

## CHAPTER 4

# FŪRYŪ ZASHIKI HAKKEI (EIGHT MODERN VIEWS OF INTERIORS): THE CONSTRUCTION OF MITATE-E

The *Fūryū ensboku Maneemon* is one of the “twin stars” of Harunobu’s *shunga*. The other, the *Fūryū zashiki hakkei*, is the subject of this chapter. As can be surmised from the word *hakkei* (eight views) in the title, the eight views of interiors consist of scenes devised as *mitate* of the *Eight Views of the Xiao-Xiang*—a traditional theme in Chinese landscape painting. The idea of creating *mitate* is an important form of expression in Japanese culture, and adaptations into painting—*mitate-e*—flourished in the Edo period. Overall, *mitate-e* show the distinctive form of the artifice called *mitatete* (to liken or compare). First let’s look at the main features of *mitate-e*.

### Harunobu’s *Mitate-e*

While generally taking classical literature and historical events of Japan and China as subject matter, *mitate-e* are pictures in which the figures and scenes have been changed to represent the manners and customs of the day. Artists poured their cultivation and wit into these clever alterations, and the audience took pleasure in figuring them out. There is a diversity of *mitate-e* schemes. A comparatively common one features figures dressed in contemporary clothes holding things that are associated with a certain earlier scene or person or deity, or assuming postures associated with an earlier model (Figure 7). There are also *mitate-e* which employ famous old poems as head notes and then depict contemporary city scenes that echo the sentiments of the poems (Figure 8).



Figure 7. Suzuki Harunobu, *Mitate of Daikoku* (*nishiki-e chûban*), after Harunobu, Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1972.

A young woman wearing a kimono with an unusual pattern on a dark ground is sitting on a rice bale. A large bag is slung over her left shoulder, and she holds a small wooden mallet in her right hand. From the bale, bag, and mallet, she can easily be recognized as a *mitate* of Daikoku, one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune.



Figure 8. Suzuki Harunobu, “Plum by the Waterside in the Second Month,” from the *Fūryū shiki kasen* (Modern Immortal Poets of the Four Seasons) (*nishiki-e chūban*), after *Ukiyo-e o yomu: Harunobu*, Tokyo: Asahi Shuppan-sha, 1998.

The *waka* poem above the picture can be translated as follows:

*The scent of the plum reaches  
even the hands of the person  
scooping out water downstream—  
the river current flowing  
beneath the fragrant plum blossoms.*

This poem is by Taira no Tsuneaki (d. 1077). For this verse, Harunobu

has depicted a pair of lovers on a dark night, with the young man breaking off some white plum blossoms. The white plum blossoms allude to the innocent forms of the young man and woman, and the fragrance is likened to the couple's first love. In addition, the meaning of the phrase "scooping out water downstream" is a *mitate* for the consummation of the young couple's love in the future.

A more elaborate example is the print titled *Mitate of Kanzan and Jittoku* (Figure 9). This print shows well the special characteristics of *mitate*, which is an important concept in interpreting Harunobu's *shunga*, and it merits closer examination.

Two young women are standing in an undecorated townhouse. One is reading a letter while standing. The other is taking a break from sweeping and glances sideways at the letter. At first it seems to be just a depiction of an everyday scene in a townhouse of the time, but actually two *mitate* are skillfully incorporated into the picture. One is comparatively easy to understand. In the cloud-shape above the picture is written the following poem by Chûnagon Asatada (910–966):

If I hadn't met that man,  
I wouldn't have such a burning passion to see him,  
and wouldn't resent him so deeply,  
or myself for falling in love.

In reading this poem, one can easily imagine that the letter in the woman's hands is a love letter. Taking inspiration from the love poetry of a Heian-period courtier, Harunobu depicts the form of a townswoman agonizing over love. After realizing a meeting with her lover, she finds that her love has intensified. Resentful of her partner for inflaming her even more, she is grieving over the anguish of love. That undying love is likened to the impatient mood of the woman standing and reading the long awaited letter.

Hidden among the assortment of small utensils is another *mitate* that may have escaped notice: the handscroll letter in the woman's hand and the broom held by the servant woman. When these two are combined in this kind of depiction, it causes us to associate them with one of the subjects of traditional Buddhist painting—*Kanzan and Jittoku* (Figure 10).

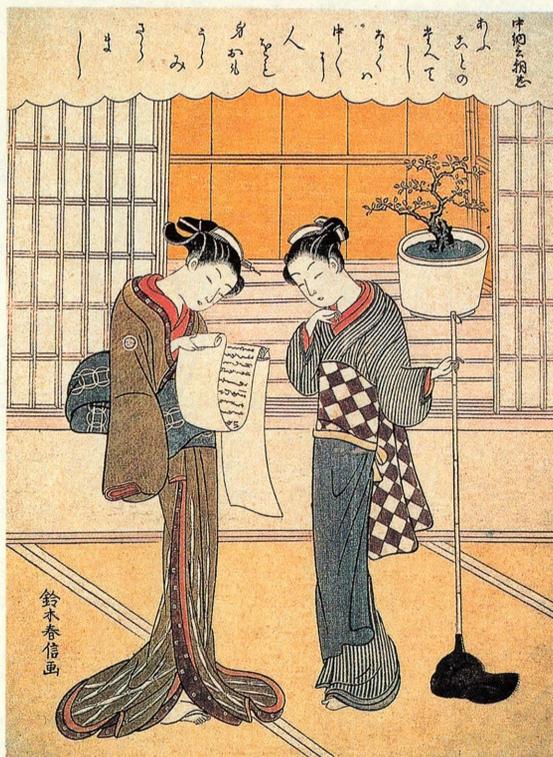


Figure 9. Suzuki Harunobu, *Mitate of Kanzan and Jittoku* (*nishiki-e chûban*) MOA Museum of Art, after Harunobu, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1965.

