Yōsan-e and The Aesthetics of Post-Tenpō Reforms Era Sericulture Prints

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abstract

Sericulture prints (*yōsan-e*), showing women industriously cultivating silkworms, were a publishing trend that emerged in the late-eighteenth century, possibly in response to the growth of Japanese silk production and the spread of commercial agricultural practices. *yōsan-e* combined the content of informative agricultural texts (*nōsho*) with the aesthetic conventions of 'pictures of beauties' (*bijinga*) - an ukiyo-e genre commonly associated with the depiction of urban prostitutes and teahouse waitresses. An analysis of the text-image compositions published before and after the Tenpō Reforms (1841-1843) reveals how, in a small number of cases, *nishiki-e* publishers and *kyōka* poets exploited the official narratives of filial piety (*kō*) and diligence (*kinben*) as part of a larger strategy to allow for the continued production of prints of beauties during periods of heightened censorship.

Introduction

This article will focus on three mid-nineteenth century *yōsan-e* series, which depict silk cultivation: from the careful handling of the egg papers, to the reeling of raw silk from boiled cocoons by young female sericulturists. The *kyōka* poems that appeared on these prints present a fascinating and humorous glimpse into mid-nineteenth century sericulture practices. The relationship between poetry and sericulture may seem esoteric to modern readers; however, as this research paper will reveal, silkworm poetry has enjoyed a long history.

The woodblock prints analyzed in this paper pre-date the economic impact of the forced opening of Japanese ports to foreign trade.[1] Only in the turbulent *Bakumatsu* era that began with the arrival of Commodore Perry (1853-1854) and ended with the sudden collapse of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1867-1868), did trade in Japanese silk become a lucrative export commodity.

When looking at Edo-period *yōsan-e*, one should bear in mind that a large portion of the population was forbidden to wear silk by official sumptuary laws that restricted the consumption of luxury products. Excessive expenditure was linked to immorality, mainly because it could lead to insolvency, but also because it blurred the distinction between those of high and low status.

Until 1685, raw silk thread had been imported to Japan from China. These imports peaked at 200,000 catties (300,000 lbs.) per annum during the Kanbun years (1661-1672). Gold currency flowed out of Japan, prompting the Tokugawa *bakufu* to limit Chinese imports of silk to 70,000 catties (105,000 lbs.) per annum,[2] which in turn necessitated the development of Japan's domestic silk industry. During the eighteenth-century, domain governments, anxious to increase their revenues, promoted silk farming and commissioned sericulture handbooks. [3]

In 1683, two years prior to the imposition of import quotas on Chinese raw silk thread, at least

seven laws were issued detailing materials that were *not* to be worn by commoners. The consumption of thin silk crepe, silk twill, figured silk and lustrous *habutae* silk was officially forbidden to urban townsmen (*chōnin*) and low-status samurai families. However, as the domestic silk industry flourished, common opinion held that it was acceptable for modest samurai families, wealthy *chōnin* and farmers to wear 'ordinary silk', coarse pongee silk, cotton and ramie.[4] Officials repeatedly issued sumptuary edicts in attempts to curb commoner silk consumption. In 1841, Sata, daughter of Sajiemon (from Tsukui in Sagami), was arrested for 'wearing clothes above her station.' Sata's offending items included 'a crepe lined under-kimono, the collar of which had large dapples, a handwoven wadded silk over-kimono, a jeweled pongee silk jacket with an undercollar of black satin, and a handwoven satin *obi* faced with crepe.'[5]

The public's obsession with silk partly explains the rise of *yōsan-e*. Their popularity is demonstrated by the poor quality of the impressions of extant prints, clear evidence that impressions were taken until the woodblocks were exhausted. However, in order to more fully understand the appeal of *yōsan-e*, it is necessary to consider how government policy and economic developments influenced print aesthetics. While the imagery of *yōsan-e* did not change dramatically in the pre-*Bakumatsu* period, an examination of the poems from the pre and post-Tenpō Reforms period can provide the viewer with a more detailed understanding of mid-nineteenth century aesthetic developments and poetic networks.

The Tenpō Reforms passed in 1841-1843 by the Chief Senior Councilor Mizuno Tadakuni (1794-1851) produced an increase in coloured woodblock prints (*nishiki-e*) that purported to be "educational" or "instructive" to women and children. This was in direct response to government edicts that attempted to suppress "luxuriousness" by banning 'pictures of beauties' (*bijinga*), courtesan prints (*onna geisha*/*yūjo*) and actor prints (*yakusha-e*). [6]

The reforms also targeted the illicit sex trade and attempted to rid Edo of its illegal prostitutes. A government edict issued in the third lunar month of 1842 instructed sex workers active in twenty-three unlicensed entertainment districts to 'leave the areas and engage in other occupations within six months.' Seigle's summary assesses the impact of this ordinance:

> "Of the original 750 illegal houses, 165 eventually moved to the Yoshiwara; 4,181 illegal prostitutes were arrested in Edo and 2,165 were transplanted to the Yoshiwara. Usually, arrested women were auctioned off at the Yoshiwara, and the successful bidders employed them for three years without wages."[7]

