfy the diverse demands and desires of individuals.

At this point, I wish to make a few remarks on the distribution of erotic material. The following is an excerpt from volume forty-four of *Kōshi yawa* by Matsuura Seizan:

Year after year, at their New Year's first visit to the shrines and temples, people are exchanging calendars for the year....

Towards the end of winter and in early spring, regardless of their being inside the castle, high and low alike come with bosoms stocked with calendars for exchange with acquaintances they meet along the way. The most popular calendars are those with erotic illustrations. Presumably we must resign ourselves to this degeneracy as a sign of changing times.

This was written around 1823 or 1824, so it describes social behavior in the early to mid-Bunsei period (1818-30). We can picture in our minds the New Year's scene in the Edo Castle, where people are exchanging calendars, some with erotic prints. The Bunka and Bunsei periods were peak periods for print culture in the Edo era.

An examination of the *Shunga surimono cho gomi chō* (with 86 prints), owned by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, shows that private limit-

ed printings were made also of quite a few erotic prints.

There were many people who found it disgusting that such material was being distributed almost openly. However, there were also many that enjoyed them, and it was demand from such people that supported the publication of erotic art. As a result, the erotic art of the period necessarily reflected contemporary views about the body and society.

Before focusing on some specific issues, let me sum up, at this juncture, my view of erotic art and sexual behavior in Edo times.

- i. I believe that, circumstances permitting, people of the Edo period enjoyed more freedom in sex than we have at present.
- ii. Sexual intercourse was as a rule conducted privately, and not in the sight of others. However, because of the structure of houses and other factors, there were many situations where the sex act had to be conducted in places where others could look on. It seems, on the other hand, that the aversion to having others view the act was not strong. There was also probably not a strong sense of guilt in watching or peeping at the sex acts of others.
- iii. Circumstances permitting, it was probably socially condoned for a male to engage in sex with multiple females, as well as with males and females. Conversely, in certain circumstances, it was also probably socially condoned for a female to engage in sex with multiple males (prostitutes being an obvious case).

Let me now turn to some specific issues.

3. The Child's Eye

So far no exhibition of erotic art has ever been held in Japan. In Europe, however, such exhibits are being held from time to time. In 1995, I was involved in an exhibition of the *ukiyo*e prints of Kitagawa Utamaro. When the exhibition was held at the British Museum, the erotic prints in Utamaro's oeuvre were displayed along with his other works; when the exhibition moved to the Chiba City Museum of Art, however, the erotic prints were omitted.

I have heard, however, that even in Europe, there is a taboo against certain types of erotic art. More specifically, the taboo applies to sexual scenes where children are present. I am told that this is because it is unbearable for Europeans to have children watching, or even to have the possibility of observing, the sex act before their eyes.

What about in Japan? Here, too, the sex act is, in principle, not something usually performed in front of other people, let alone in front of children. However, if one were to ask whether the aversion to such a situation is as strong as in Europe, the answer is probably "No". In Japan, it can be presumed that a considerable part of middle- to old-aged men and women have had, as children, the experience of

watching their parents, or other couples, engaged in the sex act.

What do we find in the erotic prints of the Edo period on this point? It appears that the aversion was probably even weaker than at present. Those that have viewed a number of such prints from the Edo period probably have noticed this fact. Let us review a few samples.

A recently discovered single sheet, black and white, brush-colored erotic print attributed to Sugimura Jihei (ca 1680s) has an annotation in the upper portion—which is unusual for single sheet prints. In the print, the wife is having sex with her husband, while concurrently breast-feeding her child. The annotation reads:

Having wed an attractive wife, the husband spent many intimate days with her, and they soon begot a child. Becoming ever more enamored with his wife, the husband continued to demand sex from her every night. One night, becoming sexually aroused from early in the evening, the husband demanded sex immediately upon getting into bed. The wife admonished him, saying, "the child has awoken, so let me first feed it and put it to sleep. Then we can enjoy each other at leisure." The husband replied that he could not wait that long, and entered her from behind. As a result the wife became wet all over, and her milk came flowing out as if it were body fluid flowing out from below.