It is said that Kanzan and Jittoku (Ch. Hanshan and Shide) were both Tang-dynasty monks: Jittoku was a monk of low status who worked in the garden and kitchen at the temple Kokuseiji (Ch. Guoqing-si) on Mt. Tendai (Ch. Tiantai), and Kanzan was a destitute monk living in a cave nearby Kokuseiji (Ch. Guoqing-si) who was always given leftover food by Jittoku. Compositions combining the figures of these two unconventional men became a popular painting subject in China and Japan. In particular, there are a lot of Zen paintings depicting Kanzan holding a scroll and



Figure 10. Ogata Kōrin, *Kanzan and Jittoku*  
 Ink and light color on paper  
 MOA Museum of Art, after *Nihon no suibokuga*,  
 Tokyo: Daichi Hōki Shuppan, 1989.

Jittoku a broom.

Thus while at first glance Harunobu's *mitate-e* may seem to depict the customs of the day, symbols of historical events and classics are casually mixed in, so that it has a structure in which a historical world is superimposed on contemporary figures. In addition to the features in common that are symbolized, the interest of *mitate-e* lies in the great distance between the two. There is the fun of discovering unexpected similarities

between objects which at first glance resemble or don't resemble one another. For example, in Harunobu's *Mitate of Kanzan and Jittoku*, in addition to the fun of figuring out the allusions to Kanzan and Jittoku in the scroll and broom nonchalantly held in the hands of the townswomen, interest is amplified through the large discrepancy between the circumstances of the two anonymous women of "downtown" Edo and those of the legendary monks Kanzan and Jittoku.

Taking pleasure in this kind of riddle-solving is probably satisfying in itself, but somehow I don't think that Edo people would have been content with just this. In other words, the interest of Harunobu's *mitate* does not simply lie in the skill of witty allusive play. In looking long and hard at this *Mitate of Kanzan and Jittoku*, one sees the unconventional visages of Kanzan and Jittoku, known for their unmonk-like eccentric behavior, superimposed on the innocent figures of the townswomen completely unrelated to Buddhist doctrine. The large disparity in outward appearances and circumstances is turned inside out, and contrary to expectation, it becomes possible to discover substantial similarities suggested between the two.

The legend of Kanzan and Jittoku started to become famous when Bukan (Ch. Fenggan) spotted the carefree pair chatting together in the garden at Kokuseiji. He realized that even though they lived like beggars, Kanzan, who read sutras, was a manifestation of Monju (S. Manjusri) Bodhisattva symbolizing wisdom, and Jittoku, who cheerfully gave left-over food to Kanzan, was a manifestation of Fugen (S. Samantabhadra) Bodhisattva, symbolizing compassion. This way of seeing by the Zen priest Bukan is a marvelous *mitate*. In fact, this may even be indicative of the essence of *mitate*. While they should not be compared to Priest Bukan, it is possible that Harunobu and other Edoites who were fond of *mitate-e* may have actually seen in part the vestiges of Kanzan and Jittoku in the demeanors of the innocent townswomen. Within the conception of *mitate* is concealed the desire to discover the kernel of something sacred within something familiar, wanting to see a familiar thing as a manifestation of something sacred.

If the forte of *mitate* is seeing "something sacred" or "something

elegant” superimposed on “something ordinary,” then at the same time as having deep affection toward “familiar things” one must have a frank admiration for “things of value.” The hidden allure of *mitate* is finding analogies between these incongruous things and through constructing a bridge, trying to inject more life into familiar things.

This kind of *mitate* scheme of layering classical and historical tales and contemporary customs, which at first glance are remotely different, dovetailed with the intellectual aspirations and playful hearts of cultivated Edoites at that time, and Harunobu’s *mitate-e* took the world by a storm. The grounding for Harunobu’s *mitate* was his upbringing in Kyoto where the remnants of court culture remained strong, and is not unrelated to the fact that he was a pupil of Nishikawa Sukenobu who designed numerous woodblock books taking classical themes as subject matter. Incidentally, Harunobu’s *gō* (pseudonym or art name) is “Shikojin” (Person looking back to ancient times).

## The Use of *Mitate* in the *Zashiki hakekei*

The *Fūryū zashiki hakekei* (Eight Views of Modern Interiors) is a *shunga* work by Harunobu; it was preceded by a non-*shunga* work by Harunobu called the *Zashiki hakekei* (Eight Views of Interiors). As one can see from the signature “Kyosen” appearing on each of the illustrations in the first edition of the *Zashiki hakekei*, it is thought that the original producer of this work was Kyosen (the art name of Okubo Tadanobu, a shogunal vassal who was a follower of Harunobu), and that Harunobu did the illustrations based on Kyosen’s conceptions. Kyosen presented it to fellow *kyōka* poets and close friends. The *Zashiki hakekei* was extremely well received and soon a bookstore obtained the woodblocks and issued a second edition. Later it was reissued a number of times, with changes in the title as well as in the combination of illustrations. While the *Fūryū zashiki hakekei* skillfully draws upon the scheme of Kyosen’s *Zashiki hakekei*, the compositional designs have been changed. Before moving on to the *Fūryū zashiki hakekei*, it is instructive to take a look at the designs of the *Zashiki hakekei*.