The persecution of sex workers and geisha extended to a government ban on women's *jōruri* (*onna jōruri*), because this profession was regarded as a front for unlicensed prostitution. The Edo city magistrate had labeled female *jōruri* "immoral" in 1798, and called for a ban on *onna jōruri* performances. This ban had been reissued in 1831.[8] In 1843, reprimands were followed by arrests, and musicians' samisens were confiscated and destroyed.[9]

Under Mizuno Tadakuni, the self-regulating trade guilds were abolished in 1841.[10] In Edo, between 1842 and 1843, a new system of government censorship was introduced to more closely regulate popular publishing. The new publishing regulations that related to *nishiki-e* limited publishers to seven or eight colour blocks, and fixed the maximum retail price for single sheet prints at 16 mon. [11]

Yōsan-e first emerged in the late eighteenth century, possibly in response to the conservative policies of the previous Chief Senior Councilor, Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829). These measures had included bans on publications of single-sheet *bijinga* that named unlicensed prostitutes (issued in 1793 and 1796), a capping of the retail price of single sheet prints (1795), and a law curtailing

the publications of 'large heads' (*ōkubi*) of women (1800).

The poetry of the pre-Tenpō Reforms *yōsan-e* demonstrates that the Kansei Reforms of the 1790s inspired many parodies of the official narrative that promoted filial piety. These must have appealed to the public because throughout the nineteenth century publishers issued numerous *bijinga* series in the same vein.

Outline

The three poetic series published in the post-Tenpō Reforms period that will be discussed are: Utagawa Yoshitora's *Beauties Compared to Sericulture* (*Yōsan bijin kurabe*「養蚕美人競」), first published circa 1842/6-1846/11[12] by Izumiya Ichibei and re-issued during the Meiji Period; Utagawa Yoshitora's untitled series from 1846/12-1852/2, published by Aritaya Seiemon; and Utagawa Yoshikazu's *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕やしない草」) published circa 1842/6-1846/11 (no publisher's seal).

With the intention of demonstrating how sericulture-themed *bijinga* developed, references will be made to Kikugawa Eizan and Keisai Eisen's prints from the pre-Tenpō Reforms period. These selected works include four series with the title *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕やしない草」), published by Ezakiya Kichibei (three series), and Moriya Jihei (one series, also published by Ezakiya Kichibei). While Kikugawa Eizan's series has a date seal, the prints by Eisen only bear a '*kiwame*' seal and their exact publication dates are not known. Between 1791-1805 and 1815-1842/5 a single '*kiwame*' seal was in use.[13] Given Keisai Eisen's dates (1790-1848), these prints would have been produced between 1815-1842/5.

This paper will begin with a brief survey of pre-*Bakumatsu* sericulture prints before discussing in Section 2 the influence of agricultural texts, most notably Uegaki's *A Secret Record of Sericulture, First Produced in Fusō* (*Fusōkoku dai issan: Yōsan hiroku*『扶桑国第一産 養蚕秘録』, 1803), on the aesthetics and textual content of nineteenth-century *yōsan-e*. This study builds on research conducted by the Tōkyō Nōkō Daigaku Fuzoku Toshokan that resulted in an exhibition and related publication with accompanying CD-ROM titled *Ukiyo-e ni miru sanshoku manyuaru – kaiko yashinai-gusa* (2002).

Sections 3 and 4 will offer translations and interpretations of the poetry that feature on the prints, and discuss how these poems relate to sericulture texts and imagery. Nineteenth-century sericulture prints will be discussed in the context of agricultural handbooks since many of these works bear the title *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*). The author will argue that the 'educational' re-packaging of the *bijinga* genre was a strategy employed by publishers to sell pictures of beauties while averting government censorship, as opposed to a genuine endeavor to teach sericultural skills or techniques to the reader/print-consumer. At the time of their issue a conscious decision had been made by the publisher to market these prints as purported 'educational' texts.

Whether the publisher had a particular reader in mind is more difficult to discern, since the age, gender, social-status and even the location (urban or rural) of the actual audience is difficult to confirm. Some consumers may have used the information on these texts to increase their general knowledge about an industry that was transforming the rural economy. Tajima, in his discussion of Katsukawa Shunshō and Kitao Shigemasa's designs for the first published *Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕やしない草」series of 1786 has suggested that the purpose of these prints was educational and appealed to the public's interest in self-help manuals.[14] It is impossible to know how the general public consumed these prints, or whether they were actually put to use in a genuinely educational way.