A husband who refuses to wait for sex until his wife has put the suckling to sleep, and the wife who grudgingly succumbs to his demand, is a familiar theme in many Edo erotic prints. The following is a list of some such prints:

- * Print titled *Kaka Kemono* in *Shokumotsu baka honzō* cited earlier.
- * Print (ca. 1772) in untitled medium size, colored, twelve picture collection by Isoda Koryūsai.
- * Print in *Iromichi yume hanji* (ca 1781), one volume, black and white picture collection, by Kitao Seien.
- * Two prints in *Hanafubuki* (1802), three volume, medium size, colored picture collection (includes some black and white), by Kitagawa Utamaro.
- * Print in *Kinoe no komatsu* (1814), three volume, medium size, colored picture collection, by Katsushika Hokusai.

The above listed prints were all produced in accordance with traditional themes and taste, with the artists learning from, and reproducing, the prints of their predecessors. Thus, the argument may be advanced that the prints may not necessarily reflect the society and view on the body of the times in which they were produced. Nevertheless, it is also true that prints that offend or disgust readers are unlikely to be reproduced for long. The design and scheme of the prints are based on the assumption that the events depicted (although exaggerated to a degree, being produced as pornography) could actually happen in real life, and if so, be tolerated as

being humorous, rather than condemned as being repugnant.

There is a print in a one-volume, medium size, colored picture collection produced by Kitagawa Utamaro titled *Enpon toko no ume* (1800) in which a woman is suckling her child, while a man is embracing her from the back and fondling her genitals with his fingers. The man is evidently not the child's father. The man is entertaining the child with a toy drum, saying,

cunts and flatfishes taste better when with children. People say they broaden by childbearing, but that's a big lie. Look, this one is real tight and warm, and oh, how delicious. Look, child, I'll show you something very interesting in a moment.

The child does not like the man and is wailing, "Go away, man, go away. I hate you! I hate you!" However the mother wants the man and chides the child, "Shut up and drink your milk, you inconsiderate brat!"

Adults realized that children disliked the act, and that was why they usually engaged in sex after putting the children to sleep. However, in some cases where this proved to be difficult, exceptions were probably condoned.

A child could awaken while its parents were in the midst of sexual intercourse. It could awaken and feign to be asleep, and secretly observe the act in process. Among the poorer families where parents and children were obliged to sleep in the same room, it must have been difficult for parents to restrict intercourse strictly to occasions when there was no possibility of being seen by their children. Accounts of the time suggest that for penniless couples unable to extricate themselves from poverty, sexual intercourse was the sole and most important recreation in their tedious lives.

Fukujusō (ca 1815) is a representative twelve sheet, large size, colored picture collection of erotic prints by Katsushika Hokusai. In Print No. 1 of the collection, a woman is holding a child in her arms, reminiscing about the previous evening when she had enjoyed sex with her husband. An unconventional print, it has the child saying to the mother,

"Mommy, when I'm older, I want to do a lot like you were doing with Daddy last night. Can you show me how?"

The embarrassed mother is laughing heartily and saying,

"Oh my dear little darling! What a thing to say, my, my!"

In this scene, there is no indication that the mother is anxious to hide knowledge of the sex act from her child.

Manpuku wago shin, another famous three volume, medium size, colored pillow picture book by Hokusai (1821) is not about a toddler, but a young girl in her teens, the daughter of a variety store owner. In one scene, when she is thirteen, we learn that "she decided to watch her parents engaged in sex. She pretended to be

asleep, and waited for them to go to bed. As they began their intercourse, she held her breath, and began peeping at them through the sleeve of her nightgown." Aroused by watching her parents, she is shown masturbating in the picture. Perhaps her onanism is a bit far-fetched, but the scene may well reflect a familiar situation at the time.

In the print titled *Arabachi in the Shokumotsu baka honzō* referred to earlier, a man is shown forcibly raping a virgin girl. She is crying out, "Stop it! It hurts! It hurts!" (although her resistance appears to be somewhat halfhearted). The print also shows her younger brother striking the man with a pinwheel, shouting, "You rascal, you're killing my sister!" The setup here is a man who won't pass up the chance to take advantage of a girl, despite of the protesting brother. Naturally, he would prefer not to be seen, but if circumstances do not permit this, the brother's presence is but an insignificant trifle.