The title *Zashiki hakkei* (Eight Views of Interiors), as noted earlier, is based on a traditional Chinese landscape painting theme—*Eight Views of the Xiao-Xiang*. Xiao-Xiang is the name of region located in what is now Hunan province, south of Lake Dongting, where the two rivers Xiao and Xiang flow together. It was a picturesque region which in the old days was visited and acclaimed by many literati. The *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* is a selection of eight scenic places in the Xiao-Xiang region. The eight scenes are as follows:

- “Geese Descending to Sandbar”—late autumn; a view in which a line of geese are flying south over a sandy beach by the lakeshore
- “Mountain Market, Clearing Skies”—early summer; a scene of a village in the mountains, with mountain winds driving away the rising clouds and bringing clear sky
- “Evening Bell from Distant Temple”—a scene in which the bell of a mountain temple announces evening
- “Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting”—mid-autumn; a scene with a full moon over Lake Dongting
- “Fishing Village in Evening Glow”—a scene with the setting sun shining over a lakeside fishing village
- “Night Rain on Xiao-Xiang”—a scene of night rain in the region where the Xiao and Xiang rivers merge
- “Returning Sail off Distant Shore”—a scene of sailboats returning from a distant bay
- “River and Sky in Evening Snow”—a scene of snowy mountains towering by the river, at sunset in winter

Many Chinese literati visited these places and described the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* in poetry and painting. Examples were brought to Japan by Zen monks in the Muromachi period (1392–1573), and their longing for these picturesque scenes, which they knew only through landscape paintings with poetic inscriptions, found expression in the creation of poems and paintings (Figures #11a–h).



Figure 11a. "Geese Descending to Sandbar"



Figure 11b. "Mountain Market, Clearing Skies"



Figure 11c. "Evening Bell from Distant Temple"

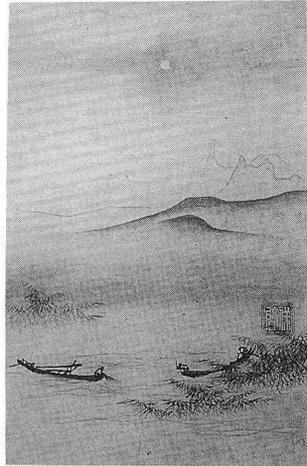


Figure 11d. "Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting"

All paintings reproduced on this page are by Xia Gui, from *Eight Views of the Xiao-Xiang*, ink and light color on paper, Seikadô Art Museum, after *Nihon no suibokuga*, Tokyo: Daichi Hôki Shuppan, 1989.



Figure 11e. "Fishing Village in Evening Glow"



Figure 11f. "Night Rain on Xiao-Xiang"

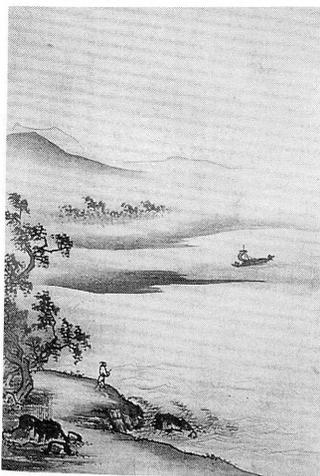


Figure 11g. "Returning Sail off Distant Shore"



Figure 11h. "River and Sky in Evening Snow"

All paintings reproduced on this page are by Xia Gui, from *Eight Views of the Xiao-Xiang*, ink and light color on paper, Seikadō Art Museum, after *Nihon no suibokuga*, Tokyo: Daichi Hōki Shuppan, 1989.

Kyosen's idea was to create *mitate* of classical landscape paintings of the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* using woodblock print scenes of interiors of contemporary Edo townhouses. However, the concept of likening the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* to Japanese scenery was not Kyosen's invention, for it had developed earlier, in the latter part of the Muromachi period. The first examples were the *Eight Views of Ōmi*, which likened the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* to scenes in the southern part of Lake Biwa. Even today, the names of the respective places are associated with "Geese Descending to Katada," "Clearing Skies in Awazu," "Autumn Moon over Ishiyama," "Seta in Evening Glow," "Night Rain on Karazaki," "Returning Sail off Yabase," "Evening Bell from Mii[dera]," and "Hira in Evening Snow." Japanese were very fond of this kind of *mitate* of the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang*, and in the early Edo period, *mitate* developed which employed scenes from what is now Tokyo Bay in Yokohama city—the *Eight Views of Kanazawa*. Later, a diversity of "Eight Views," large and small, came into being in every part of Japan during the Edo period. In ukiyo-e as well, many sets of prints such as the *Eight Views of Edo* and the *Eight Views of Yoshinawa* were designed with the scheme of *meisho-e* (pictures of famous places).

The witty conception of the *Zashiki hakkei*, in which the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* are likened to the forms of everyday household furnishings, did not originate with Kyosen, for one can already find this kind of idea employed about forty years earlier in Nagata Teiryû's *kyôka* poems titled *Zashiki hakkei* (1722). The titles for Kyosen's *Zashiki hakkei* are written on the outer wrapper for the set of prints, and for the most part are the same as those appended to each of Teiryû's *kyôka*. In connection with this, three years after Teiryû's work was published, in 1725, the fourteen-year-old youth Fukuo Kichijirô (the son of a samurai) composed *kyôka* following exactly the same idea as Teiryû. Interestingly, poems closely resembling Kichijirô's *kyôka* appear at the top of each of the illustrations of the *Fûryû zashiki hakkei*. Thus it can be surmised that Harunobu's *Fûryû zashiki hakkei* was inspired by Kichijirô's *kyôka*, and that Kyosen's *Zashiki hakkei* was based on Teiryû's *kyôka*.

Before beginning to look at the *Fûryû zashiki hakkei*, let's look at the

*mitate* of each of the illustrations in the *Zashiki bakkei* (*nishiki-e chûban*) while consulting Teiryû's *kyôka*.