1. Pre-*Bakumatsu Yōsan-e*: A Survey

The view that woodblock prints were consumed by urban commoners in the major trading cities of Edo and Osaka continues to shape our understanding of ukiyo-e, in spite of the fact that well-established trade networks operated along the main travel routes that connected cities with castle towns and beyond. As Francks concludes in her study of 'Country gentlemen, ordinary consumption and the development of the rural economy,'

> "By the middle of the nineteenth century, when Western warships first made their threatening presence felt in Japanese waters and the solid foundations of the Tokugawa system began to crumble, the world of consumption born in the cities had spread out into the countryside, so that the rural people could no longer be ignored, either as producers of many of the goods available or as consumers in rural markets tied in to national ones."[15]

A comical reference to the consumption of Edo's *nishiki-e* by a rural audience can be found in Nishimuraya Yohachi's 1770 publication, *Elegant Amorous Mane'emnon* (*Fūryū enshoku Mane'emon* 『風流艶色真似ゑもん』) [International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken): NBK224_A_010; NIJL: 1656139]. In this erotic picture book (*enpon*) illustrated by Suzuki Harunobu, a miniscule Mane'emon spies on a young woman being molested in the silkworm-raising room (*kaikobeya*) of a farmhouse [Figure 1]. The young man complains that his master's (*sena*) mood has worsened after seeing his souvenirs of *nishiki-e* from Edo, known as 'colour pictures' (*shoku-e*). The young woman tries to resist him, fearing that sex in front of the silkworms (*okosama*) will pollute them. The aged man in the adjoining room lights a candle and peers out. Awoken by the noise he exclaims, "I'm afraid a mouse is poking the silkworms!"

Figure 1. *Fūryū enshoku Mane'emon* (1770).
ⓒCenter for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) [No. 244]

> *-Sena ga Edo miyage ni azuma nishiki to iu shoku-e o mitara, ki ga waruu natta.*
> *-Kore mousu, okosama no mae de kagaremasu zo e.*
> *-Nandaka, daibun michizuku ga okosama e nezumi ga tsuki wa senu ka* [16]

At least, in this fictional portrait of life in a farmhouse, printed erotica had found a rural market. When examining the sericulture prints it is worth asking the questions: Who consumed these prints? And, to which genre do these prints belong?

Yōsan-e are usually categorized as prints that depict Edo-period 'manners and customs' (*fūzokuga*)[17] or as parodies of a genre which depicted trades practiced by commoners (s*hokunin zukushi*). The game of matching *waka* poetry to pictures of artisans engaged in their trades (s*hokunin zukushi uta awase*) originated in the Heian era (794-1185) and provided an enduring theme for woodblock-printed books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *A Contest of Seventy-one Poems* (*Shichijūichiban uta awase*『七十一番歌合』 [NIJL: 31903] first published in 1657, was reissued in 1744, 1812, 1826, and 1845. The two-volume *Colour Pictures of Various Artisans* (*Iro-e shokunin bunrui*『彩画職人部類』) illustrated by Tachibana Minkō was first published in 1784 [MFA Boston: 49.655a-b; NIJL: 99149], and *A Poetry Contest Between Edo Craftsmen* (*Edo shokunin uta awase*

『江戸職人歌合』 [NIJL: 14040] was published in 1808 and reissued in 1851.

However, unlike weaving and cord making, the industry of sericulture does not feature in these *shokunin zukushi* texts. Instead, images of women engaged in sericulture are predominantly found in educational textbooks for women (*joshi yō ōrai*). Examples include the *Tōshōzōho kinmō zui*『頭書増補訓蒙図彙』, Volume 3, compiled by Nakamura Tekisai and Shimokōbe Shūsui, first published in 1666, reprinted in 1695 and in 1789 [NIJL: 23483; Waseda: 文庫 06 00027]; *Onna kanninki Yamato bumi*『女堪忍記大倭文』of 1713 [NIJL: 29111024]; *Onna daigaku takarabako*『女大学宝箱』first published circa 1714 [NIJL: 29157297; ARC: Ebi 1092]; Katsushika Hokusai's *Ehon teikin ōrai*『絵本庭訓往来』of 1828 [NIJL: 815747; ARC: Ebi0323]; *Onna misao kyōkun onna daigaku misao kagami*『女操教訓女大学操鏡』, compiled by Akatsuki Kanenari and published in 1843 [NIJL: 760247; Waseda: 文庫 30_e0453]; and Onna daigaku tama bunko『女大学玉文庫』published in 1851 [NIJL: 770467; ARC: T1A0/26/29]. [18)]

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed an explosion in *yōsan-e* that focused on the sericulture process. From the period 1807 to 1855, the author has catalogued over 160 different extant, single-sheet designs by Kikugawa Eizan, Utagawa (Gofutei) Sadatora, Harukawa Eishō, Utagawa Kuniyasu, Utagawa Yoshikazu, Utagawa Yoshitora, Keisai Eisen, Utagawa Sadahide, Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Utagawa Kunihisa, Utagawa Yoshifuji, Utagawa Hiroshige, Utagawa Hiroshige II (Shigenobu), Utagawa Kunimaro, and Utagawa Kunisato. These prints constitute approximately fifty-five different series (including at least twelve triptychs). Many of these series, recycle the title *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕やしなひ草」).

Of these, thirteen series incorporate poetry (thirty-nine poems in total). This breaks down as: one series by Kikugawa Eizan (four sheets); one series by Utagawa Kuniyasu (two sheets); four series by Keisai Eisen (eleven sheets); four series by Utagawa Yoshitora (fifteen sheets); and one series by Utagawa Yoshikazu (six sheets). Only three Edo-period poetic sericulture sheets have been identified that post-date 1855/6, suggesting that the trend for silk-related *kyōka* peaked in the decade immediately after the Tenpō Reforms.

Before turning to these poetic prints, the three main sources published in book format that influenced nineteenth-century sericulture prints will be introduced. Collectively, their information content and aesthetics inspired a sub-genre within *bijinga*.

2. Agricultural Texts and Aesthetics

The key texts that shaped the aesthetics of nineteenth-century *yōsan-e* were: *Newly Compiled: A Treasured Book on Sericulture* (*Shinsen yōsan hishō* 『新撰養蚕秘書』, 1757) [ARC: 2541247] written by the silk farmer Tsukada Yoemon and illustrated by Isshiki Nobuhide; *A Picture Book of Brocades with Precious Threads* (*Ehon takara no itosuji*『画本宝能縷』, internal title *Kaiko yashinai-gusa*『かゐこやしなひ草』, 1786) [NDL: 10.11501/1286957], illustrated by Katsukawa Shunshō and Kitao Shigemasa; and sericulturist Uegaki Morikuni's three-volume *A Secret Record of Sericulture, First Produced in Fusō* (*Fusōkoku dai issan: Yōsan hiroku* 『扶桑国第一産 養蚕秘録』, 1803) [NDL: 2556953] illustrated by Nishimura Chūwa and Hayami Shungyōsai. Uegaki's work is also famous for having been secretly taken back to Europe by Philipp Franz von Siebold, where it was translated into French and Italian for the benefit of Western silk manufacturers. *A Secret Record of Sericulture* was published overseas with the title *Yo-san-fi-ro* in 1848, in spite of Japan's official policy of isolationism (*sakoku*).

The text-images of *yōsan-e* were guided by the instructive illustrations in these books, whose common aim was to inform their readers with factually accurate descriptions of processes and techniques. Because *yōsan-e* took their models from sericulture texts, a certain level of authenticity and realism enters the *bijinga* genre. Kitagawa Utamaro's *A Manual to the Female Occupation of Sericulture* (*Joshoku kaiko tewaza-gusa*「女織蚕手業草」[Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: 34.241- 34.252] an impressive horizontal polyptych comprising of 12 sheets, was published around 1798-1800 by Tsuruya Kiemon. Its imagery and texts were deeply indebted to *Newly Compiled: A Treasured Book on Sericulture* and *A Picture Book of Brocades with Precious Threads*.

In Kitagawa Utamaro, Katsukawa Shunchō and Tamagawa Shūchō's late-eighteenth century sericulture series, the aesthetics of *zoku* (vulgarity) and *ga* (refinement) were intentionally intertwined in *fūryū yatsushi* ('stylishly casual adaptation').[19] The early-to-mid nineteenth-century *bijinga* prints that feature in this discussion create comical parallels (*mitate*) between silkworms and young women, nurturing silk grubs and raising a family, aristocratic refinement and *chōnin* social ambitions. This will be discussed in more detail in Sections 3 and 4.

The custom of silkworm cultivation, once practiced and patronized by the nobility both in China and Japan, signified ancient elegance, refinement, and moral rectitude within a feminine private sphere.[20] However, contemporary perceptions of female silk workers may also have been influenced by Japanese love poetry that used silk to connote sensuality. A poem from *A Collection of 10,000 Leaves* (*Man'yōshū*『万葉集』), an imperial anthology compiled after 759 C.E., explored the erotic theme of exchanging clothes as a metaphor for sexual intimacy.

「筑波祢乃
尓比具波麻欲能
伎奴波安礼杼
伎美我美家思志
安夜伎尓保思母」
Tsukubane no
Nii-guwamayo no
Kinu wa aredo
Kimi ga mikeshishi
Aya ni kihoshi mo

"Although I have silks
Fresh from the new mulberry cocoons
Of the Tsukuba Mountain.
Oh, how I'd love
To wear that gown of yours."[21]

Uegaki's *A Secret Record of Sericulture* was encyclopedic in its scope. In its retelling of sericulture history, it offered meticulous technical observations interspersed with Chinese and Japanese mytho-historical tales, short stories, and poetry. The *kyōka* within the second volume of *A Secret Record of Sericulture* were thoroughly integrated with the text's practical illustrations[22] [Figure 2]. The poems in *A Secret Record of Sericulture* were chosen to lyrically describe regional farming methods and sericulture apparatus. In the first five poems translated here, the reader is introduced to the hardworking figure of the filial farmer's daughter, whose diligence ensured the success of the household's silk crop.