An untitled twelve sheet, large size, colored pillow picture collection by Koryūsai (ca 1775) also includes two prints where children are pictured watching ongoing sex. One print is set in May, and shows a small child holding some irises for use in the iris striking game. It watches on from behind a sliding screen as a young couple engage in sex. It seems to be saying to the couple, "I'm going to tell on you to Mommy." The other print is that of the *hakama-gi* ceremony held in November to celebrate the first wearing of a split skirt for males by a small boy. The boy has opened the sliding screen and is looking at his sister having sex with the man living next door. The child is saying to his sister:

"Today is the day for my hakama-gi ceremony. So Mommy should be coming any time now."

The man is mumbling:

"We'll be coming in a moment. Let's hurry!"

The boy is observing openly:

"Well if it isn't our next door neighbor who's lying on top of my sister!"

I was once responsible for writing the explanatory notes to the republication of a twelve sheet, non-titled, large size, black-and-white pillow picture book by Torii Kiyonobu (1721), issued under the provisional title of *Neya byobū*. Most of the pictures in that collection had three or more persons in them. The pattern was quite common in the erotica of the first half of the Edo period. This seems to me to reflect the premise that sex need not necessarily be confined to a private room. I believe that the relatively relaxed attitude toward the child bystander is basically an extension of this tradition.

4. Preference in Foreplay

Sex is a very simple affair. In a word, it is intercourse first and foremost. The

penis penetrates the vagina, the couple attain orgasm, semen is ejaculated by the male. That is the pattern for virtually any sexual encounter. In male homosexual intercourse, one male penetrates the anus of the other. In lesbian play between females, the female playing the male role inserts a dildo into the vagina to help the partner reach orgasm. That is all.

In the case of erotic prints, hardly any were sold as single pictures. Most belonged to a set of twelve pictures and appeared in the form of scrolls, albums, picture sets, and book sets. Consequently, the artist was compelled to introduce variety among the pictures. He contrived to achieve this variety by depicting men and women from different walks of life, by varying the postures of the couples and the setting of their trysts, and by trying out diverse graphic layouts. Being pornography, emphasis was placed on the depiction of the genitals, which were exaggerated, and out of proportion with the remaining parts of the body. Many different kinds of sexual positions, including the so-called "48 postures", were drawn. Whether all of those drawn were actually practiced is questionable. For instance, in Print No. 22 of *Enshoku mane emon* cited earlier, a customer, seeking variety, pretends to be a legendary Chinese emperor, and the prostitute serving him the emperor's legendary wife of great beauty. He then pretends that he and his beautiful wife are playing on flutes to make music. To accompany this music, he starts drumming on a *shamisen* (a sort of Japanese mandolin) using his aroused penis as the drumstick.

The most popular types of foreplay in the erotic prints and writings of the Edo period, are kissing, and the male fondling of the female genitals. We see kissing during, as well as prior to, intercourse, but I have never encountered a depiction of kissing after the climax. Hence I believe kissing was basically thought of as foreplay in the Edo period.

Judging from erotic prints only, the most frequent type of foreplay after kissing and genital fondling was the male sucking of female breasts. One example of this appears in a print from *Shikidō torikumi jūni tsugai*, the twelve sheet, large size, colored, representative pillow picture collection by Isoda Koryusai (1775), where we see a prostitute and her customer. However, the prostitute chides the man, saying:

"Don't do that. I hate it!"

This thus may not have been too popular a type of foreplay.

Another scene of breast sucking appears in *Negai no itoguchi*, a thirteen sheet, large size, colored pillow picture collection by Kitagawa Utamaro (1799), one of his representative works. In this scene, a married woman is secretly meeting with a married man, who is sucking her breasts during coitus. We also find breast sucking in two prints of the *Enmusubi izumono sugi*, a twelve sheet, medium size, colored pillow picture collection by Hokusai (1822). In fact many Hokusai prints

include such scenes. However, the percentage of such prints in the total corpus of Japanese erotic art is very small, and in the pillow pictures of the first half of the Edo period in particular, none can be found. Likewise, no instance of the converse case of a female sucking a male's breasts has so far been found.