**A. “Kotoji no rakugan” (Geese Descending to a Koto)  
(*Mitate* of “Geese Descending to Sandbar”)**

This print is titled “Geese Descending to a Koto,” and conforming to the title, the scene depicts a well-dressed young woman practicing the koto. As in Teiryû's *kyôka*, “geese descending to sandbar” (scene with a



A “Geese Descending to a Koto”

line of geese flying south over a lakeside sandbar in late autumn) are likened to geese descending to a “koto.” In other words, the gently curved surface of the body of the koto is the “sandbar” and the bridges—shaped like pairs of legs spread open wide—are the descending geese, so that the slanted alignment of the bridges is a *mitate* for a line of geese. The *hamamatsu* (pines on the beach) pattern on the kimono of the young woman probably alludes to the sandbar. The flowering bush clover hanging over the veranda that can be glimpsed through the open sliding door is also a typical autumn plant associated with the season of the descending geese.



B “Folding Fan, Clearing Skies”

**B. “Ôgi no seiran” (Folding Fan, Clearing Skies)  
(Mitate of “Mountain Market, Clearing Skies”)**

This print is titled “Folding Fan, Clearing Skies” and depicts a young woman shielding herself with a fan, walking across a street accompanied by a female friend. “Folding Fan, Clearing Skies,” too, derives from Teiryû’s *kyôka* “Wind at the Fan” which is a *mitate* of “Mountain Market, Clearing Skies” (the mountain wind blowing away clouds gathering in a village tucked away in the mountains in early summer). The woman holding a fan in her hand is based on the “folding fan” in the *kyôka*, and her gesture of shading herself with it is indicative of strong sunlight. It is the season of “clearing skies,” in other words, a depiction of early summer taking into account the strong sunlight. In addition, the hem of the woman’s kimono is in disarray; this and the depiction of the female attendant turning her face away are suggestive of the “mountain wind.”

**C. “Tokei no banshō” (Evening Chime of the Clock)  
(Mitate of “Evening Bell from Distant Temple”)**

In tune with the title “Evening Chime of the Clock,” a woman wearing a *yukata* has just come out of the bath and is relaxing on the veranda with a young female attendant. A clock is located in the spot where the servant is turning her head and gazing. It is probably sounding the hour of evening, so the “clock chiming the evening hour” becomes a *mitate* for the “evening bell” (temple bell ringing at evening). However, in Teiryû’s *kyôka*, “a clock sounding the time of a lover’s return” is employed as a *mitate* for “the temple bell ringing at evening.” If the large, black stand of the clock is a *mitate* for “mountain,” then the clock on top of the “mountain” could signify the “distant temple bell.”



C “Evening Chime of the Clock”

D. “*Kyôdai no shûgetsu*” (Autumn Moon on the Mirror Stand)  
 (*Mitate* of “Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting”)

Conforming to the title “Autumn Moon on the Mirror Stand,” this print depicts a scene in which a townswoman is having her hair groomed by a female hairdresser in front of a mirror. It is easy to see that the round mirror suspended in the mirror stand is a *mitate* for the “autumn moon.” Moreover, the woman’s kimono pattern of plovers over waves may be a *mitate* for the surface of “Lake Dongting.” From the pampas grass outside



D “Autumn Moon on the Mirror Stand”

the window we know that the season is mid-autumn.

**E. “*Andon no sekishō*” (Evening Glow of the Lamp)  
(*Mitate* of “Fishing Village in Evening Glow”)**

In accordance with the title “Evening Glow of the Lamp,” this print depicts a woman in a black ground kimono, with *obi* tied in front in the old style, reading a letter in the light of a lamp. This is derived from the image in Teiryū’s *kyōka* of “lighting a lamp at twilight in the remaining



E “Evening Glow of the Lamp”

rays of the sun,” which is a *mitate* for “fishing village in evening glow” (scene of the evening sun shimmering over a lakeside fishing village). Instead of a scene of the setting sun, the writer of the *kyōka* found interest in the scene of a lamp lit at the onset of dusk. Since the leaves of the maple tree in the garden are turning red, we know the season is autumn. The autumn sun sets early, and it quickly becomes dark. Thus the situation of this print is a scene of sunset in autumn, and while the woman is reading a letter it quickly grows dark. Taking notice of this, a servant girl has lit the lamp. The stream coursing through the garden is probably a *mitate* for the lakeside of the “fishing village.”

F. “*Daisu no yosame*” (Night Rain on the Stand)  
 (Mitate for “Night Rain on Xiao-Xiang”)

The *daisu* (stand) of “*Daisu no yosame*” is a stand on which tea ceremony utensils are placed. Harunobu depicts a middle-aged woman dozing off in front of the stand while a young boy is playing with her hair. Behind them a young woman is watching and chuckling. The three figures are probably mother, daughter, and grandson. As for why this print is a *mitate* for “night rain,” in Teiryū’s *kyōka*, the “bubbling sound of water in the tea



F “Night Rain on the Stand”

kettle” is likened to the “sound of the night rain.” In other words, the “sound of boiling water” in the tea kettle on top of the stand is a *mitate* for the “sound of night rain.”

**G. “Tenuguiwake no kihan” (Returning Sail at the Towel Rack)**  
 (*Mitate* for “Returning Sail off Distant Shore”)

Teiryū’s *kyōka* employs the phrase “the towel hanging on the rack flutters in the breeze” as a *mitate* for “returning sail” (sailboat returning to



G “Returning Sail at the Towel Rack”

the bay), so Harunobu depicted a towel suspended from a towel rack on the veranda. In the scene of “Returning Sail off Distant Shore,” when standing on the shore and watching a boat head out to the open sea, one can hardly see the progression of the boat, only its swaying form. Here, in a room of a well-to-do person’s home, while her servant is sewing, the female mistress who has been relaxing with a fan in her hand wearily goes over to the washstand and is using the water to rinse her hands. One can see that his kind of languid scene of a summer afternoon in the city is a *mitate* for the swaying appearance of “Returning Sail off Distant Shore.” The pattern on the kimono of the mistress is “water plantain by the shore,” which is related to a summer waterside scene.

