

## CHAPTER 3

### *FÛRYÛ ENSHOKU MANEEMON: A TRIP TO STUDY THE WAY OF LOVE-MAKING*

#### Entrance of the “Bean Man”

This illustrated book, which is divided into two parts with twelve prints each, is a work of 1770, the year in which Harunobu suddenly died. Ukiyo-e *shunga* are generally in the form of sets of twelve prints; usually there is no plot, and the scenarios of the characters in the individual prints are separate, without systematic coherence. However, this set of prints is unusual, for it has a continuous story in the style of popular fiction.

The tale is about a man called Maneemon, and it can be summarized very quickly. In Edo there lived a man named Ukiyonosuke, who by nature was amorous. One day he visited a shrine on Mt. Ryûshin that was famous as the shrine of the goddess of love, and he appealed to her for aid in mastering the secrets of the art of love-making. Two goddesses appeared on a cloud and presented him with two magical potions which they claimed would grant his wish: soil dumplings for making the body tiny like a bean and a wonder drug for perennial youth. He ate the soil dumplings at once and his body shrank to the size of a bean. After changing his name to Maneemon, he set off on a journey to various provinces. The plot is a collation of his comments and observations on various scenes of sexual intercourse that he witnesses in the places he visits. The twelve prints in Part One primarily depict the sexual activities of the common people in Edo and its surroundings, and Part Two shifts to show scenes of Yoshiwara. The plots of the two parts are radically

different, but through them, the sexual mentality of a diversity of men and women is vividly captured.

The fantasy of transforming one's body so that one becomes invisible and thereby can observe other people's sexual intercourse is not unusual. There are precedents for this and thus the conception of this work was not Harunobu's invention. The earliest example is Ejima Kiseki's (1666–1735) *Kontan iroasobi futokoro otoko* (The Secret Love Excursions of the "Pocket Man") published by Hachimonjiya in Kyoto around 1712, and its sequel the *Meotoko iroasobi* (The Sexual Pleasures of Women and Men). The illustrations in both of these books were done by Harunobu's teacher, Nishikawa Sukenobu. The scheme of shrinking to a bean-sized body and peeping seems to have enjoyed great popularity at that time, and later erotic novels such as the *Eika asobi nidai otoko* (The Glorious Adventures of Two Generations of Men) and the *Musô zukiin* (The Fantasy Hood) employing the same theme were published. Eventually this vogue spread to Edo from Kyoto, and in the erotic novel *Fûryû sandai makura* (Today's Modish Three Generations of Pillows) of 1765, as well as in the *Tôsei anasagashi* (Shrewd Observations in the Present Age) published in 1769 just prior to Harunobu's work, a bean man goes around Edo satirizing the customs.

Thus the idea of becoming a bean-sized man and spying on other people existed before Harunobu's work. It should also be pointed out that the idea of transforming one's body so that one is invisible to the human eye and going on a journey to study the way of love-making is connected to the *Fûryû Shidôken den* (The Dashing Life of Shidôken, 1763) written by Harunobu's close friend Hiraga Gennai. In Gennai's work, the protagonist Fukai Asanoshin is granted (by an immortal) an implement to make himself invisible, along with a shuttlecock capable of flying in the air and a magical folding fan capable of becoming a boat to cross the sea. The idea of traveling from country to country, which include a land of giants, a land of midgets, a land of long-legged people, and a land of long-armed people, closely resembles *Gulliver's Travels*. Gennai's grand conception of a world tour, starting with Ezo (present-day Hokkaidô) and Ryûkyû (present-day Okinawa) and as a matter of course going to

Chōsen (Korea) and Morokoshi (present-day China), then on to Tenjiku (India) and Oranda (Holland), was undoubtedly a great incentive for Harunobu. Maneemon's journey to various parts of the Kantō district in Part One of Harunobu's work is not as grand in scale as Gennai's conception, but even though Harunobu's space was limited to the three metropolises Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka, the idea of a broad look at sexual customs was certainly influenced by Gennai's work. There is a much wider variety of characters and situations than could be found in the world of sex depicted in *shunga* prior to that time.

As noted above, in the background of the origin of this work can be seen the shadowy figures of Nishikawa Sukenobu and Hiraga Gennai—people who were close to Harunobu. However, there is another person whom we must not forget—Komatsuya Hyakki, who wrote the introduction as well as the text in the upper part of the prints. In addition to composing *haikai* as a hobby, Hyakki, who was the owner of a large pharmacy, was an ardent admirer of Nishikawa Sukenobu and amassed a large collection of his illustrated books and *shunga*, and he, too deserves a share of the credit for introducing the *kamigata* (Kyoto) style and Sukenobu's pictures among cultivated people in Edo. Hyakki's own interest increased and he himself came to write popular fiction. The *Fūryū ensboku Maneemon* is the product of a collaboration; the introduction and the text in the upper part of the illustrations were written by Hyakki, and the illustrations and writing within the pictures are by Harunobu.

## Explanations of the Illustrations in Part One

First I will read the introductory text by Hyakki at the beginning of the *Fūryū ensboku Maneemon*, and then while reading the lines of text incorporated into the pictures, attempt to elucidate the aspects of sexuality in each of the illustrations.

### *Introduction*

There was a man who loved sex. That man yearned for the flowers of the eastern capital Edo, and by virtue of praying to the moon,

he was granted a miraculous gift from the goddess of love enabling him to make his body small, as tiny as a bean. Entrusting himself to his body's newfound freedom, he went to places he had never been to and witnessed uncommon sexual intercourse. With the intention of mastering the secrets of the way of love-making, traveling by palanquin and boat, he went across the sea, first going to the "Island of Virgins" about which he had previously heard. On the island were the famous places "Beach of the Innocent Young Girl," "Rock of the Unmarried Young Woman," "Seashore of First Experience," "Bridge of Pain," "Crag of Eagerness," and "Beach of Satiation." A peculiar custom of this island was a fondness for virgins, and men took pleasure in forcing themselves on them. A man feeling pity for a young woman's anguish upon her first experience—Maneemon realized that this was not the way of love in which men and women were sympathetic to each other's feelings. Next, Maneemon went in search of the "Island of Flirting." There he visited many famous places including the "Village of Vulgarity," "Forest of Grumbling," "Valley of Lechery," "Mountain of Lying Down," "Slope of Women of High Rank," "Pass of Constant Submission," "Rock of Pregnancy," "Bluff of Discomfit," and "Pine of Visiting a Woman under the Cover of Night." The people raised in the countryside were unrefined, but not lacking with regard to sex, and the point of not finding it disagreeable was shared by both men and women in their hearts. However, since country people didn't have the disposition to seek out hitherto unknown secrets of love-making, this amorous man abandoned his pursuit of the inner secrets of the way of love in the countryside. There was nothing that came up to the standard of his own hometown, so he got on a boat and returned to Edo. Upon reaching Edo, he immediately went to the Yoshiwara pleasure district, with which he was intimate; the cherry blossoms were falling and the sound of the *shamisen* could be heard, and a wonderful fragrance was wafting through the vicinity. It was like a dream, as though a heavenly maiden might appear in this world.

Although it is just the frivolous talk of an amorous man, it would be a shame to keep it all stored up only in his breast. The tale that follows is a dream story without a plot, just a spring night's diversion.

The opening lines of the introduction are in the style of the famous Heian period *utamonogatari* (a short story centering around poems) *Tales of Ise*, and the paragraph before the end mimics a passage from the Nô drama *Hagoromo*. The literary style and language as a whole are permeated with the tone of popular literature. But amid that playful tone is the passage innocently expressing the author's view of sexuality, stating that "the custom of the Island of Virgins was a fondness for virgins, and men took pleasure in forcing themselves on them" and that "this was not the way of love in which men and women were sympathetic to each other's feelings." From that we can infer that the ideal of "male-female harmony" had emerged in the discourse about (though it may not have been the prevailing ideal of) sexuality in Edo at that time.

### Plate 1

Two goddesses bearing gifts appear before a man kneeling in front of a vermilion shrine gateway. Since this is the opening print, there is a long textual passage above which introduces the protagonist and relates the beginning of the story:

In the old days, long before the time of your grandfather and grandmother, there was a strange fellow called Ukiyonosuke. By nature this man was amorous. He made up his mind that he would somehow master the secrets of the art of love-making, and like Narihira, the hero of the *Nise monogatari* (Tales of Nise), inform the world of the mysteries of love. With that in mind, he went to a shrine on Mt. Ryûshin in Morokoshi, and when he made a prayer for his resolution to master the art of love-making, a strange thing happened. A bright light glowed in front of the shrine and the goddess of Mt. Ryûshin appeared, accompanied by the Wisteria Flower Maiden (Tôkajo) of Mt. Kinryû, and said: "Since you came



Plate 1

and prayed, wanting to master the inner secrets of the art of love, we will make your wish come true.” They gave him two boxes, informing him that “One of these contains soil dumplings; please open it and eat one now. As for the other, open it and look at it when you meet with great trouble.” In addition, the Wisteria Flower Maiden said, “Even if you succeed in mastering the secrets of the way of love-making, if you don’t maintain your good health, nothing will come of it.” She presented him with some “eternal life powder,” and then the two goddesses disappeared into the sky. Ukiyonosuke regarded this as suspicious and strange, but ate one of the soil dumplings he had been given and his body shrank to the size of a bean. He thereby changed his name to Maneemon. Well, then, is this man’s procurement of divine power for the way of love-making a tall tale?

This is the preface; the opening text also introduces various classics and episodes of the time. To begin with, the opening passage, while imitating the style of reciting old tales, is slightly at odds with that style. Moreover, the protagonist's name—Ukiyonosuke—is obviously a parody on the name of the main character Yonosuke in Ihara Saikaku's *Kōsboku ichidai otoko* (The Man Who Loved Love, 1682). The *Kōsboku ichidai otoko* is the progenitor of Edo-period erotic novels, and considering the plot in which Yonosuke travels around Osaka, Kyoto, and Edo and has a variety of sexual adventures, there is no doubt that Yonosuke is the ancestor of the protagonist Ukiyonosuke in this novel. The author Hyakki was not satisfied merely with that, but also puts forward a comparison with Ukiyonosuke's predecessor, the great lover Ariwara Narihira. (Narihira was a famous *waka* poet of the early Heian period, the protagonist of the *Tales of Ise*. He was a handsome as well as passionate man, a man who according to legend was free-spirited and extravagant and had many lovers. He became the subject of Nô as well as kabuki plays.) However, instead of referring to the classic *Ise monogatari* directly, Hyakki comes up with a parody—*Nise* (imitation) *monogatari* (1639)—in a sleight of brush that embodies one of the special features of Edo popular fiction.