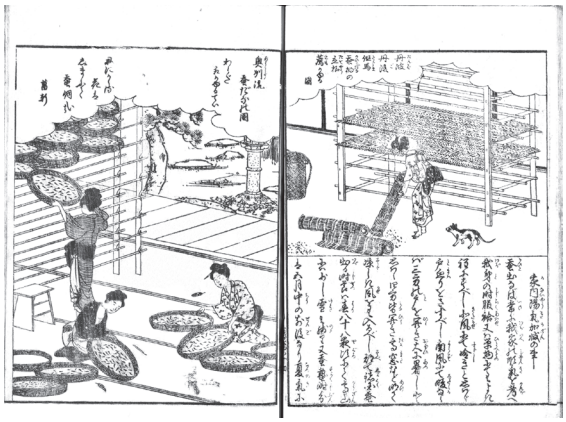

Figure 2. Uegaki Morikuni, *Yōsan hiroku* (1803).

1.「順礼にいてす桑つむむすめ哉」

Junrei ni
Idezu kuwa tsumu
Musume kana
- Ryouta 寥太

The young woman has
Never been on a pilgrimage,
Because she is kept busy picking mulberry leaves.

2.「美しう蚕は紙をはかれ霜」

Utsukushi u
Kaiko wa kami o
Hakare sou
-Shichizawa 七沢

She sweeps
The beautiful, newborn silkworms
Off the egg paper.

3.「我まゝに這はて飼るゝ桑蚕かな」

Wagamama ni
Haiwate kawururu
Kuwago kana
-Rankou 闌更

The pampered
Young silkworms
Cannot yet crawl.

4.「気にかゝる花はしまふて蚕飼哉」

Ki ni kakaru
Hana wa shimaute
Kogai kana
-Shouken 菖軒

When raising silkworms,
Stow away the finest flowers
That call for attention.

5.「蚕飼ふ女や古き身たしなみ」

Kaiko kau
Onna ya furuki
Mi tashinami
-Taigi 太（祇）

The woman who raises silkworms
Develops a modest appearance
Like the people of times past.

6.「人に疎し蚕かひの女賢ならん」

Hito ni soshi
Kaiko kai no jo
Ken naran
-Gyoutai 暁台

Estranged from others,
The woman who raises silkworms
Is a wise woman.

7.「さゝ波や蚕飼涼しき自在棚」

Sazanami ya
Kogai suzushiki
Jizai dana
-Gashou 鵞少

Like rippling waves,
Flexible shelving
Keeps the reared silkworms cool.

8.「松になき風薫る也おほか陰」

Matsu ni naki
Kaze kaoru nari
Ohoka kage
-Gashou 鵞少

Not from the pine
This fragrant breeze,
Under the shade of the large reeling frame.

9.「今年より蚕はじめぬ小百姓」

Kotoshi yori
Kaiko hajimenu
Kobyakushou
-Buson 蕪村

From this year
I started raising silkworms.
I am a true peasant farmer!

Poem No. 4 related to the portable baskets that could be rested on shelves made from bamboo

poles. No. 5 described the simple old-fashioned shelving used in Tajima [northern Hyōgo], Tanba [central Kyōto, east-central Hyōgo] and Tango [northern Kyōto]. Poem No. 6 referred to a shelf used in Shinshū [Nagano] that had wheels meaning that the silkworms could be easily transported. No. 7 described an innovative hanging shelving system used in Ōmi [Shiga] that enabled the silk worker to easily move the shelves up and down. No. 8 was paired with an image of a large reeling frame devised to reel ten spools of silk at one time. [23)]

3. Pre-Tenpō Reforms

Prior to the Tenpō Reforms, there was already a tradition of *Kaiko yashinai-gusa* prints, some of which featured poetry. This standard title derived from *A Picture Book of Brocades with Precious Threads*, the pages of which may also have circulated as single sheet prints [Figure 3]. The poems that appear on *yōsan-e* are known as *kyōka* or comic *tanka* (*haikai*) that follow a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable pattern. The shortened form with the 5-7-5 syllable structure is a *kyōku*.

Figure 3. *Ehon takara no itosuji*. *Kaiko yashinai-gusa*, Nos. 8 and 9. (1786). ©National Diet Library [info:ndljp/pid/1286957]

Professional and amateur-enthusiasts composed *kyōka* (‘mad poems’) at poetry gatherings and competitions. These poetry groups and their networks (*kumi-ren*) provided opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas in an unofficial and convivial atmosphere. According to Ikegami, the organization of *kyōka* circles was “open, egalitarian, flexible, and supplied close connections to commercial networks through competitions for prize money.”[24)] *Kyōka* playfully exploit the ambiguities of the Japanese language and use homophones, puns and word associations to generate multiple meanings. Poets frequently signed their work using witty pseudonyms that obscured their true identities. The phonetic reading of the names of *kyōka* poets cannot be confirmed, and unless stated, no further biographical information has been found.

This section will analyze several poetic sericulture series by Kikugawa Eizan and Keisai Eisen that pre-date the Tenpō Reforms (1841-1843). These pre-Tenpō Reforms series have been included to demonstrate continuity, as opposed to contrast when discussing the development of poetic *yōsan-e* and the recurrent themes of filial piety, social advancement and ‘rural’ diversions. The different series are indicated by an alphabetical prefix.