Prints where a woman is rubbing a man's penis to erection are rare. Basically, erotic prints in the Edo period portray the male as an animal susceptible to instant arousal and penile engorgement. Males that reacted otherwise were considered to be sexually impotent or at least debilitated. Scenes where the woman is touching the man's genitals are numerous in both erotic prints and literature. However, she does so to satisfy her curiosity, or to allow the male to show off his huge penis, or to guide the penis into her vagina. There are very few examples of a woman rubbing the penis to cause ejaculation.

Some exceptions merit attention. One print in *Imayō makura byōbu*, a two volume, large size, black-and-white, pillow picture book by Hishikawa Moronobu (ca 1682) shows a prostitute is rubbing the penis of her customer. Another print from *Kasen makura*, an earlier one volume, large size, black-and white pillow picture book produced during the Kanbun period (1661-1682) shows a woman rubbing the penis and making it ejaculate. There is also a print from *Ehon mizu no mimaki*, a three volume, medium size, black-and-white pillow picture book attributed to Katsukawa Shunko (1786) in which a *tengu* (long nosed goblin) is licking the genitals of a wife, while she is manipulating the penis of the *tengu* to ejaculation. The reason why the wife refuses to have sex with the *tengu* appears to be to avoid having a child by the *tengu*. A print in *Shunsho hizu emaki*, a colored pillow picture book by Tsukioka Settei, an artist in Osaka in the mid-Edo era, shows a man and a woman each caressing the other's genitals. A print in a large size, colored picture set of the Bunsei period (1818-1830) attributed to Katsushika Hokusai also shows a fisherman and a woman pearl and seaweed diver each fingering the other's genitals. A print in *Shuugen ironakashi*, a three volume, medium size, colored pillow picture book by Utagawa Kunitora (1825) exhibits a retired old man having his concubine use her fingers to enlarge his penis. From this brief survey, we may conclude that to some extent this type of practice was going on in real life.

During her menstrual periods, a woman might have induced male orgasm with her hand or mouth, but this seldom appears in prints. This rarity may be due to the same reason that masturbation by males and of onanism by females were avoided as subjects of erotic art. In this essay I am speculating about mores based on published prints. However, it is quite possible that there were behaviors that were widely practiced in daily life, but which do not show up in publications.

We can cite a number of illustrations of cunnilingus and fellatio. An early example is a picture on a hand-drawn scroll produced in the 17th century. In this

illustration a nobleman wearing a court-ordained hat is licking the genitals of a court lady with long hair. At the same time the nobleman is fingering the genitals of another court lady, who in turn is running her tongue over his penis, which she is holding in her mouth. In other words, a picture of a sexual threesome.

There is also a picture in a hand-drawn scroll of the Tenpo period (1830-44) by Utagawa Kunisada showing a court lady covering her head and standing below a cherry blossom tree, while a handyman is licking her genitals. There is also a print in *Azuma Genji*, a three volume, large size, colored pillow book, also by Kunisada (ca 1837), which shows a Heian period noblewoman with a Buddhist monk licking her genitals. Presumably Kunisada believed-possibly under the influence of the erotic novel called *Koshiba gaki zōshi*-that cunnilingus had been common among the nobility of the Heian period.

The print titled *Kugai* (meaning this world of suffering) from the earlier cited *Shokumotsu baka honzō* shows the customer of a prostitute from Fukagawa, a brothel district of Edo, engaged in cunnilingus with the prostitute. The man is thoroughly enjoying himself, sighing, "Oh, how delicious. Yummy, yummy." But the prostitute is not happy, complaining, "I'm fed up with this guy. He has such a strange habit." Her remark hints that cunnilingus may not have been a widely accepted practice at the time.

A print from the earlier cited *Fukujusō* by Hokusai shows a female, presumably a housewife, with her paramour performing cunnilingus in a posture somewhat approaching the sixty-nine position. She complains, "What a filthy thing to do! Stop it?" But the man retorts "What's filthy about it? It's where we're born from isn't it? But I must admit it tastes a bit salty."