Furthermore, the Mt. Ryūshin (Ryūshinzan) that Ukiyonosuke visits is written with the same Chinese characters as the Kasamono shrine in the Yanaka district of Edo, the latter pronunciation being the *kun* or native Japanese reading. As for why Hyakki alludes to the Kasamono shrine, at that time the young woman waitress Osen working at the teahouse Kagiya within the shrine precincts was acclaimed in Edo as the paragon of beauty. Thus the woman referred to as Senjo (immortal goddess), who appears riding the white clouds, is a manifestation of Osen. In addition, the woman accompanying Senjo, referred to as Kinryūzan no Tōkajo (Wisteria Flower Maiden of Mt. Kinryū), is also modeled after an actual person of the day. This was Ofuji, a salesgirl at the Motoyanagiya, a shop selling toothpicks in front of the temple Sensōji in Edo's Asakusa district. Sensōji is also known by the "mountain name" Mt. Kinryū, and the Sino-Japanese (*on*) reading of the character "fuji" in Ofuji's name becomes "tōka." Her identity can also be figured out from

the illustration, as her shop name, Motoyanagiya, is written in small characters on the paper pouch she is holding.

The magical potions that the two goddesses present to Ukiyonosuke are also related to their respective shops. *Dango* (dumplings) were associated with Osen's teahouse, and dumplings made of soil were traditionally used as offerings to the god of the Kasamono shrine. The "*fushi*" (immortality) powder offered by the Wisteria Flower Maiden is connected with one of the products of the toothpick shop, for there was a powdered mouthwash used by women which was also called "*fushi*" (but written with different characters), and thus this is a play on words.

Ukiyonosuke eats one of the soil dumplings given to him by Senjo and his body becomes minuscule like a bean, and he changes his name to Maneemon. Considering that "Mane" has the meaning of "to imitate," the name change of the protagonist who has been endowed with the multiple layers of parody outlined above is truly befitting.

At the end of the inscription, the author Hyakki writes, "Well, then, is the obtaining of divine power to master the way of love by this man a tall tale?" This has the implied meaning of "If you listen to this lightheartedly with the intention that it is a tall tale, before long you will be able to see the true forms of human beings."

The lines of writing within the illustration simply repeat what is in the text above, saying, "Senjo of Mt. Ryûshin in Morokoshi, accompanied by Tôkajo of Mt. Kinryû, meet with Ukiyonosuke."

## Plate 2

Having changed into a bean man, Maneemon first goes to the "Island of Virgins." On the second floor of a building, in a room where there are desks with copybooks and a paperweight, he spots a middle-aged man with long hair swept back and tied at the back of his head forcing a girl wearing a *furisode* (kimono with long sleeves worn by unmarried women) down on top of the *tatami* matting and trying to kiss her. Seeing that the girl is trying to push the man away with both hands, he deduces that the man is raping her.

What kind of person is this middle-aged man? Since the placard above



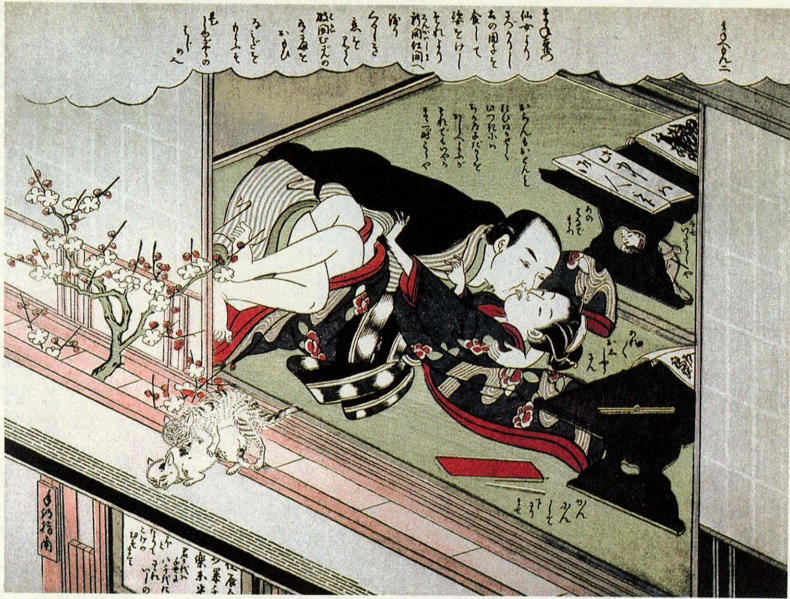


Plate 2

the door downstairs says “calligraphy instruction,” and the setting is a calligraphy classroom, the man must be the calligraphy teacher. The girl is probably one of his pupils. The lines of writing near the man read as follows:

I’ll pass you ahead of your fellow pupils Oran and Oton, and will teach you the methods of the next level of students. In that case is it still disagreeable? Be patient for just a little while longer.

The teacher is enticing her with preposterous talk of promoting her to the next class level. A man abusing his position as instructor and wooing his pupil on the premise of promoting her to the next level, now and in the past, never changes, does it?

When we read the lines of the girl pupil, she responds, “Oh dear! Teacher, please let go of me!” She is not at all willing. However, it doesn’t

look like the middle-aged teacher is dissuaded by this kind of gentle refusal, and in the end his behavior is probably no different from the male cat outside the window. Maneemon, witnessing this from underneath one of the desks, says to himself, “What a pitiful, wretched thing. And look at that nose!” In addition to expressing deep sympathy for the girl, he is making a sarcastic remark about the man’s nose. If we look closely at the man’s face, his nose is indeed depicted larger than usual. At that time, there was a popular belief that the size of a man’s penis was proportionate to his nose, so a large nose was regarded as revealing the intensity of sexual desire. According to the sense of values of that time, *irokonomi* (amorousness) and *seiyoku ga tsuyoi* (strong sexual desire) were exact opposites; while the spirit of *irokonomi* was generally viewed positively, just having strong sexual desire was regarded as boorish.

Here we can see that the writer of the text, Hyakki, also felt the same, for he stated that the teacher was misusing his position as instructor to the young girl, and that forcing an overture was a cruel, atrocious thing provoking tears. At the end he wrote, “Thus was the beginning of Maneemon’s journey to master the way of love-making,” hinting at the reality of the contradictory joys and sorrows of the way of love.

### **Plate 3**

Quickly taking leave of the “Island of Virgins,” Maneemon next goes to the “Island of Flirting.” *Ichatsuku* or flirting refers to the playful exchange of tender feelings between men and women. The first thing Maneemon sees there, in the light of a paper-covered lantern, is a scene of a man making love to a woman from behind in a strained position while she is applying moxa to the back of an old woman. Judging from the fact that the man is wearing a *montsuki* (a formal garment with the family crest), he is probably the master of the house returning home early. As for the young woman, it is difficult to ascertain her position. The words of the old woman read, “San, that moxa feels really strong.”

The old woman intimately calls the woman “San.” Is she a household servant? Or perhaps the wife of the son? Both are possible. However, since the text above this scene describes it as a “hasty dalliance,” I am



Plate 3

tempted to see San as the wife of the old woman's son. Her eyebrows are not shaved so she is probably a young woman without children.

In other words, the husband had been thinking about his new wife while he was out, but upon hurrying home finds her in the midst of cauterizing her mother-in-law with moxa. One can imagine a situation in which the husband cannot wait for his wife to finish, so in the dim light of the paper-covered lantern, he hastily commences. The wife is astonished by her husband's impulsiveness, and as a result of her awkward position, her hand misses the mark and the old woman says, "That moxa feels really strong." When the ball of moxa is applied outside the vital points, it is extremely hot. If we extend our imagination a little further, before that the husband's thrust was probably felt strongly by the wife. Hyakki related his impressions upon watching this "hasty union," saying that he "felt it was ridiculous." In contrast, Harunobu has Maneemon being favorably impressed, saying, "In pursuing the way of love, one must be assiduous

like this man.” He then says, “While the old woman is cooling off from the hotness, I’ll try a little moxa,” and applies some moxa to the vital point on his own foot. This vital point, called *sanri*, is the moxa-treatment point that is effective for all illnesses. When you apply moxa there, it is said to restore health, and accordingly, sexual intercourse will also become vigorous. At the end, Maneemon recites an ancient Heian-period love poem by Fujiwara Sanekata.

*While I am yearning for you like this,  
you don't even notice it a bit.  
Like the moxa of Ibukiyama,  
my love is burning for you.*

(Ibukiyama is a famous district for producing *mogusa*, a plant used in moxa.)

In this poem, the ardor of the man in love is juxtaposed with the heat of moxa. By having Maneemon say at the end, “This is hot,” Harunobu is suggesting that the passionate love of the man in the ancient poem overlaps with the impatient desire of the husband in the print. Hyakki mocks this “hasty union” as boorish, but I think Harunobu fully sympathized with the husband. While this kind of discrepancy exists between the author’s text and the lines written into the picture by the artist, the collaborators’ unconcern with mutual agreement makes jointly created ukiyo-e *shunga* interesting.

From the sensibility of the present day, the scenario in this print probably strikes one as unnatural. There is no question that the situation and events unfolding in this scene are a fabrication for the sake of an artwork. However, to regard this kind of representation as complete fantasy is to underestimate it. I would like to see this kind of situation as the reality of sexual activity of people of that time, accurately expressing the broad-minded attitude that did not attach great importance to privacy in sex.