A. Kikugawa Eizan (1787-1867)

This study of nineteenth-century poetic *bijinga* begins with an early series by Kikugawa Eizan. *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕養草」) was published by Ezakiya Kichibei in the twelfth lunar month of 1807 and includes unsigned *kyōka*. The prints bear a *kiwame* and a separate ‘Hare 12’ date seal. From this series, only four extant prints are known to the author (Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5).

The format of this *bijinga* series follows the conventions of *mitate* that employ the ‘paired picture’ (*e-kyōdai*) device. The fashionable beauties who are depicted engaged in the ancient practice of sericulture, wear hairpins and bows in a style commonly associated with young maidens and courtesans. In the small inset picture (*koma-e*),

that in this series takes the form of a picture scroll, women are also shown farming silkworms. The pairing of the silk farmers in the venerable *e-maki* scroll with the two contemporary beauties serves to link the past with the present. Kikugawa Eizan produced a similar *e-kyōdai* series titled *A Manual to the Female Occupation of Sericulture* (*Joshoku kaiko tewaza gusa*「女織蚕手業草」) published by Yamaguchiya Tōbei in the third intercalary month of 1811. This series substituted a sericulture-related, woodblock-printed picture book for the picture scroll inset [Manos Collection- Corfu Museum of Asian Art: Inv. No. AE-7033].

Dai ichi
Shishiko
Kuridasu
Haru no yanagi no
Ito yori wa
Tsukuru kaiko no
Mayuge yori shite [25)]

No. 1: *Shishiko*
From the threads of the willows
Spring spins out,
Even the eyebrows
Of the silkworms are made.

The title of the print, 'Shishiko' 獅子子 refers to the first of four dormant periods or 'sleeps' in the life-cycle of the silkworm. In this poem, there is the use of the variant kanji for cocoons (眉 for 繭). This character forms the compound kanji meaning 'eyebrows'(*mayuge* 眉毛) and at other times, is used independently to mean 'cocoons' or 'brow' (*mayu*/*mayo* 眉). The phrase 'spring warbler brow' (*uguisu mayu* 鶯眉) referred to the appearance of ladies-in-waiting (*okujochū*), who drew a willow-shaped line on their plucked eyebrows. This fashion was also known as 'willow brow' (*ryūbi* 柳眉, and 'thread brow' (*ito mayu* 糸眉).[26)] The 'Shishiko' poem references this custom and also suggests that another word that was used to describe a beautiful young woman was 'silkworm.' The reader has already encountered this usage of the word to mean woman, when it was euphemistically employed in Suzuki Harunobu's *enpon*.

The imagery of the spring willow 'spinning out' or 'paying out' its threads can be found in the Heian-era, imperial poetry anthology, *Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times* (*Kokinwakashū* 『古今和歌集』). The following verse by the courtier-poet Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 may have influenced the 'Shishiko' poem.

「青柳の
いとよりかくる
春しもそ
みたれて花の
ほころひにける」
Aoyagi no
Ito yori kakuru
Haru shimo zo
Midarete hana no
Hokorobi ni keru

"The soft green threads of
Disheveled willows twisted
Spun taut in spring
Unraveling masses of blooms
Rent open in abandon"[27)]

In the following Chinese poem from *The Book of Odes: Lessons From the States, Odes of Wei* (『詩經』, Chinese: *Shijing*;「國風 衛風」), attributed to Shuo Ren 碩人, one encounters a description of a beautiful woman with silkworm moth eyebrows and a 'tree grub' neck:

「手如柔荑。
膚如凝脂。
領如蝤蠐。
齒如瓠犀。
螓首蛾眉。

巧笑倩兮。
美目盼兮。」

"Her fingers were like the blades of the young white-grass;
Her skin was like congealed ointment;
Her neck was like the tree-grub;
Her teeth were like melon seeds;
Her forehead cicada-like; her eyebrows like [the antennae of] the silkworm moth;
What dimples, as she artfully smiled!
How lovely her eyes, with the black and white so well defined!"[28)]

Women were first favorably compared to silkworms in a 4th-3rd century B.C.E. Chinese text by Xunzi 荀子 titled *Ode to the Silkworm* (Chinese: *Can fu*『蠶賦』). This text contemplated the form of the silkworm and asked: "Is its body like a woman's and its head like that of a horse?"[29)] It is useful to consider how the slender bodies of silkworms were associated with feminine beauty, when reading the poems.

The following two poems focus on the skill and industry of the filial daughter, whose diligence is 'fortunate' because it will enrich her family. The two women in 'Takeko' たけ子 pose demurely. One woman gathers her green *obi* sash in one hand as she peers down to observe her companion cutting mulberry leaves. Two more women are pictured in the scroll-shaped *koma-e* managing the 'Takeko' stage of cultivation. 'Takeko' refers to the transference of the silkworm grubs using chopsticks [Figure 4].

Figure 4. Kikugawa Eizan, *Kaiko yashinai-gusa*, No. 2, *Takeko* (1807/12). ⓒ Corfu Museum of Asian Art, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports. Manos Collection- Corfu Museum of Asian Art. [Inv. No: AE-7047].