#### H. “*Nurioke no bosetsu*” (Lacquer Stand in Evening Snow) (*Mitate* of “River and Sky in Evening Snow”)

“River and Sky” can be interpreted as meaning a large river and vast sky, and in the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* it is used to signify mountains rising at the edge of the water, so accordingly it refers to a twilight scene of snowy mountains by the riverside. In Teiryû’s *kyôka*, a “lacquer stand” is used as a *mitate* for that kind of scene. The lacquer stand is a black lacquer mountain-shaped stand used as tool in smoothing out cotton. When a white cotton cloth is draped over this stand, it resembles a scene in which the foot of the mountain grows dark as the sun goes down, but the snow-capped peak sparkles in the last rays. There is no question that this is a *mitate* of “River and Sky in Evening Snow.”

In this way, with Teiryû’s *kyôka* as intermediaries, the views inside the homes of Edo townspeople in Kyosen’s *Zashiki hakkei* are splendid *mitate* of the ink landscape painting world of the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang*. As may be expected, because it was prepared solely under the supervision of the cultivated shogunal retainer Kyosen, the pictures as well as the printing were done with great care so that the finished product is a



H “Lacquer Stand in Evening Snow”

gorgeous set of prints. However, in the process of explaining the pictures above I felt that something was lacking. The reason is that too much emphasis is placed on the importance of the furnishings in the rooms as *mitate* for each of the scenes of the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang*, and therefore it is difficult to sense the psychologically resonant relationship.

## Explanations of the Illustrations in the *Fûryû zashiki hakkei*

Having looked at the salient Chinese and Japanese models for the *Fûryû zashiki hakkei*, let us turn to a reading of this *shunga* series. The title and poem on each of the prints are somewhat unusual *kyôka* by Kichijirô, which appear above as head notes. Whereas Kyosen's *Zashiki hakkei* was a private edition distributed to like-minded colleagues, this *shunga* publication was aimed at a slightly broader audience, and thus it can be thought of in a way as disclosing the "inside story." Of course saying that it is disclosing the inside story does not mean that the interest of the set is reduced. Harunobu's aim was to reveal the pleasure and depth of *mitate* by transforming the *Zashiki hakkei* into *shunga*.

Let us examine the prints one by one. Since the *kyôka* appearing at the top of the illustrations play an important role, at the beginning of each explanation I will provide a brief explanation of the title and the poem.

### *Print A* "Geese Descending to a Koto"

*Perhaps attracted by the sound of the koto,  
this year's first flock of geese  
descends together from the sky.*

As this is the first illustration in the volume, the artist takes pains to provide a number of clues that guide his viewers toward recognition of what the *mitate* allusions are. To begin with, in order to indirectly suggest that the title "Geese Descending to a Koto" is a parody of "Geese Descending to Sandbar," in the background of the single-panel screen painting is a depiction of "Geese Descending to Sandbar." Moreover, outside the window are crimson maple leaves associated with the season of descending geese. Having explained it this far, the viewer can easily see that the row of bridges on the koto played by the young woman is a *mitate* for the line of "descending geese" and the surface of the koto is a *mitate* for the sandy beach of the "sandbar."

In looking at the couple in the picture, a young man has his arm around the shoulder of a woman who is playing the koto, and they are kissing.



Print A "Geese Descending to a Koto"

He still has a forelock, which is cut during the coming-of-age ceremony, so he is a youth. The woman is also an adolescent, for she is wearing a long-sleeved kimono (*furisode*) for young girls. Since the coming-of-age ceremony for both men and women at that time took place around the age of fifteen or sixteen, this print depicts the budding of a boy and girl's love. As in the *senryū*, "At the beginning of *makura-e* is the untying of the *obi*," for *shunga* this is rather reserved, and as one stage of human sexuality this kind of scene probably never changes.

A problematic issue in explaining this illustration is that, following the *kyōka* in which "geese descending to a koto" is a *mitate* for "geese descending to sandbar," is the main thrust of this print only the koto skillfully incorporated into the picture? If it is just that, then there is no difference between this and the *Zashiki hakkei* designed by Kyosen. However, if one closely compares Kichijirō's *kyōka* and Harunobu's illustration, one can see that in this print there is an even more subtle *mitate* at work.

The *mitate* in the *kyōka* is the image of the first wild geese flying in line formation in the sky, quickly changing direction and descending to a sandbar as though they had been attracted by the sound of a koto. If the “first wild geese” is a *mitate* for the young man’s “first love” and the “sound of a koto,” an instrument typically taken up by young women, is a *mitate* for the girl’s as yet unconscious romantic awakening, then it perfectly matches the love scene in this print. The sound of an instrument being played by someone he admires is probably filled with an enticing power that is hard for the young man to resist. If we consider it from that angle and look at the details of the composition, we can interpret the color of the maple leaves outside the window as suggestive of the burning passion of the young man, and the pattern of ivy and maple leaves on the young woman’s *furisode* as alluding to the floating romantic feelings of an adolescent woman.