#### **Plate 4**

The next place Maneemon visits is “Excuse Island.” There he witnesses a scene in which a husband is having an affair during his wife’s pregnancy,

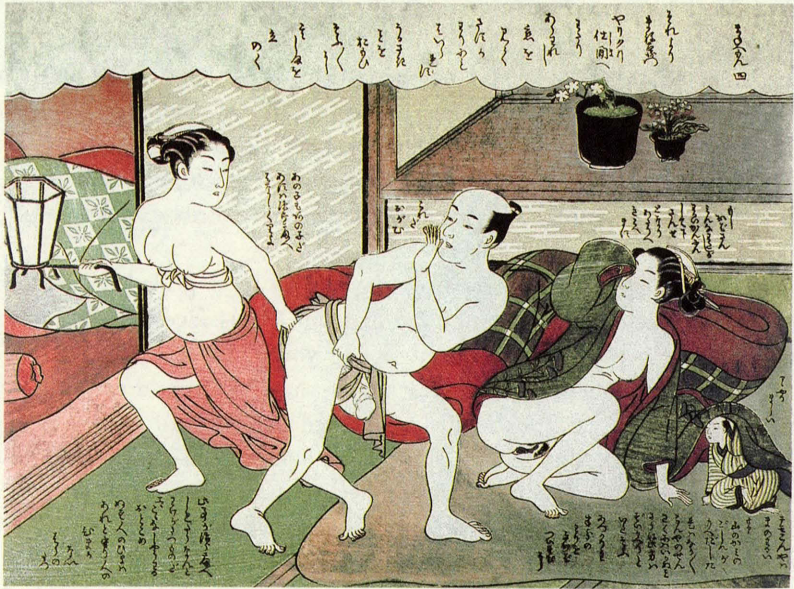


Plate 4

and one night the wife walks into the room and catches him. (One can ascertain that the wife is pregnant because her belly is depicted large and also by the fact that she is wearing an *ivataobi*—a white sash worn by pregnant women to protect the unborn baby.) The ruckus has already begun and the lines written into the picture for each of the three people express their different frames of mind respectively.

Firstly, holding a lantern with candlestick in her right hand and tugging at the loin cloth of her husband, the wife bursts out:

What kind of girl are you? Tomorrow, I'm going to tell Jirô. But what am I going to say to him? This kind of thing is not something one can make excuses for. Ugh! You cheating man. Even if you felt like having an affair, don't you have a mind to preserve your honor? I'm furious at you!

From these lines we can infer that the girl is the daughter of Jirô, who out of friendship has sent her to help with housework during the wife's pregnancy. Since the husband has started an affair, the wife's anger at having been betrayed is understandable. She wants to report this straight-away to the girl's parents, but since the partner of misconduct is her own husband, the complaint vice versa may come back here. She decides that her husband is the one who is to blame and angrily exclaims, "Ugh! You cheating man!"

Meanwhile, the husband, looking ungainly as he is pulled by his loin-cloth, turns back and with one hand in front of his face pleads for forgiveness, saying only, "You're right—I beg you." His loin cloth gripped by his wife, the husband's naughty penis already hangs down. Having been caught in the act, for the husband, there is no room for excuses.

From the standpoint of the other party concerned—the young girl—having been reproved by the wife for her improper conduct, she apologizes with embarrassment, hiding her face with the sleeve of her nightclothes. Watching the development of events for a while and finding the loud voice of the wife unbearable, she says, "Pardon me Madam, I'm the one at fault. Please forgive me. But if you speak in too loud a voice, the neighbors will hear." It may seem that she is admirably shouldering the blame and trying to appease the wife's anger, but in actuality, if this incident is made known to the neighborhood, afterward it will be very awkward for her. Observing the scene from his hiding place in the girl's nightclothes, Maneemon gives his impressions as follows.

Ahh, what an uproar. I have certainly walked into a bad scene tonight. The wrath of this mountain god (the wife) is burning furiously. This situation probably won't calm down until morning. Since that is the case, I think I'll take my leave. The wife herself accepted the girl's services, so if she hears even half an apology, this would all quickly come to an end.

For Maneemon, in the way of love, a scene in which an affair is discovered is boorish, and he regards the wife's anger as reasonable. Seeing that her anger will not be easily pacified, he decides to leave the

island quickly. However, what did he mean by his final remark “since she herself accepted the girl”? Accepting the young girl into the house sewed the seeds for the affair, so perhaps it’s half the wife’s responsibility? Not only in Harunobu’s works, but in other *shunga* of that time it is useless to expect a logical viewpoint in which affairs are all bad. Harunobu’s *shunga* embodies the practical view that “in this world, the seeds of infidelity are inexhaustible,” with joy and sorrow simply depicted in succession.

**Plate 5**

At first glance, this may appear to be an illustration of a man and woman having intercourse in a peculiar position, but if we look closely, the person on top also has a penis. In other words, this is a depiction of male love. As is common knowledge, male love was not such an unusual custom in the Japanese cultural tradition. Especially in the Edo period, male love, which had previously existed among Buddhist monks, court-



Plate 5

iers, and warriors, spread to the populace and occasionally appears in ukiyo-e *shunga*. Yet it wasn't an ordinary thing. There was a reason for Maneemon's encountering this kind of scene which is explained in the text above the illustration. Maneemon leaves the home on "Excuse Island" where he encountered the uproar of the affair and then:

He crossed over to the island of Sakai from Fukiyagahama, and listening to the sounds of drinking bouts (*kenshu*) and songs (*meriyasu*), he spent the night at a house there. He was thinking that somehow he would like to watch the bedroom pleasures on the second floor of the neighboring building. It was the end of spring, the season for flying kites, so he grabbed onto the string of a kite and was carried up to the window frame on the second floor.

It is probably necessary to add commentary here. Fukiyagahama and Sakaijima allude to Fukiya-chô and Sakai-chô in Edo. At that time, those districts were lined with kabuki theaters, and nearby Yoshi-chô was famous for its *kagama-chaya*—teahouses employing young *onnagata* (male actors specializing in female roles) called *iroko* as prostitutes. The character *ken* of *kenshu* refers to a popular game of the time (a competitive game in which two people face one another and have a contest with hand gestures). It is a form of amusement in which the loser is forced to drink sake. *Meriyasu* is a kind of song popular at that time—songs derived from kabuki which were accompanied by the *shamisen*. The place that Maneemon has come to is completely permeated with kabuki. Even the kite he is riding on has a *mimasu* (concentric squares) design—the crest of the actor Ichikawa Danjûrô, who dominated the kabuki world of the time.

Returning to the print, Maneemon peeps into the scene of sex with a male prostitute, which is just what he had hoped for. What he witnesses is a playboy on top of a beautiful young *onnagata* actor, who looks just like a young woman in a long-sleeved kimono. The unusual position of doing it from behind made it an enjoyable spectacle. However, it was a very strained position for the male prostitute, so he is supporting his body with his left hand, and while the man is embracing him with both arms, he raises the upper part of his body and utters "Oh, oh, my arm is tired—



this is exhausting.” Since the expression “*shindoi*” (tiring or difficult) is a so-called *kamigata* word used in the Kyoto-Osaka area, this is probably an example of Harunobu’s Kyoto background coming to the fore.

The male prostitute’s long sleeve has a design of narcissus, which is a symbol of a beautiful youth in the world of male love. The chrysanthemum crests on the bedding also symbolize male love. If one looks at the crest on the kimono of the male client, it is the same as the husband in the previous print. While it is not absolutely necessary to see both characters as the same person, among Edo dilettantes, heterosexual love and male love were not exclusive. We should understand that male sex was regarded as an enjoyable thing—one of the accomplishments of a cultivated person. In that sense, this print depicts a scene infused with the pleasure of Edo dilettantes. Maneemon had come to the Shibai-machi kabuki district wanting to observe this. His impressions are as follows:

This is without a doubt the world of Mr. Gennai. The events unfolding in that room are truly amazing. Good heavens, the method of having male sex involves some elaborate armwork. Mr. Gennai also enjoys this kind of play, and perhaps for this reason he gave up on the Nakasendô highway and started his trip from Shinagawa.

This requires some explanation. Mr. Gennai is Hiraga Gennai, who was introduced earlier. He lived in the same district as Harunobu and they were good friends. Gennai wrote books such as the *Kiku no en* (Chrysanthemum Garden) which closely examined male love, and he made public the fact that he himself enjoyed male sex. Since it is said that Gennai was fond of a young male *onnagata* kabuki actor named Yoshizawa Kuniishi, it would be natural to think that in the scene in this print Harunobu was recalling Gennai. Furthermore, Shinagawa was the first station on the Tōkaidō highway. Gennai had traveled to Nagasaki by way of the Tōkaidō to pursue Dutch studies the year prior to the publication of this set of prints. Harunobu touches upon this, borrowing Maneemon’s mouth to make a satire upon Gennai, who went to Nagasaki via the Tōkaidō because he didn’t like the rural Nakasendō, probably

because there was no unconventional play in the form of male love, and therefore he chose to take the Tōkaidō which passed through bustling towns. Learning about Gennai's sexual inclination from the words written in this print, for the first time we catch on to the fun of it. This sort of comradely "insider" talk frequently appears within *shunga* from Harunobu to Utamaro and Hokusai. The end of the text reads as follows:

Maneemon watched all of the male love-making and enjoyed it immensely, but being shown so many diverse sexual play techniques, the blood rushed to his head.

Indeed, looking at the illustration we can see that Maneemon is using a fan to cool down his head. This paying careful attention to the description of details is characteristic of Harunobu's work.

### *Plate 6*

Feverish with excitement after watching male love-making in Edo's Shibai-machi, in order to recover Maneemon contemplates a hot-spring cure, so he leaves Edo and heads for the countryside. How different are the sexual customs of the countryside from those in the city that we have previously looked at? The first place he visits is a place called the "Gullible Rice Field."

As might be expected from the word *shinden* (new field), it is the height of rice planting in early summer. A farming couple and their daughter are planting rice, when a strange man wearing a frightful mask and a sword appears and performs anal sex on the daughter bent over planting rice. What is going on here? Without a moment's delay, let's read the words of the masked man.

Well, well! I am the god of delight (*yogarasu*), a descendant of the god of rice (Inari). If you give your daughter to me, without your having to do any work in the field, I will produce a hundred more straw bags than the usual harvest.

In short, the man wearing a mask and assuming the air of a god is an imposter. The name he gives, *yogarasu*, in Japanese has the ominous



Plate 6

meaning of “night crow” and also the meaning of giving sexual pleasure to a woman. So from the name he is a suspicious character. However, the farmer and his wife are completely taken in by him.

Farm wife: How frightful!

Farmer: Oh, god of delight. I’m grateful for your goodwill, and will give you not only my daughter but also my old wife. Please give my regards to the god of rice.