Dai ni
Takeko
Taoyame ga
Soto e chirasanu
Kokorobae
Hana no kaiko no
Sodachi katayoki [30)]

No. 2: *Takeko*
The elegant young woman's attention
Is not scattered by external things.
She has a good method for
Cultivating the flower of silkworms.

Dai yon
Niwako
Saiwai o
Musubu ito
Oya kuri iten
Musume mo kuwa no
Hataraki mo yoshi [31)]

No. 4: *Niwako*
Good fortune
Is bound by the thread
The parent reels.
A daughter working with the mulberry
Is also auspicious.

In 'Niwako' 庭子, two similarly dressed women handle the mulberry leaves. One woman works with a knife to remove the leaves from the branches,

while the other holds a large basket of leaves. The women in the *koma-e* conduct a similar task, preparing the leaves and checking the silkworms in the trays. 'Niwako' is used to refer to the period after the silkworms' third moult or 'sleep' before they begin spinning their cocoons.

B. Keisai Eisen (1790-1848)

A Text on Cultivating Silkworms (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕養艸」), with black title cartouche and *kiwame* censor's seal was published by Ezakiya Kichibei. Of the *kyōka* poets, it has only been possible to tentatively identify Kinju'en Niki as the prolific *kyōka* poet Nakajima Mataemon 中島又右衛門 (? - 1843).[32] The author has located two extant prints from this series (Nos. 3, 4).

In this series, Eisen has depicted two women collecting mulberry leaves in a round basket to feed to the many silkworms in the trays. One woman is attractively dressed in an eye-catching kimono with a maple leaf and silk reel design, a reference to the Tanabata weaving festival that was celebrated on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month.

Dai san
Shita ni sae
Okade sodatetsu
Taoyame no
Te yori te ni toru
Tana no kaiko wa
-Ryuusoudou Itoman　柳想堂糸満[33]

No. 3
Even the lowest are
Nurtured with great care;
Passed between the hands
Of graceful young women −
The shelf of silkworms.

In the next print [Figure 5], two women are shown busily moving the trays of silkworms, while

Figure 5.　Keisai Eisen, *Kaiko yashinai-gusa*, No. 4 (1815-1842). ⓒ Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. [Coll. no. RV-1327-326].

a young boy plays by their side. One woman with large hairpins wears an apron decorated with a bat pattern that has three linear bands, an emblem commonly associated with the kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō VII (Ebizō V). Her companion is dressed in serviceable indigo blue, fastened with a voluminous *obi* sash patterned with a circular dragon motif. Her styled hair is kept clean with a dyed-blue head cover also decorated with the bat motif. The boy's clothing is also patterned with Danjūrō VII's crest of three, square, rice measures (*mimasu*). Unfortunately, the dayflower blue of the woodblock print has faded to grey.

Dai yon
Sewa shinaku
Yashinau sue wa
Sokobaku no
Kogane ni kaen
Kuwa no kodakara
-Kinju'en Niki　琴樹園二喜[34]

No. 4
The silkworms cultivated with great care,
Will return some money in the end.

The treasured children of the mulberry leaves.

The poetry that appears on Eisen's series emphasizes the economic and social advantages that can result from a careful upbringing. The *kyōka* reflect the social ambitions of parents who, like the 'rural' women in the prints, nurse their young with assiduous care. Silkworms are equated with human children, who are in turn identified with treasure/wealth in the commonly used epithet *kodakara* (子宝). The syllable *ko* was also used to refer to young women (*musume* 娘).

Eisen continues the *bijinga* tradition of presenting his print-buying public with the latest kabuki-influenced fashions. This print is a reissue of an older design titled *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms*, No. 3, *Funako* [Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology. Ukiyoe 1_063: Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM] [Figure 6]. A comparison of the two states reveals how the artist and publisher have altered details relating to the women's clothes, simplifying the textile patterns. In the later edition, informative prose has been replaced with a signed poem.

Figure 6. Keisai Eisen *Kaiko yashinai-gusa*, No. 3, *Funako* (1815-1842). ©Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology. [Ukiyoe 1_063: Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM].

C. Keisai Eisen

A Text on Cultivating Silkworms (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕養艸」), with yellow title cartouche and *kiwame* censor's seal was also published by Ezakiya Kichibei. Three extant prints from this series are known to the author (Nos. 1, 4, 5). In print No. 4, women prepare leaves for the adult worms, and in No. 5 the women collect the silk cocoons.

The poet Ryō'untei Morimaru has been tentatively identified as Ryō'untei Wakai 凌雲亭和海 (dates not known). Originally from the silk-producing region of Kōzuke [Gunma], Ryō'untei Wakai moved to Asakusa in Edo where he worked as a *haikai* poet and artist. He also used the poetic soubriquet Kayatsuki'en Morimaru 茅月園守丸 and compiled *Kyōka kachōgashū*『狂歌花鳥画集』.[35]

Dai yon
Niwako
Kurai yoki
Hito no hakama ni
Naru ito zo
Kaiko no toki yori
Gyougi no tsukete
-Kijakurou Kakyuu 黄雀樓夏躬[36]

No. 4: *Niwako*
To become the thread in the *hakama*
Of a person of high status.
Acquire good manners
From the time you are a silkworm.