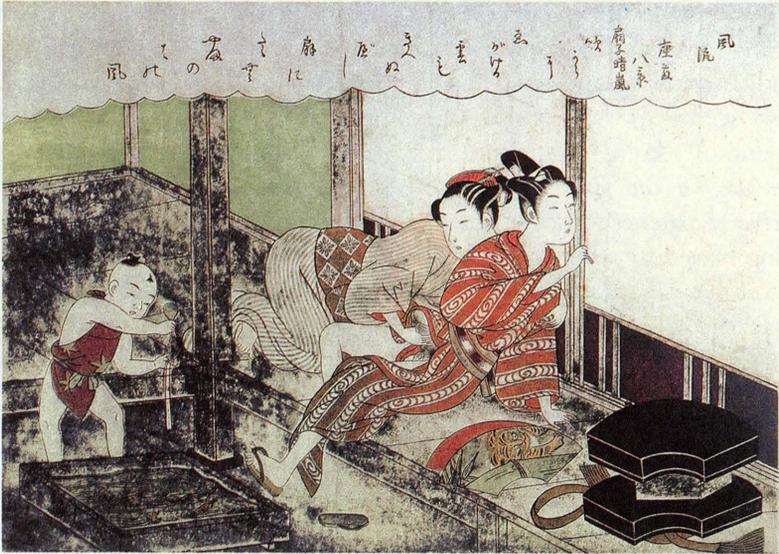
Lastly, the black dog depicted next to the young couple is probably the girl’s pet which is kept indoors. It is looking in the opposite direction and pretending not to see its master’s romantic liaison. This is probably one of Harunobu’s devices to evince the smile-provoking nature of this scene.

**Print B** “Folding Fan, Clearing Skies”

*In the wind from the fan  
the painted clouds will probably disappear,  
like the mountain wind driving away clouds in the mountains.*

In line with the *kyōka* “Folding Fan, Clearing Skies,” which parodies “Mountain Market, Clearing Skies,” a peddler of folding fans appears in this picture. A lacquer box used for carrying fans is placed on the veranda, and a folding fan with a design of “tiger and bamboo” has already been taken out. It seems that summer is approaching, so the woman has purchased a fan with a new design as a replacement. Since the majority of this kind of peddler dealt with the women of the household, it is said that handsome young men were often put in charge. The peddler in this picture is a young man who still has his forelock.

The design of this illustration has become *shunga*-like. The woman who is babysitting is making advances to the fan peddling youth, and is



Print B “Folding Fan, Clearing Skies”

groping around in the front of his kimono and grabbing his penis. From the striped pattern of her kimono it appears that this aggressive woman is the wet-nurse of this home, and is probably older than the young man. Unexpectedly the fan peddling youth appeared at the back door on an early summer afternoon while the wet nurse was babysitting a boy in the inner garden of a *machiya*. It seems to be a scene in which her amorous heart was suddenly aroused while she was being shown a variety of fans. The sexual passion that has suddenly sprung up in the older woman sitting in the early summer sun—warm enough to make her slightly sweaty—has been employed by Harunobu as a *mitate* for the “clouds” which quickly arise in the clear skies of early summer.

According to the common literary knowledge at that time, it would have been natural to associate “clouds” with the “clouds of Fuzan (Ch. Wushan).” The tale of Fuzan is about one of five legendary Chinese emperors and Princess Tōki (Ch. Taoji), daughter of Emperor Seki (Ch. Chi) who ruled Ka (Ch. Xia). Tōki was a beautiful woman who died

without marrying and was buried south of Fuzan. One day when King Ja (Ch. Xiang) of So (Ch. Chu) was visiting this area, while taking a nap he dreamed that he was seduced by a beautiful woman and they joined in a sweet exchange. As the woman was leaving, she said, “I live amid the mountains to the south of Fuzan; in the morning I become clouds, in the evening I appear as rain,” and disappeared. Awakening the next morning, when the king looked in the direction of Fuzan, just as the woman said, clouds were hanging over Fuzan, so he realized that the beautiful woman in yesterday’s dream must have been Princess Tōki. A one-time casual intimate exchange between a man and woman accordingly came to be referred to as “the clouds of Fuzan” or simply “clouds and rain.”

Moreover, as in the phrase of the *kyōka* “the painted clouds will probably disappear,” the clouds that suddenly appear in the mountains in early summer are quickly dissipated by the mountain winds, and the sky soon returns to its original clear state. In other words, Harunobu is speculating that the passion of the wet nurse is the manifestation of a one-time playful heart, by no means the kind to cause problems afterward. If this is so, the kind of man and woman combination employed in this illustration as a *mitate* of “Mountain Market, Clearing Skies” is a brilliant match. Clever *mitate* such as this can only be found in *shunga*.

In order to accurately convey the circumstances of the setting, Harunobu paid attention even to small details. Contrary to her hands, the eyes of the wet nurse are steadily watching over the child; by no means is she losing her head. And even though the young man is entrusting his penis to the hands of the wet nurse, afraid of being seen by other people he has stealthily cracked open the sliding door. The delicate position and situation of the two, as well as the risk of enjoying a fleeting affair are skillfully represented.

The depiction of the little boy innocently playing with water in the garden, indifferent to the actions of the couple, adds a refreshing quality to this scene of a naughty liaison. This kind of innocent child frequently appears in Harunobu’s *shunga*, bringing what could be called a fiction-like, carefree atmosphere to a scene of love-making. However, while adopting



clock, which was rather costly at that time, and the thick bedding, it can be surmised that the two are a young married couple of a wealthy merchant family. The fact that the man is still wearing his crested outer kimono suggests that this is a hasty act which happened on the spot upon his return home.