Is this for real or is it make-believe? The manner of speaking in this dialogue makes it interesting. The idea that if the farmer can receive a hundred more straw bags of rice than the usual harvest without working, he will give not only his daughter but his old wife is laughable. This is without doubt the world of *rakugo* (comic storytelling that flourished in the Edo period). In compliance with the farmer’s request, the god of

delight jokingly replies “OK, OK, I get you. I’ll come back tomorrow.” (*Yoshi, yoshi, wakatta. Myōnichi konkon.*) The sound of the word for come—*kon*—can also be understood as the crying voice of a fox, which is a manifestation of the rice god. Both are implied, which is exactly the point of *rakugo*. Watching this strange act that he had never seen in the city, Maneemon gives his impressions while having a smoke in the shade of a tree by the roadside: “This is interesting. It is the upshot of playing a joke on farmers.”

To be sure, anyone observing this kind of comic scene would probably laugh. Of course, it is a story concocted for the purpose of *warai-bon* (*shunga*). However, in looking closely at this picture, rather than simply a made-up story, doesn’t it have some of the flavor of nostalgic old tales? In the olden days in Japan, at rice planting festivals there were songs and dances laden with sexual innuendos. This probably derives from the idea that harvesting rice was a *mitate* for (likened to) a woman’s conception. While this kind of *mitate* can be regarded as a simple metaphor for the “progress” of human intellect, even after we come to perceive it that way, a primal feeling exists inside at the bottom of human consciousness. The laughter in this picture is not simply foolish laughter, but the sensing of its smile-provoking quality which arises from that kind of depth of human consciousness. In other words, the “god of delight” wearing the mask is not simply an imposter, but can be seen as taking on the air of the mischievous, likable trickster who appears in folklore and myths.

### Plate 7

This print is a scene of a farmhouse on a summer night. We can see that the family has already finished dinner, and an elderly couple are having a cup of tea. Mosquito netting is suspended in the adjoining room, and within the son and his wife have begun to engage in sex. However, they do not play the leading role in this illustration; instead it is the old couple. Their lines are as follows:

Old man: Grandma, how about giving me a little kiss. Hearing those sounds anyone . . .

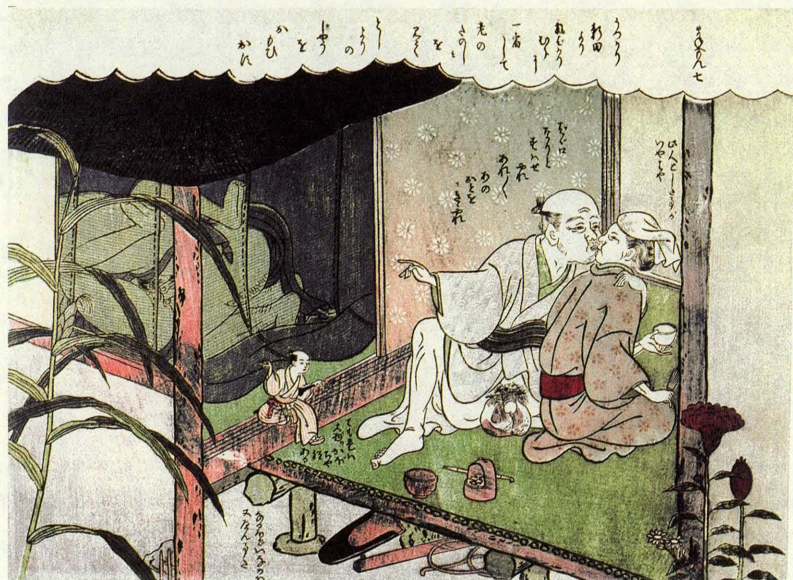


Plate 7

Old woman: For you to be behaving like this—you are supposed to be a grownup!

Listening to the sounds of intimacy from the young couple under the mosquito netting in the next room, unconsciously the old man suddenly recalls being seized with sexual passion and pesters his old wife for a kiss. While the old woman is a little taken aback, she turns her head and allows him to kiss her. Isn't this a delightfully peaceful love scene? In the garden is a tall corn stalk with an ear already ripened, and two cockscombs have their midsummer red flowers. Although one can say that this kind of tranquil scenery is representative of the countryside setting, frequently one senses a similar kind of tranquility in *ukiyo-e shunga*, even in depictions of city scenes. In thinking about the reason for this, though nowadays *shunga* is referred to by the names *bigiga* (secret pleasure pictures) or *higa* (secret pictures), Edo people called it

*warai-e* (pictures for laughs). Instead of regarding human sexuality as something to be kept hidden from others, I think it was seen as “something to laugh at” that everyone possessed. In other words, on the occasion of creating the illustrations, the sex scenes were not designed with an atmosphere of secrecy as though they were taking place behind closed doors, but rather depicted with the doors and windows always partly open, in airy, unclosed spaces.

The number one laugh in this picture is the depiction of the old man using only his mouth, not at all concerned with his “essential part,” and jokingly titling it “Desire Only Village.” Maneemon gazes at the old man’s genitals and gesturing with his arms out wide, says, “Still, it’s quite large—the size of a pumpkin. In the country things are indeed strange.”

His lines expressing admiration for this surprising thing compound the laughter. Remarks of admiration for the large size of a man’s penis are common in *shunga*, but while Maneemon is impressed with the size of the old man’s scrotum, here it is not something to boast about. It is probably a type of disease called hydrocele.

This laughter is superficial laughter, but as in the previous illustration, in this picture one can also sense a mood that invites a hidden smile. That is because the artist Harunobu is not just poking fun at “elderly sexual passion,” but is capable of self reflection. This kind of thing could happen to anyone, or is something anyone could experience, so that an atmosphere of warm sympathy with the old couple’s feelings pervades this picture.

### **Plate 8**

Having left Edo to find a spa, after passing through the “Gullible Rice Field” and “Desire Only Village,” Maneemon finally arrives at a hot-spring resort. According to the text, it is Ikaho Hot Springs. In the Edo period, Ikaho was located in the province of Kôzuke—the present-day hot springs district at the eastern foot of Mt. Haruna in Gunma prefecture. Now and in the past, diversions are a part of hot springs resorts. Maneemon makes the rounds to check out the diverse sexual



Plate 8

activities. This print depicts one of those scenes.

In a room attached to the bath, a man and woman are engaged in sex in an unusual position. They are peering into the adjoining room where the figure of a blind minstrel (*zatō*) can be seen strumming a *shamisen*. (*Zatō* were blind people who belonged to a vocational group; they sang ballads while playing primarily stringed instruments such as the *bima*, *koto*, and *shamisen*. They also served as masseurs and acupuncturists.) Due to the location, it would be normal to see the woman as a *yuna* (prostitute employed by hot spring lodgings), and judging from the loose appearance of the couple's tied back hair, they have just emerged from the bath. It is also feasible to see them as a familiar married couple who have come to a hot spring. The scene has the appearance of light-hearted sex at a resort. Rubbing her hair with her *yukata*, the woman peers through the lattice window into the next room and says, "Kamisō-san is really making a clamor."

Her manner of referring to Kamisô-san suggests that he is a friend who has come with them to the hot spring. In between bathing, they are drinking sake and getting into a good humor, perhaps even starting to dance in the nude to the tune of the blind musician's *shamisen*. The man jokingly says, "Kotobuki-no-ichi is strumming *sukasuka denden*, and we're doing *sukosuko dendenja*." Kotobuki-no-ichi is the name of the blind musician, and "*sukasuka denden*" is a way of strumming the *shamisen*. *Sukasuka* is plucking the strings in a fast tempo, and *denden* is a method of strumming in which one strikes the belly with the plectrum. In other words, "we're doing *sukosuko denden*" is a joke in which the man's phallus is a *mitate* for the blind musician's plectrum. Hearing this man's joke, Maneemon, who has come out of the bath, chimes in with "That's quite a large plectrum."

It is a peaceful scene of pleasure different from the atmosphere of the urban pleasure quarters. The couple making love do not seem to mind that others may be watching. While in general it can be said that the love-making scenes depicted in *shunga* are free of restraint, it is difficult to conceive that in reality it was so public. However, it is not simply the author's desire or fantasy; this scene suggests that the concept that one should hide completely scenes of love-making from other people's eyes did not exist at that time.

### *Plate 9*

The next three illustrations are episodes from Maneemon's return trip to Edo after leaving Ikaho. This picture depicts a road-horse boy and his female client performing what appears to be an imitation of an acrobatic feat at a ferryboat crossing. From just the illustration it might seem that the road-horse boy is raping the woman, but upon reading the text, this doesn't seem to be the case. To begin with, the woman says, "There! It's going in. This is just like the mountain sparrow catching falling food. I still have some time until the boat comes in." The mountain sparrow is a bird known for various feats. "Mountain sparrow catching falling food" is a trick in which a person takes some food and drops it, trying to make a mountain sparrow catch it directly with its bill. In this picture, the woman holds onto the horse with one arm behind and





Plate 9

lowers her rear end. While holding up her buttocks from below, the road-horse boy is on the verge of sexual intercourse. Speaking metaphorically about the unusual position, the woman makes a comment likening the road-horse boy to a mountain sparrow. Her words “I still have some time until the boat comes in” suggest that she is seducing the road-horse boy with his favorite “food.” Meanwhile, the road-horse boy, who has been successfully seduced by the woman, forgets about business and says gleefully, “You don’t need to pay the riding fee. I’ll take you on my horse for free to the second post town beyond the bank of Kumagaya.” The “bank of Kumagaya” refers to the post town of Kumagaya on the Nakasendō—the well known ferry crossing at the Arakawa river.

The dialogue of the two figures is written together underneath the horse, and therefore one could interpret all of it as being the words of the road-horse boy. However, since only the latter lines use polite speech,

I think the first set of lines should be seen as the words of the woman. That makes it more interesting. Having a smoke in the shade of a pine tree, Maneemon's impressions are as follows, "Well, well, isn't this man's penis big. But what a *Yosaku ni wa mukanaï* face."