There is another depiction of cunnilingus in the earlier cited *Enmusubi izumo sugi*, also by Hokusai. However, the scheme here differs from the print in *Fukujuso* referred to in the preceding paragraph. In this print, the body fluid flowing out as a result of the cunnilingus is being collected and stored in a jar. The concept of this picture is predicated on a Dutch manual's claim that if the fluid so stored is mixed with sake and drunk, it would serve as an invigorating drug.

In this connection, you may also recall the example which I mentioned earlier of the print from *Ehon mizu no mimaki*, attributed to Katsukawa Shunkō, in which a *tengu* (long nosed goblin) is licking the genitals of a woman, while she is stimulates the penis of the *tengu* to ejaculation.

At this juncture I wish to call to your attention two references to cunnilingus in erotic tales. Both are quotes from an article titled *Enshō kobanashi to rachigai hanashi bon* by Mutō Sadao. The article was published in the summer 1999 issue of *Bungaku* (Maki 10, Dai 3 Go, Iwanami Shoten).

A man demanded sex of a girl. She said she would do it if he would first lick

her parts. Not liking the idea of licking her directly, he cut a piece of *konnyaku* jelly in the shape of a tongue. Holding the jelly in his mouth, the man proceeded to lick her. But the girl complained that his tongue felt cold as if it were a piece of *konnyaku* jelly. The man retorted, "How can it be a piece of *konnyaku* jelly? That's absurd." and licked her directly by his tongue, while swallowing the jelly in a hurry (from *Sashimakura*, one volume, small size pillow picture book, preface by Takotsuboan, illustrated by Katsukawa Shunsho, 1773).

A couple was deeply in love with each other. The husband was aroused and said, "If you really love me, I want you to lick this." The wife obliged willingly and caressed his penis by her tongue while holding it fully in her mouth. And she smiled lovingly at him saying, "Now you know how sincerely I love you." The husband responded by saying, "I want to show how sincerely I love you too", and asking her to raise her skirts, started to lick her in her parts as well. However her hair got into his nostrils and he sneezed. The wife, not wishing to have her pleasure interrupted, cried, "Oh, what a shame! Please don't let that stop you from continuing with the licking!" (taken from print titled *Kusame* from *Mamedarake*, small size, one volume, pillow picture book, published 1770s)

To the extent that it is possible to judge from erotic art and writings in the Edo period (in my view there are virtually no other reliable sources on the subject) cunnilingus and fellatio were not widely popular practices. They were thought odd. However, they were also considered useful as a way for the person doing the licking to express his or her sincere love toward the other.

The reason for this preference is not clear, but I believe that it may have had something to do with concerns about cleanliness. Today people are accustomed to taking a bath or shower before engaging in sex. This was not the case in Edo times. Those who bathed daily were either high-class prostitutes or Edo citizens particularly fond of bathing. It was not customary to take a bath before intercourse. In other words, the genitals were not clean, but dirty and smelly. The case of a man who requests both normal and anal intercourse in succession and is rejected by his partner on the grounds that it would soil her private parts can also be considered a reflection of the sanitary sense prevailing at the time. In addition, the feeling that the genitals of a nonprofessional were smellier than those of a prostitute may also have been involved.

The picture titled Saotome in the earlier cited *Shokumotsu baka honzō* shows a farmer forcing a rice-planting girl down among a growth of rice plants and engag-

ing in sex outdoors. The annotation in the upper part of the print contains the remark that,

The rice-planting-girl fruit (comparing the girl to a kind of fruit) is oily and gives out a slight odor. It is a low-grade fruit. While having sex in daylight, she enjoys sex as intensely as a wild boar rushing across an autumn field....

There was thus a sense of contempt for females engaged in physical labor, and admiration for high society females and quality prostitutes, a common feature in pornography. However, I will not pursue this subject further at this point.

Finally, let me mention a somewhat novel type of foreplay. This appears in the print titled Kirikami (meaning widow) from *Shokumotsu baka honzō*, which I have repeatedly cited in this survey. The widow is mounted on a boy, and with his penis inside her, she licks his ear. It seems that she loves the boy to no end, but the boy seems to find her distasteful.

5. Discrimination of the Underprivileged

Is there any discrimination in the way bodies are drawn in pornography? There are indeed some ugly prints of the bodies of lepers. However, these are very rare.