As *shunga*, one would expect the young married couple attempting an unusual position to be the main subject, but in this set, which specializes in skillful *mitate*, the female servant spying on the pair becomes the main character. No matter how we look at it, the notion expressed in the *kyōka* lines “at dusk, hearing the sound of the clock marking time and becoming lonely” doesn’t seem to reflect the hearts of the young couple, but rather matches the sentiment of the “Peeping Tom” woman servant. In other words, Harunobu is employing the desolate mood of the “evening bell” sounding the evening hour as a *mitate* for the loneliness of a woman who has no lover. At nightfall, for someone without a lover, the sound of the temple bell ringing at dusk, if interpreted as announcing the arrival of the “world of nighttime,” is probably heard only as something which stirs up emptiness. In looking at this picture, the sound of the clock in the background of the servant crouching behind the *fusuma* can perhaps be seen as goading on the empty passions of a single person. The woman cannot stop herself from reaching toward her own genitals with her left hand.

**Print D** “Autumn Moon on the Mirror Stand”

*The mid-autumn full moon—  
just when you think it is hidden in the clouds,  
shines over the mirror stand.*

It goes without saying that the round mirror mounted on the mirror stand is a *mitate* for the “autumn moon.” A wife, naked from the waist up, is applying makeup in front of the mirror. Her husband, who is having a smoke, watches her and unexpectedly his playful heart is aroused, so he is embracing her from behind and is spreading apart the hem of her kimono. Since the wife has not shaved her eyebrows, it is likely that she is a new bride, as yet without child. The object hanging from her neck is an amulet containing a paper charm for women.



Print D “Autumn Moon on the Mirror Stand”

To understand why Harunobu depicted this kind of situation as a *mitate* for “Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting,” one must go to the *kyōka* written above as an intermediary. Kichijirō’s *kyōka* celebrates the pleasure of viewing the autumn moon; when the circular form of the moon hidden behind the clouds suddenly appears, he describes it as emitting a glittering brightness. Let’s imagine that Harunobu is employing the innocent body of the new wife as a *mitate* for the “mid-autumn moon” and her clothes as a *mitate* for the “clouds.” Ordinarily, a new wife hides that “attraction” in her kimono, but when she puts on her makeup, she boldly shows her skin openly. The husband’s excitement upon seeing this is the main subject of this picture’s *mitate*. In other words, Harunobu employs the sudden passion of the husband aroused at seeing the form of his wife applying makeup, bare to the waist, as a *mitate* for the cry of admiration when unexpectedly the white shining form of the moon (female body) obscured by the clouds (kimono) appears.

The husband puts his arms around his wife from behind and spreads



The husband's partner is probably the servant of this house.

The *andon* held by the wife, representing concretely the words in the *kyōka* “*ie no tomoshibi*” (household lamps), is the same as in the *Zashiki bakkei*. The problem is the connection between the scene of the original “Fishing Village in Evening Glow” and the compositional design of this print. Emulating Kichijirō's shift from sunlight to the light of household lamps as the special feature of “Fishing Village in Evening Glow,” Harunobu represents the change in heart of the husband. As it sinks into the mountain shadows, the sunlight which illuminates this world in the daytime gradually becomes weaker, and consequently the small lamps in everyone's home come to attract attention, and before one knows it they become the “heroines” of night light. Harunobu employs the not uncommon fickle heart of a husband during his wife's pregnancy as a *mitate* for that kind of scene of changing evening light. In other words, the pregnant wife is a *mitate* for the sinking “setting sun” and the female servant a *mitate* for the house “lamp,” and the fickle heart of the husband who has shifted his interest from his pregnant wife to the servant close at hand is likened to the twilight scene of “light changing before one knows it.”

The contrast between the angry face of the wife and the expression of the servant who is still in ecstasy, and the surprised look of the husband in between who suddenly realizes what is happening, naturally elicits a smile from us at the thought of the husband's flurry in the moments to follow.

**Print F** “Night Rain on the Stand”

*Night deepens,  
the sound of the boiling water is thick and fast—  
or is it the sound of rain on the wooden floor?*

The likening of the “sound of boiling water” from the tea kettle on the stand to the “sound of night rain” is the same as in the *Zashiki bakkei*. In front of the stand, a man who is probably the husband of this house is rather forcibly importuning a girl holding *kaishi* (paper used in the tea ceremony) in her hand. They are being spied upon by a woman who has slightly pushed open the sliding door. The fact that her eyebrows are



Print F “Night Rain on the Stand”

shaved implies that she already has children, so presumably this is the wife of the household. In other words, as in the previous illustration, it is a situation in which a wife witnesses a scene of her husband's infidelity.

The sound of boiling water comes to sound like rain leaking on the wooden floor as the night wears on. At the heart of the *kyōka* is the idea that while for a cultivated person, the sound of night rain is an elegant thing, for an ordinary person, leaking rainwater is worrisome. This idea seems strike at the heart of the true nature of “night rain.” That is to say, the sound of rain heard by a person alone, late at night, in some way provokes unease. Harunobu has likened the sensation of restlessness brewing during the “night rain” to the feeling of doubt suddenly budding in the heart of the middle-aged wife toward her husband. Ordinarily used to hearing the sounds of her husband taking pleasure in the tea ceremony, on this evening suddenly the wife becomes suspicious of the faint sounds coming from the tearoom. When she comes and opens the door to have a

look, lo and behold, the husband is in the act of indulging a sexual whim. The disparity between the trembling facial expression of the wife with her hand over her mouth and wrinkled brow, and the pleasant expression of the husband with eyes closed in a dreamlike trance, causes us to smile in anticipation of the uproar that will soon follow.

In contrast to the scene in the previous illustration in which the husband's fickle heart was a *mitate* for "evening glow," in this print the scene of "night rain" is a *mitate* for the wife's mental state upon discovering her husband's infidelity. For the most part, ukiyo-e *shunga* series do not have a single continuous plot, but rather represent the sexual mentality of human beings from the various viewpoints of men and women.