The first half of his commentary is standard for ukiyo-e *shunga*, but it is necessary to explain the second half. *Yosaku* is a common name used in poking fun at a country person, so in that case, the meaning of this line is "This man doesn't have the face of a country person." In other words, he has a refined face. But such words of praise are out of keeping with the Edoite Maneemon. Actually, this remark refers to *Yosaku*, the road-horse boy of Tanba, the hero in the kabuki play *Tanba Yosaku matsuyo no komurobushi*, a work by the famous early Edo-period playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724). So in part Maneemon's words are belittling the road-horse boy with his large "instrument" and ready eyes in this print. Kabuki was an amusement that people of the time had in common, so the reference to the road-horse boy as "*Yosaku*" would have led most people to immediately recall Tanba no *Yosaku*. Not only Harunobu's *shunga*, but in other *shunga* texts as well, words originating in kabuki frequently are incorporated without any kind of explanation.

### ***Plate 10***

Hyakki's text for this illustration includes the phrase "On returning home from the hot spring, he saw a variety of *mugi* (wheat, barley, etc.) sexual unions that made him laugh." *Mugi* is slang for an unlicensed prostitute. Here it probably refers to the prostitutes employed by lodgings in the post towns. (In this connection, the slang word for licensed prostitutes is *kome* [rice]) However, in looking at Harunobu's illustration, a "battle" is taking place between a man and woman in the silkworm room of a farmhouse. The lines of the couple are as follows:

Man: After looking at the *iro-e* brought home by my older brother as a souvenir of Edo, I've gotten aroused.

Woman: But if we do it in front of the silkworms, they will be corrupted.



Plate 10

In all likelihood, the souvenir bought by the older brother was not simply *iro-e* (color prints) but *iroppoi-e* (erotic prints)—in other words, *shunga*. In this scene, the husband who has been looking at *shunga* has gotten excited and is importuning his wife in the silkworm room. In some ways this smacks of self advertising on the part of Harunobu, the originator of *nishiki-e* or brocade prints. However, in reality *nishiki-e* were disseminated in the provinces in this way as souvenirs of Edo.

The wife attempts to push away her husband with both arms saying, “If we do it in front of the silkworms, they will be corrupted,” but doesn’t this really mean “If we do it in the silkworm room, our kimono will get dirty”? As for the wife’s refusing her husband’s advances, there was the belief among sericulturists in those days that if a man and woman made love in front of the rack where the silkworms were spinning their cocoons, the silkworms would be corrupted and the silk would be flawed. In this way everyone was quite careful when raising silkworms. Mean-

while, upon hearing suspicious sounds coming from the silkworm room, the father gets out of bed naked and holding a candle in one hand comes to check on the silkworms saying, “Something is making quite a bit of noise. I wonder if mice are nibbling at the silkworms.” The husband, whose sexual desire has been aroused by looking at the Edo souvenir *iro-e* prints, is also amusing, for there is a fresh comical quality in this country episode of his losing to the silkworms by having to curtail his advances.

**Plate 11**

A young couple are embracing each other in the shadows of a bank amid pitch black surroundings. A portable candlestick and a sword are placed at their side nearby, and both of them have Buddhist rosaries in their hands. It doesn't appear to be an ordinary rendezvous. Moreover, on the other side of the bank is a man with a lantern and an old man carrying



**Plate 11**

a staff and crying. The situation is increasingly suspicious:

Maneemon, on his return from having seen a diversity of love-making scenes, meets a handsome young man accompanied by a girl of about sixteen wearing a long-sleeved kimono. Sensing that he will be able to see something interesting, he follows them, and it so happens that they are planning to commit a double suicide here.

The old man on the other side of the bank is the father searching for the young couple. In all likelihood, for some reason he opposed the marriage, probably not thinking about the possibility that they might contemplate double suicide. Today it is inconceivable that young couples would immediately take it into their heads to commit double suicide upon being told that they can't get married. However, in those days, kabuki plays with dramatic double suicides attempted by men and women (mostly Yoshiwara prostitutes) who for various reasons couldn't get married were very popular. It is likely that this couple was easily influenced by that trend. But even so, double suicide is a grave matter, and however much these illustrations are called *warai-e*, this is not something to be laughed at. Harunobu, by means of the illustration and the lines of dialogue incorporated into it, contrives to change this serious scene to a funny one. First, in reading the dialogue of the couple, we find that the course of events is slightly different from that in the text.

Young woman: You're really late in coming.

Young man: It's not so late, but hey, I can hear people's voices.

In other words, in the illustration the situation is changed with the woman arriving at the appointed place first, and around the time she had grown tired of waiting, the young man shows up. The woman has no hesitation about committing a double suicide, but his words "I can hear people's voices" somehow hint at his lingering affection for this world. (Since the girl is imitating the manner of speaking of Yoshiwara courtesans, this double suicide affair was probably derived from a double suicide kabuki play.)

Characteristic of Harunobu, this scene of parting from this world is

one of his best. In contrast to the young man, who is uneasy at the sound of voices and his resolve seems to cool, the girl aggressively reaches for the man's penis and grasps it firmly. In this depiction it seems that she is impatient so takes the lead herself. If we take this interpretation a bit further, the young man has come this far without declining the girl's invitation to commit double suicide, but in order to linger a bit longer in this world cannot bring himself to do it, so the girl has become impatient and is assisting his penis with her hand to induce him. In either event, through showing the discrepancy in the feelings of the young man and woman in the eleventh hour of their double suicide, Harunobu brings forth a smile in a grave scene. A similar device often can be seen in *rakugo*. Maneemon's monologue reads:

How deep will the grief of the parents be? This has turned into something dreadful. It is pitiful for flowers in the prime of their youth to scatter the blossoms themselves. I'm going to hide the sword to save their lives. Before long their parents will find them. I'm sorry to say, there is nothing of interest here.

Upon observing the lovers' grief, Maneemon thinks about the young couple's future and hides the sword to save their lives. This is the first time that Maneemon, who up until now by means of his bean-size body has enjoyed the position of a bystander, has intervened. To go to that extent he must have felt "I can't turn my back on them." Seeing the love of the young couple, who at the height of their youth were running away to commit double suicide, Maneemon became depressed, commenting "there is nothing of interest here" and quickly flees the Ichiyatsuki Island of commoners. For Maneemon, "living to die" love-making was senseless; sex should be a harmonious and pleasurable thing to the end. Next he headed for Yoshiwara, the best place for diversion.

### **Plate 12**

This illustration is a complete change, depicting a scene in front of an ornate Yoshiwara teahouse (a place where clients could appoint a courtesan on the spot and enjoy drinking and eating). The man wearing the



Plate 12

hood is a client; to his right is an *oiran* (a high-ranking courtesan) and on his left is a *furisode shinzô* (an apprentice courtesan) who assists the *oiran*. A paper-covered lamp has been set in the middle of the room, signalling that it is already evening. Judging from the large escort lantern placed at the entrance, the *oiran* has just arrived at the teahouse from her *okiya* (living quarters for courtesans). The cherry blossoms in front of the teahouse are in full bloom, so the time of year is early in the third month, making this a night scene in Yoshiwara at the height of spring. The words of the apprentice being embraced by the hooded client are, “Help! Shigahara-san, Rokô-san is being naughty. People will see.”

Thus we know the *oiran*'s name is Shigahara and the client's name is Rokô. Rokô is the pen name of Segawa Kikunojô II, the number one *onnagata* kabuki actor in Edo at that time. A lot of Edo kabuki actors enjoyed composing *haikai*. The fact that they were called by their pen names is proof of their fame. Rokô was incredibly popular due to his

natural good looks and gracefulness. Women competed with one another in emulating his stage appearance. For example, his way of tying an *obi* called “Rokô-*ketsu*” and his preferred color for dyeing called “Rokô-*cha*” were very fashionable. In fact, the color of the kimono worn by Rokô in this print, which is greenish blue tinged with yellow is probably “Rokô-*cha*.” It is quite possible that the apprentice has tied her *obi* in the “Rokô-*ketsu*” manner as well. If so, then this scene no doubt represents the dazzling, gorgeous kabuki stage as it was. Hyakki’s text describes the splendor of Yoshiwara:

Crossing over to the pleasure quarters, he arrived at the place known as the Yoshiwara red-light district, where he could see and enjoy a diversity of pleasures. Maneemon first stops by the front of a teahouse and records in his travel diary the peak of the cherry blossoms, the lighthearted play of male entertainers arising spontaneously from seats in the banquet room to humor the guests, the *oiran*’s elegant and beautiful attire, and the sensation of floating amid the hustle and bustle where kimono sleeves brush one another. This land of splendor is indeed the supreme place of love-making.

Hyakki’s statement that the Yoshiwara land of pleasure was “in its splendor, indeed the supreme place of love-making” is the concluding remark for the first volume, but Harunobu wasn’t content to let it end with that kind of colloquial praise. Harunobu put Maneemon in the branches of a cherry tree, facing Rokô, who is cavorting with the apprentice, and has him say, “That clown Rokô—he’s having everything his own way. Isn’t he going a little too far? OK, let’s commence with ‘the double cherry blossoms of Nara.’”

“The double cherry blossoms of Nara” is slang for fart—a joke among Edoites based upon a famous Heian-period poem. While saying “How inelegant!” Maneemon bares his buttocks and breaks wind towards Rokô, who is doing whatever he feels like with no scruples about being noticed, trying to seduce the apprentice in the front of the teahouse. Before long, the flirtatious Rokô remarks, “What an awful smell,” and



returns to his senses. With this joke Harunobu closes the curtain on the first half. At first this may seem like a vulgar joke, but in it is expressed the Edoite Harunobu's aesthetic sensibility of thoroughly despising boorishness.

## Explanations of the Illustrations in Part Two

All of the twelve prints in the second half take as their setting the Yoshiwara, describing and showing the diverse ways of love-making peculiar to the pleasure quarters. The second half, from which views of the realities of life have been omitted, is different from the first half, in which Maneemon traveled around to see scenes of love-making by a wide range of commoners in town and country. Nevertheless, I think we can learn something from it. Since it can serve as a reference for understanding the mode of life in the Yoshiwara pleasure district at that time, I will go through the prints in order and provide a simple explanation for each illustration.