In the case of females, there are some differences in the way the genitals are drawn for the hairless (without pubic hair), virgins, aged, etc. However, in most cases, we find little evidence of discrimination.

In the case of males, however, there are some cases where discrimination is found in the prints of children, aged, and low class persons. There are cases also of discriminatory prints of socially normal, but sexually unattractive males. The most common expression of discrimination in males is phimosis.

There are two rape scenes in *Kinoe no komatsu* by Hokusai cited earlier. The first of them shows a rice-cleaner forcing a girl down. He is depicted as a man with an ugly face and body, cracks in the soles of his feet, and a somewhat undersized and phimotic penis. The second is that of a handyman attacking a court lady whom he had been ordered to accompany. This handyman is also shown with repulsive features and a small and phimotic penis. However, I have so far not encountered any rape scene involving a phimotic penis in prints produced before Hokusai. Hence it is possible that this was an innovation introduced by Hokusai. It should be noted, however, that phimosis is detected in many other prints of Hokusai, and that this practice steadily spread to prints by other artists in the latter half of the Edo period. These include prints by Yanagawa Shigenobu and artists belonging to the Utagawa school.

In one print from the large size, colored picture set attributed to Yanagawa Shigenobu, a sex act between Koman, a prostitute, and Sasano Sangobei is under

way. The scene is based on a Kabuki play titled *Godai rikimono*. In this picture, Sangobei is clearly shown as an ugly and hairy person with a phimotic penis. The scene is not a rape scene and Sangobei is not a lowly person. The only reason why he is depicted in such an unfavorable manner is probably due to his disgusting character in the Kabuki play.

The ideal hero in a erotic print was a man of high social standing, rich, handsome, and young or middle-aged. He was sexually strong, well versed in sexual techniques, and possessed an above average robust body. Although ordinary males not so well endowed are not likely to have suffered much from that handicap, it is interesting to note the gap that existed between the ordinary man in the street and the hero in erotic prints.

An interesting aspect of rape scenes in erotic prints is that the rapist is invariably set as a male belonging to the lower class. In a erotic setting, when a man in high social standing and power forces himself on a female, the sex act never becomes rape, but consensual sex. This is a tacitly agreed convention in erotic prints. We may wonder, however, to what extent this convention reflects real life situations. Perhaps it could be stated that in case a woman was confronted by a demand for sex by a man of high social standing, very few would or could refuse. Moreover, society may have tolerated such behavior, to an extent, as a fact of life.

In a print titled *Erimoto* from the above-cited *Shokumotsu baka honzō*, the master of a samurai household, just out of bath, has forced down a maidservant and is having sex with her. The maid protests, "What if the madam hears us?" To which the man is responding, "It's no big deal. I'll just make you my concubine." So he is promising to make her his concubine. The title of the print *Erimoto* implies a woman who sticks on to the man's collar, i.e., a female who entices a man to profit from him. In other words, the maid in the print has pasted herself on to the master's collar and is contriving to become his concubine.

It was perhaps the accepted wisdom in society at that time, for a woman forced to have sex with her master, normally to seek to profit from the relationship, rather than to fight it out to the end against him. If so, it would perhaps have non-plussed contemporary readers of Edo prints, if a maid forced to have sex with her master were drawn as desperately resisting his advances by biting and clawing.

6. Concluding Remarks

The task of analyzing erotic prints to gain insight into the Edo imagination and experience of the body, and eventually into Edo society as a whole, has only begun. In today's lecture I have discussed some of the patterns that have caught my attention so far, and outlined to you my present thoughts in connection with them.

Many interesting areas remain to be studied in further depth. Today, I have

mentioned some of these areas only in passing. These include further scrutiny of Edo period erotica with respect to such aspects as the size of genitals, postures in sex, the balance of power between men and women, homosexuality among males as well as females, and the relationship between prostitutes and ordinary women. On a broader front, interdisciplinary analyses combining studies going on in such fields as history, literature, and sociology will be essential. Developments over time, and cross-cultural comparisons will also prove important, as technological advance brings nations closer together year by year. These are all challenging tasks for the future.