**Print G** "Returning Sail at the Towel Rack"

*That boat over there with sails swelling to the front—  
is it coming into this harbor?  
Ah, yes, it's coming in!*

Judging from the elegant rear garden with stepping-stones running from the veranda to a bamboo wicket gate, and the middle-aged man having his beard hairs plucked by a girl in a *furisode*, the pair is probably a master with his young mistress. If that is so, one can consider the young woman's house as a *mitate* for the "distant shore" (harbor) in the original title, and the sentiment of the man headed toward his mistress's house as a *mitate* for "returning sail."

While these *mitate* themselves are of sufficient interest, as we look at the pair within the illustration, it seems that a still more subtle *mitate* is included. Looking at just the composition, the man has already put one arm around the girl's shoulders and is kissing her, and one hand is reaching underneath her robes. However, I don't think his passions were aroused instantly upon arriving at his mistress's house. It is more likely that the man's desire blossomed when the girl's face came near his as she took his chin in her hand and began to pluck the hairs. The occasion for arousing a man's desire is a strange thing, which operates willy-nilly. If separated by more than the standard distance, nothing happens, but when in close range to a woman's body, like a piece of iron entering into a



Print G “Returning Sail at the Towel Rack”

magnetic field, suddenly passions are aroused, and without thinking the two drift together. If this kind of male inclination is likened to a “boat with sails furled” (male passions) being swept into a “harbor” (female body), then one must acknowledge that this is truly a fine *mitate*.

In “Geese Descending to a Koto” (Print 1), the “magnetism” attracting the youth was the sound of the girl playing the koto. In comparison, the young woman’s body being the “magnetism” attracting the middle-aged man in this illustration could be called a truly symbolic *mitate* in tandem with the first illustration.

**Print H** “Lacquer Stand in Evening Snow”

*The foot of Mt. Fuji is dark,  
but as I look upward at the dusky sky,  
white snow is sparkling.*

This *kyōka* is likening “snowy Mt. Fuji at dusk” to “River and Sky in



Print H "Lacquer Stand in Evening Snow"

Evening Snow," and in the illustration, as in the *Zashiki hakkei*, a lacquer stand covered with a cotton towel is employed as a *mitate*. At that time in Edo, women did the work of cotton spreading. However, while up front their occupation was spreading the layers of cotton, behind the scenes they customarily worked as prostitutes. Re-examining the illustration in the *Zashiki hakkei* with this in mind, in comparison with the women in the other illustrations, I feel a different kind of air of eroticism floating about the woman sitting with one knee drawn up and smoking a long pipe. In the *Fūryū zashiki hakkei* illustration, a Harunobu-esque woman and a man are having sex in the cotton spreading room. Since behind the man is an account book on which is written "cotton spreading memo," we can surmise that he is a shop clerk who has come to collect cotton goods.

The occupations of these two people are subtly entwined. It is through noticing that the light/dark contrast of the lower black and upper white of the black lacquer stand covered with a white cloth is employed as a

*mitate* for “River and Sky in Evening Snow,” and reading between the lines the disparity between the “official” and “private” occupations of the cotton-spreading woman that one can enjoy the true meaning of Harunobu’s expressly tailored *shunga*. One can also superimpose upon this the underlying motive of the shop clerk who regularly goes back and forth to the cotton-spreading woman’s place. The deeper meaning of this illustration lies in reading into the picture the man and woman’s “inner” and “outer” personae, and the extreme differences between those.

Furthermore, outside the room, on the other side of the sliding door one can see only the the head and forelegs of a white dog. One can infer from its posture that there must be a male dog in the background, and they seem to be doing the same thing as the humans inside the room. Since Harunobu is playing with the theme of contrast (white snow-dusk, white cloth-black lacquer, male-female, official-private) in this print, the male dog is undoubtedly black. Calling forth this kind of imagination and enjoyment from viewers is one of the chief characteristics of Harunobu’s *shunga*.

In comparison with the *Zashiki hakkei* examined earlier, from the explanation above we can see that the *mitate* in the *Fúryú zashiki hakkei* are designed with two and even three layers of meaning, and that they have greater depth. The *Zashiki hakkei* supervised by Kyosen skillfully employed common household furnishings and succeeded in shifting the lofty painterly concept of the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* to private interior scenes. The rendition of the illustrations was carried out with thorough perfection. Moreover, the subtle wit of including the titles for each illustration only in the cover’s table of contents, and not including the *kyōka* upon which the subjects in the illustrations are based shows elegant taste. However, while one is struck by the wittiness and refinement of the illustrations, as *mitate* they seem to lack an important penetrating “true to life quality.” It is probably because he was dissatisfied that Harunobu attempted a *shunga* version of the *Zashiki hakkei*—the *Fúryú zashiki hakkei*. There is no question that he was not completely satisfied with *mitate* that could only be understood intellectually, and was not

content unless *mitate* had an “actuality” in the form of being echoed in physical bodies. The reason why Harunobu dared to create a *shunga* version is because he could not find anywhere the sensitivity which conveyed the sexual mentality of men and women.

The idea of employing the Chinese concept of the *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang* in *mitate* form in landscapes of Japan’s Ômi region, or scenes of the Yoshiwara, to be sure, is using mundane things as *mitate* for lofty things and thereby bringing the latter into one’s own life. Since *mitate* play upon external similarities, it is easy to fall prey to forced interpretations. However, as in these examples, when the psychology of sexual love—something that everyone can image—is translated into visual forms, we can understand the true pleasure of *mitate* and at the same time, we can rethink the true meaning of the classical *Eight Views of Xiao-Xiang*, which have taken on a vivid sense of actuality.