### Plate 13

The first picture depicts a client's first meeting (*shokai*) with a courtesan. In the Yoshiwara, before being admitted to a courtesan's sleeping room, a client would host a banquet. It was prescribed form that he would order food and drink, hire geisha, and engage in singing and dancing. During a *shokai*, the courtesan and the client would have an opportunity to check out their sentiments toward each other. If he passed muster, the man might finally be admitted into the courtesan's sleeping room. If it was a first class Yoshiwara establishment, there would be three layers of red bedding and *kaimaki* (thick padded bedclothes in the shape of a kimono), and the room would be equipped with luxurious furnishings such as a sumptuous folding screen, a rich ornament in the *tokonoma* alcove, a lampstand near the bedside, a tobacco tray, and tissue paper.

It would be erroneous to imagine that instant sexual gratification was readily available in the pleasure district. That would have gone against the custom of Edo-period Yoshiwara, where rather a great deal of weight



Plate 13

was given to the exchange of feelings before and after. When we read Manemon's lines here, he seems impatient. "This man is still a novice. He doesn't have any subjects to talk about, and he can't capture his partner's interest. What a miserable guy he is about love affairs!"

Noticing her client's discomfort, the courtesan takes a puff on her pipe and is about to hand it to him, saying, "Here, why don't you have a puff," in the hopes of putting him at ease. This is one of the set ploys of courtesans, and observing it Manemon says, "Ah, it appears to be a beguiling trick to please the client—this man has the kind of disposition that is cordially welcomed." In other words, in the pleasure quarters, a novice is received more warmly than a veteran lover.

### Plate 14

This picture depicts the “second meeting” between the same client and courtesan. Hyakki describes the situation as “White thread in the dyeing vat gradually becomes permeated with the dye.” A client’s second meeting with the same courtesan was called *ura o kaesu*, literally meaning “turning over.” The *oiran* is less reserved and the client is more composed. Behind the sliding door panel is the *oiran*’s girl apprentice (*kamuro*), who is dozing off. The *oiran* says to the client, “Come on, untie your sash” as if to hurry him, but the client pompously replies, “Don’t rush me—I’m pretty drunk.” Watching the couple with one elbow on the bedding, Maneemon says, “Gee, he seems to be trying her patience. But in his heart, surely he is in a hurry.” Afterward, struck with admiration by the layers of luxurious bedding in the Yoshiwara, he comments, “I need a ladder for this bedding.”

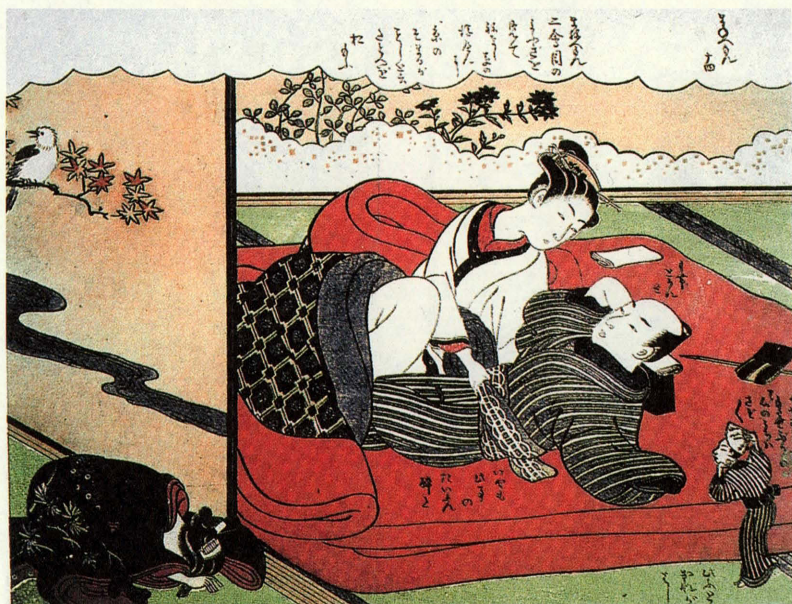


Plate 14

### Plate 15

This is a continuation from the above illustration, depicting the third encounter between the same client and courtesan. When a client engages the same courtesan three times in a row, they are referred to as *najimi*, and thereafter they are regarded by the teahouse as a provisional couple. According to the Yoshiwara customs code, afterward this client cannot engage a courtesan from another establishment, and the courtesan likewise cannot accept invitations from other courtesans' *najimi* clients. The appearance of the couple on top of the bedding, reading a letter while both resting their chins on their hands, is already imbued with an atmosphere of familiar, intimate harmoniousness.

A more *shunga*-like scene is unfolding in the corridor behind the sliding door panels rather than in the sleeping room. Discovering them, Maneemon says, "This is a surprise! The night watchman (*yosuke*) has been aroused by the first song (*batsune*)."  
 "Yosuke" (night man) is a slang



Plate 15

name for night watchman; *Hatsune* (first song) is the name of the *oiran's* apprentice (*shinzō*). Sex in the Yoshiwara was not just between clients and *oiran*. While it was taboo for a man employed by a teahouse to make advances to *oiran* or *shinzō*, not following regulations was the usual course of events in the world of sex.

The male client overhears the sounds in the corridor and says suspiciously, "I can hear some kind of *suu-suu* sound." The *shinzō's* elder sister-like *oiran* seems fully aware of the situation and to allay his suspicion tactfully replies, "It's the sound of water boiling on the *daisu*." (A *daisu* is a stand on which are placed tea ceremony utensils; here it refers to the kettle for boiling hot water.) Hearing the *oiran's* words, the night watchman says to the *shinzō*, "Relax and let yourself go. From the *oiran's* response, even if you let yourself go, she'll take care of you (*daiji na itosa*)." The night watchman is making an impromptu joke, for in Japanese, the words *daisu* and *daiji* have similar pronunciations. This joke is probably Harunobu's, and in this kind of scene the laughter of *shunga* is at work.

### Plate 16

This picture depicts concretely the actions of a client and courtesan who have become *najimi*. To express the familiar intimacy of a *najimi* couple, Harunobu depicts their activities after the fact. The courtesan agilely wipes her partner's penis with tissue paper, and the client is taking a sheet of paper offered to him by the courtesan, probably to wipe her genitalia. This kind of behavior can only be that of a close, intimate relationship.

Lying on his stomach on top of the bedding, watching the couple's actions and piqued by their intimacy, Maneemon says, "They are probably going to repeat this again. Do as you please. I think I'm going to take a nap."

### Plate 17

In his monologue in this illustration Maneemon states, "There are a diversity of 'contracts' and ways of love-making in the Yoshiwara. Since they are endless, I'm going to stop recording them." But is that really

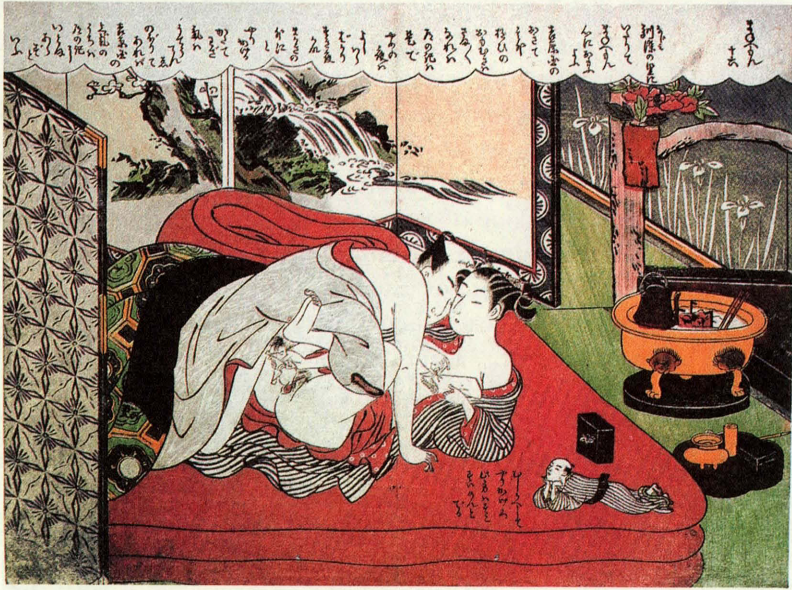


Plate 16

true? To be sure, there were many kinds of “contracts” and interesting ways of love-making peculiar to the Yoshiwara. Nevertheless, the idea that there is not much freshness or sentiment to record as the reality of the way of love is probably true, isn’t it?

At this point Harunobu begins to depict violations of the regulations in Yoshiwara or other departures from the usual practice. The previous illustration of the scene in the corridor was an example of violating rules, and the man and woman fooling around while walking in the corridor in this illustration as well are not a client and *oiran*, but probably an *oiran* with the servant who escorts her to and from teahouses. This can be inferred by the fact that the man is holding the kind of lantern used for escorting *oiran*. Of course it was taboo for men working in the pleasure quarters to make advances to courtesans, but male-female relationships are prone to straying from the rules. The atmosphere of love between a man and woman is quickly sensed by others, and here a courtesan from



Plate 17

the same brothel is peeping through the curtains. Meanwhile, the nervous servant has dropped a letter to an *oiran* from an important client. Finding it, Maneemon makes the following light joke, “It’s not *fumibazushi* (straying from the right path), but *fumiotoshi* (dropping a letter). Let’s have a look.” In this joke he is making a play on words that have similar pronunciations in Japanese.

The name “Ōshima” written on the lantern held by the male servant and the name “Kazusaya” on the portable box sitting in the corridor are both the names of establishments that actually existed in Yoshiwara.

### Plate 18

From this print on, the text written above changes to the form of *bokku* (*haikai*). In *shunga* with this kind of design, it is interesting to consider how the poem and the circumstances of the *shunga* are tied together.



Plate 18

First let's look at the poem's outward meaning.

*Doesn't the temple bell ringing  
also get wet?  
Rain coming down at a slant.*

In this illustration, the male client is stretching and a woman is fast asleep at his side. The *oiran* probably was making the rounds of other clients' rooms, and as the night wears on has at last come to this client's bed. In the Yoshiwara, an *oiran* visiting multiple clients in one night was called *mawashi*. While the *oiran* was making the rounds of her other clients, one of her *shinzō* would stand in for her to entertain the client who was waiting—a practice called *myōdai*. However, it was the rule in the Yoshiwara that the client would not make advances to the *myōdai*. Thus, the girl sleeping next to the client here is the *oiran's* apprentice serving as *myōdai*, who has grown weary of waiting for the *oiran* to return



and has fallen asleep. The client has also grown tired of waiting, and says to the *oiran* when she finally arrives, “Tonight you are a lacquered wood pillow.” The *oiran* asks, “What do you mean by that?” In Japanese, at the sound of *nuri makura* (lacquered pillow) the words *nure makura* (wet pillow) quickly come to mind. The word “pillow” has long been linked with sexual intercourse. In other words, this is a kind of sarcastic comment intimating that in making the rounds of other clients, she is probably already “wet” down there. Impressed by the man’s joke, Maneemon comments, “That’s pretty erotic sarcasm.”

Through this kind of reading of the circumstances in the illustration, at last one can understand the relation between the picture and the poem. In Japanese, “the sound of ringing” and “a person finally coming” derive from the same word, and accordingly the underlying meaning of this poem is “my partner has finally come, but the bell (secret part) is probably already wet.” In sum, in his depiction Harunobu has transformed the circumstances of the poem by Hyakki into the circumstances of an *oiran’s mawashi*.

### Plate 19

First let’s have a look at the poem above the illustration.

*A butterfly on a flower, playing,  
flitting from one to the next.  
How fickle!*

In reading this poem, even though not original with Harunobu, one can easily see that the flower is a metaphor for a woman, and the butterfly a man, so the butterfly flitting from one flower to another is a *mitate* for a man’s fickle heart. When we read the lines written into the picture, we can see that while the *najimi oiran* has been making the rounds of other client’s rooms, a situation has occurred in which the client waiting in bed here is flirting with the *shinzō* serving as *myōdai*. As stated in the explanation above, it was taboo for a client to seduce an *oiran’s shinzō* acting as *myōdai*. In the previous print, the client obeyed this rule, but in this picture he is about to break it. The *oiran* has just arrived on the scene.

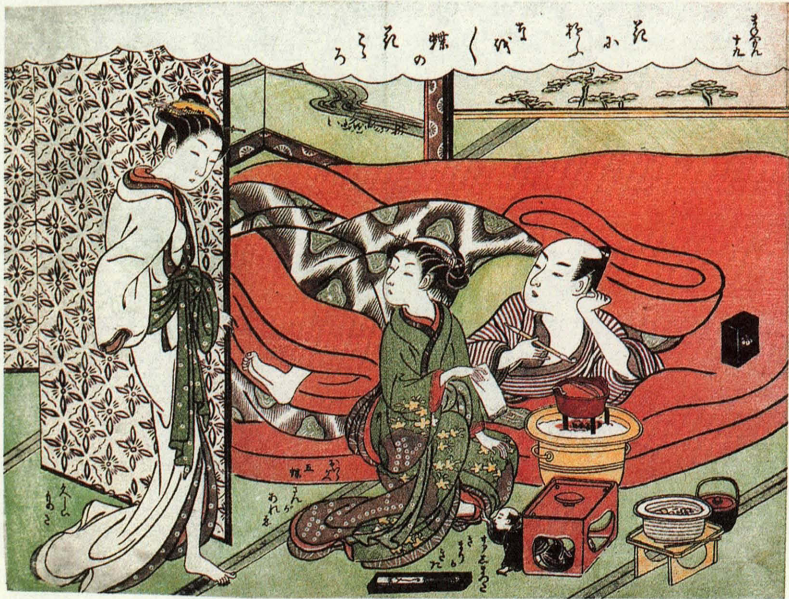


Plate 19

Maneemon worries, saying, “Oh no, the worst has happened. The *najimi oiran* is coming.” The *shinzô* appeals to the *oiran*, saying, “Gochô-san is trying to seduce me!” The *oiran* replies, “As usual,” indicating that she has already seen through his fickle mind. The name of the client, Gochô, which has the literal meaning of “five-winged butterfly” in Japanese, is a name which Harunobu created to match the poem.

### Plate 20

The poem above can be translated as follows:

*A bud on a branch, swelling—  
isn't this a show of spring?  
A young bracken coming up.*

In this print, the client's breaking of rules has advanced one step further.

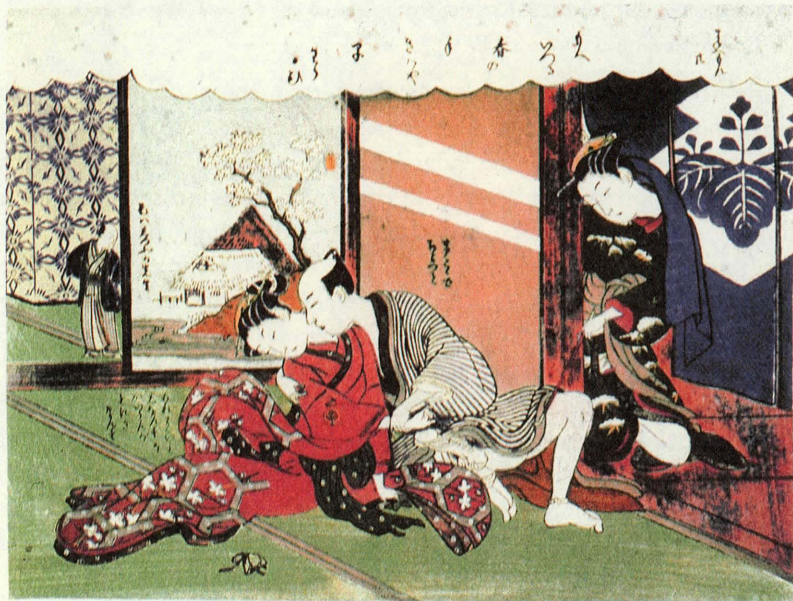


Plate 20

While saying, “Come here, let’s play around a little,” the client is embracing the *shinzō* and is trying to make her hold his penis. The *shinzō* nervously says, “Hey, don’t do anything bad. The *oiran* is coming!” As feared, the *oiran* seems to have discovered them. The phrase “a show of spring” in the poem above is clearly a *mitate* for a man’s flirtatious passion.

However, what is interesting is that the *oiran* doesn’t directly step into the scene of infidelity, but reaching out from behind the curtain extends her long *kiseru* pipe toward the man’s crotch. This is rather mysterious behavior. Actually, there is another ukiyo-e *shunga* print with almost the same design. In that print, the following famous Chinese poem from the *Wakan rōeishū* (an anthology of *waka* and Chinese-style poems) appears as a head note.

*The purple-dusted, tender bracken—men’s hands making fists;  
The emerald-jade, chilly reeds—awls poking through a bag.*

(Translation by Jonathan Chaves, from *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing*,  
Columbia University Press, 1997)

This poem celebrates early spring scenery in the countryside. In this illustration, Harunobu depicts the form of a *shinzō*'s hand grasping the man's penis as a *mitate* for "tender bracken," and also the *oiran* sticking out her long pipe for "chilly reeds." People who were fond of Harunobu's prints, upon hearing "young bracken in the early spring" probably would have recalled the poem above. There are many examples of this kind of ukiyo-e by Harunobu, in which the realities of life and images from classical poetry are layered upon one another.

Manemon, who is observing the situation from behind a sliding door panel, calls out, "This is Shitsubuka-sensei." Hayashi Yoshikazu believes that Shitsubuka-sensei is a pseudonym of the author of this work, Komatsuya Hyakki. If this is so, by calling the promiscuous client by the name Shitsubuka-sensei, Harunobu is forcing Hyakki to make an appearance in this scene. Plate 5 also employed this kind of "shoptalk" or "insider" information not understandable to outsiders.

### Plate 21

The meaning of the poem in this print cannot be understood in just one reading.

*A small silk wrapper  
for a spare in my bosom—  
an iris (kakitsubata) being amorous.*

(The small silk wrapper (*fukusa*) is used in tea ceremonies to wipe the dust off the tea utensils and also for setting utensils on to look at them.)

In looking at the composition, a courtesan has come into the room of another courtesan applying makeup before she leaves the brothel, and with a long pipe takes a swing at the man lying on the floor. According to the words written into the illustration, she says angrily, "You've come here yet again, playing around." The man replies with a flimsy excuse, saying, "I'll leave, but wait a moment for the numbness [in my legs] to go away."

Judging from their lines, the irate courtesan is the man's *najimi* courtesan,

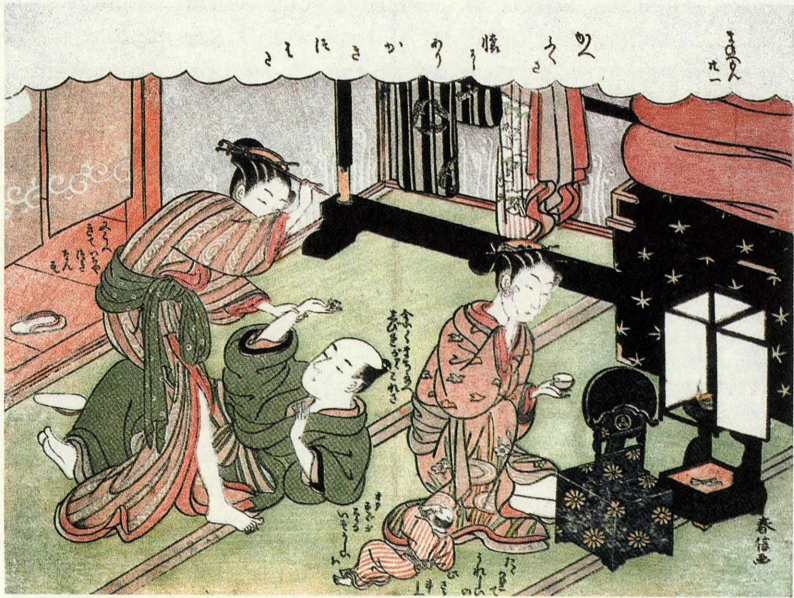


Plate 21

and the man has gone to visit another courtesan in her room. As stated earlier, in the Yoshiwara it was forbidden for a *najimi* client to get involved with another courtesan, or for a courtesan to usurp an established *najimi* client. Therefore the man has put himself in a position of inviting punishment.

Watching this, Maneemon comments, “It is only in this world where one gets pleasure from being hit,” finding that the inconsistency of the man who has come to be amused in the pleasure quarters makes a curious kind of sense. “Ahh, the bell is ringing; from now I’m going to be busy.” The bell signals the beginning of night in Yoshiwara, a place that relishes incongruities.

Let’s return to the meaning of the poem above the picture. Considering the situation outlined above, the words “a small silk wrapper for a spare” probably allude to the courtesan to whom the client is making

advances. Thinking back to an actual tea ceremony, in addition to the wrapper for wiping dust off utensils, it is common for the host to tuck another wrapper in his breast to use on the occasion of looking at the tea utensils. In other words, he usually carries two cloth wrappers. If we draw from this image an analogy to the client's feelings, it can be likened to the situation of taking a fancy to two courtesans at the same time. Moreover, the word for wrapper—*fukusa*—also has the meaning of “unorthodox” or “risque.” Thus both the “true wrapper” and “spare wrapper” in the end have the meaning of “risque,” hinting at the relationship between the client and the courtesans.

The final image (and word) in the poem on which I should comment is *kakitsubata* (iris). It is not simply a flower, but is imbued with a special meaning in the Japanese cultural tradition. Specifically, the word *kakitsubata* is associated with a famous episode of Ariwara Narihira, and thus this flower is understood as a symbol of Narihira. Thus the underlying meaning of the poem should be understood as follows:

Always entertaining a fickle heart in the breast, just like Narihira.

### **Plate 22**

The meaning of the poem above this illustration goes something like this:

*At night, hearing the sound of a big drum—  
is it kagura bayashi?*

*Now is the season for hibernating.*

(*Kagura bayashi* is the sound of kabuki music.)

This illustration represents a complete change and has become kind of zany. A naked client is sitting with a courtesan on top of three layers of thick bedding. He has one arm around her shoulders and the two are supporting a *shamisen*, and the client is beating on the body of the *shamisen* with his erect penis. How did Harunobu dream up this composition? He was probably inspired by Hyakki's poem and the idea was born from imagining the diverse circumstances in the sleeping quarters of a brothel. When I look at this picture, a painting by Harunobu comes to

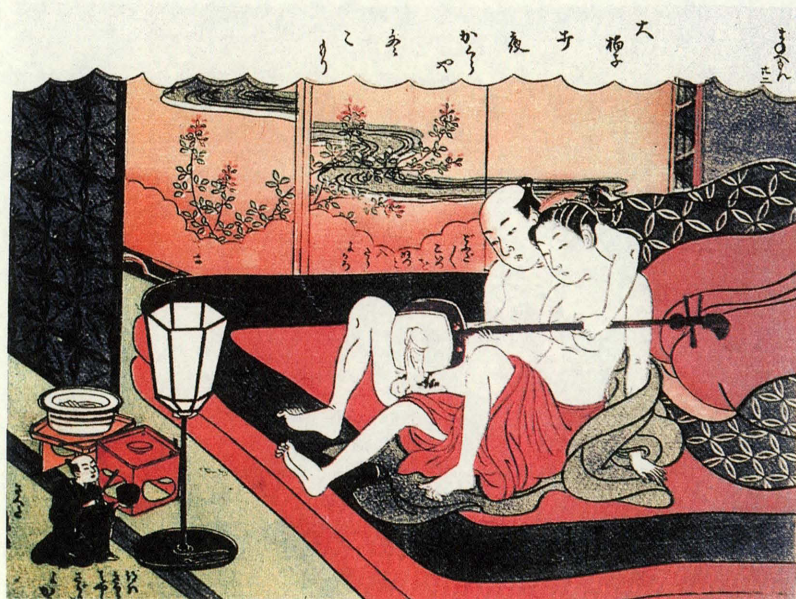


Plate 22

mind. It is a horizontal painting titled *Emperor Xuan Zong and Yang Gui-fei* (Figure 6), depicting the pair playing a flute together, leaning against each other with their heads and shoulders touching. If we change the flute to a *shamisen*, it overlaps exactly with the scene in this picture. The *shamisen* is an instrument associated with pleasures in the brothel; if the belly is a *mitate* for a drum and the erect phallus a *mitate* for a plectrum, the scene becomes a *mitate* for “beating a big drum” truly befitting *shunga*. Maneemon is elated and accompanies them by tapping on a teacup with a chopstick. Only in the Yoshiwara would this kind of absurd play occur.

The lines of the couple are as follows. The man proudly showing off his penis says, “How about this? It will be so good to stick this in you.” The courtesan excitedly answers, “Yeah, please lie down. I want to stick it in quickly.” Is the effect of this wacky scheme sufficient as foreplay? Listening to them, Maneemon makes a joke. “Later, will it be *kirin bayashi*



Figure 6. *Emperor Xuan Zong and Yang Gui-fei* by Suzuki Harunobu (detail)

Colors on silk

MOA Museum of Art, after *Ukiyo-e to jōnen*, vol. 10 of *Ningen no bijutsu*,  
Tokyo: Gakushū Kenkyūsha, 1990.

for this couple? I myself prefer *sagari ha*. There seems to be some lively play going on.” “*Kirin bayashi*” and “*sagari ha*” are types of kabuki music, playing upon the words in the poem, “*kagura bayashi*.” The meaning of *kirin bayashi* is not certain, but if we take *kirin* to be a legendary Chinese swift horse capable of running a thousand *li* (4,000 km) in one day, then *kirin bayashi* is probably a metaphor for fast action with a light tempo like a galloping horse. *Sagari ha* is a majestic rhythmic musical accompaniment



used in kabuki on the occasion of the entrance or exit of a nobleman, so Maneemon is writing and performing his own departure.

As for the deeper meaning of *fuyu gomori* (hibernation) in the poem, if one imagines that *kagura bayashi* is performed when a *ninja* (spy) appears on the stage, the meaning becomes “hiding from people’s sight.” Thus through the skillful incorporation of kabuki music, this work is none other than a *shunga* skillfully uniting the two main subjects of early ukiyo-e—kabuki and the pleasure quarters.

**Plate 23**

The poem above reads as follows:

*The more being entwined,  
the more feeling good—  
ivy-covered house.*



Plate 23

From just reading this poem once, one can conjure up an image of ardent love-making. In looking at the picture, the woman has both arms and legs wrapped tightly around a man and has her eyes closed tight in ecstasy. Her dialogue lines in the picture are just sighs of pleasure. The man impulsively utters, “Ahh, darling.” Forgetting all of the customs and deceptive wiles of the Yoshiwara, forgetting the relationship of client and courtesan, it is a scene of man and woman joining with all of their hearts. If the poem is a *mitate* for a scene of love-making, then indeed it would end up as this kind of composition. At this point one cannot distinguish whether it is sex in Yoshiwara or everyday life. Maneemon also comments, “This is the best state among all affairs. It’s more like an appetite for food than sex.” There is nothing left to say after that.

#### *Plate 24*

This is the last print in the second half of this set. It is a picture of a secret rendezvous taking place in the doorway of a brothel late at night. From the couple’s conversation, it can be inferred that the woman is a courtesan and the man is her lover.

Man: Who’s your client tonight?

Woman: A tourist

The previous print depicted the reality of a courtesan, without any acting, and this final illustration is another example showing a courtesan’s true heart, unconnected with business—a secret meeting with her lover. Maneemon’s final monologue is as follows.

Having exhausted all extravagances, in the end human beings prefer simple things like this. If life were like this, there would be no need for the Yoshiwara, and shops wouldn’t get any business. However, this too is a scene of interest in the Yoshiwara. Next spring, let’s shift the scene to Fukugawa (“downtown” Edo, an area known for amiable prostitutes) and try to seek out different ways of love-making.

What Maneemon had been looking for in the Yoshiwara seems to have

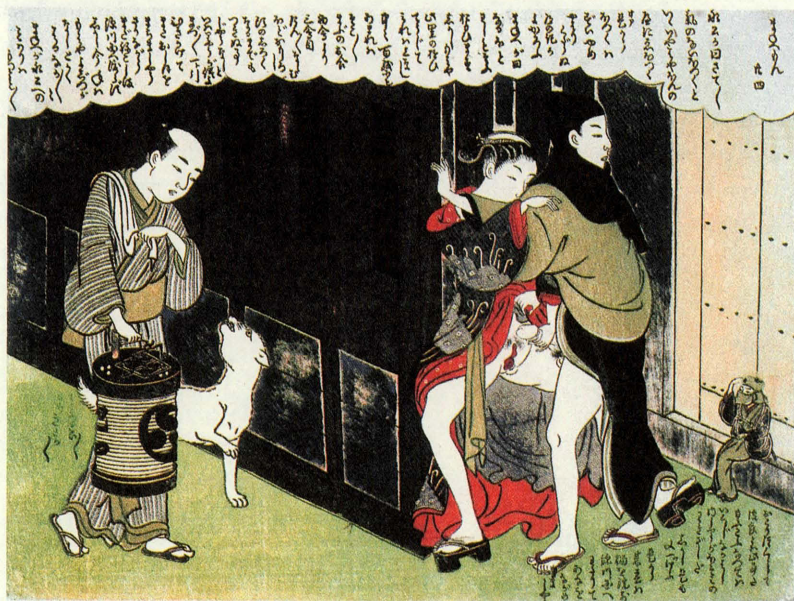


Plate 24

been unconventional love strategies. His revealing of the unchanging true hearts of men and women of this world perhaps implies there is no longer any reason for him to remain in the Yoshiwara.

This brings the entire set to a close, with Harunobu slyly employing an amusing device—a man carrying a lantern accompanied by a white dog. At first glance, reading this as an ordinary Yoshiwara scene, this man looks like a servant from a brothel coming to get one of the courtesans. But if we look at the crest on the lantern he is carrying, it is the trademark of the publisher of this work, Nishimura Eijudō. In other words, while this man is pretending to be a servant employed by a brothel, actually he is a servant of the publisher who has come to get the main character, Maneemon. Hyakki in his text actually has the master of Eijudō make an appearance and deliver a farewell greeting together with Maneemon.

Thus for the present, the long trip to master the way of love-making

undertaken by Ukiyonosuke has come to an end. Ukiyonosuke placed *irokonomi* (erotism) at the center of people's lives, and to be conversant with the secrets of this "way" was one of his ideals. There is not space here to discuss the psychology of *irokonomi* in Edo culture, but if one takes a general look at the diverse cultural phenomena in the Edo period, Edoites were well versed in the way of *irokonomi*, and one can see that they showed incredible ingenuity in their expressions of it. The flourishing of *shunga* in ukiyo-e evidences this better than anything else.