The imagery in this poem calls to mind a *haikai* by the influential teacher, Sakurai Baishitsu 桜井梅室 (1769-1852).

「はかま着や 稚ごゝろに 威儀の眉」
Hakamagi ya
Osanagokoro ni
Igi no mayu

Hakamagi

To the childish mind
A cocoon of dignity.

Hakamagi is a coming-of-age ceremony in which a child is dressed in his first pair of formal pleated trousers (*hakama*). In the past, this ceremony traditionally took place when the child reached three years of age. In Baishitsu's poem, the dignified solemnity associated with the *hakama* is compared to a cocoon, and by implication, the child to the silkworm.

Dai go
Mayu
Kuwa no ha ni
Araki kaze sae
Ito harite
Kaiko kau mi ya
Oya kokoro naru
-Ryou'untei Morimaru 凌雲亭守丸[37)]

No. 5: Cocoons
Even a rough wind against the mulberry leaves,
Effects the tension of the thread.
When keeping silkworms,
Be mindful of oneself and one's role as a parent.

This poem suggests two readings, the first of which relates to the sericulturist's attention to details when farming silkworms. In the poem, even the wind on the mulberry leaves effects the quality of the silk thread. An alternative reading of the poem reveals that the *kyōka* is alluding to the relationship between mother and child.

D. Keisai Eisen

Eisen's *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕養草」) was published by Moriya Jihei during the 'kiwame' censor's seal period. Only one unnumbered extant print with a Moriya Jihei publisher's seal is known to the author [Figure 7]. Publisher, Ezakiya Kichibei also issued this series, and all five prints from this series have been identified (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The title of this *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* series is framed by a black rectangular cartouche. The following poem is a signed *kyōka* and appears within a framed inset, alongside information advising the reader to feed large leaves to the mature silkworms that will soon spin their cocoons. The instructive text quotes verbatim from sheets No. 5 and 6 of *Brocades with Precious Threads*, which refer to the 'Niwako' stage in sericulture. The poet has signed the *kyōka* with his alias Kamenoya Mino'o and reveals that his place of birth/current residence is in the silk producing region of Kuragano [Takasaki, Gunma]. This design corresponds with No. 4 of Ezakiya Kichibei's series.

Figure 7. Keisai Eisen, *Kaiko yashinai-gusa, Niwako*（1815-1842）

[Ukiyoe 1_065; Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM]

Niwako
Mutsumajiki
Futari komori no
Mayu no ito
Kau ni mo araki

Koe tatenu nari
-Kuragano Kamenoya Mino'o 倉ヶ野 亀の屋簔雄[38]

Niwako
Harmoniously,
The two confined within
Raise the silk cocoons.
Their voices are hushed and controlled.

Four women appear in the print, preparing leaves and lifting trays of silkworms. The interior of the *kaikobeya* reveals shelves of silkworm trays, and the room looks out onto an idealized landscape with lake and bridge. According to Morris-Suzuki's study "silkworm trays were frequently moved from one part of the house to another to protect them from heat or cold, and the amount of food given to the worms was varied according to changes in temperature."[39] Because it was also believed that the worms were sensitive to sound, and flourished in a calm and quiet household, the women were expected to speak with "hushed voices so as not to disturb the sensibilities of the worms." [40]

Silk poetry that utilized this seclusion motif may be consciously adapting the following poem that is found in the *Man'yōshū*:

「足常母蠶子眉隠
隠在妹見依鴨」
Tarachine no
Haha ga kaiko no
Mayu gomori
Komoreru imo o
Miru yoshi mogamo

"Like the silkworm in the cocoon
Which her loving mother rears,
That maid so close secluded in her home –
O for the means of seeing her!"[41]

The theme of confinement (*komoru* 籠もる) has long been identified with sericulture practices and dates back to the Nara-era customs of the Japanese court. Each year in the third lunar month, the Japanese Empress secluded herself in a ritual enclosure to tend to the imperial silkworms.[42] The 'Niwako' poem, however, evokes the erotic image of an intimate couple snuggling up under the covers of their futon in the line, *mutsumajiki futari komori no mayu*. The formulaic reference to a woman's finely drawn eyebrows (*mayu no ito* 眉の糸) is repeated here, and again serves as a metaphor for a beautiful young woman.

4. Post-Tenpō Reforms

This final section will examine prints by two artists who designed *yōsan-e* at the beginning of their artistic careers, Utagawa Yoshitora and Utagawa Yoshikazu.

E. Utagawa Yoshitora (active c. 1850-1880)

Beauties Compared to Sericulture (Yōsan bijin kurabe「養蚕美人競」) was first published circa 1842/6-1846/11 by Izumiya Ichibei during the single *nanushi* censor seal period. The title cartouche of this series is a reddish-colour, framed at the top and bottom by two silkworms, and on either side by mulberry leaves. Each single sheet depicts one beauty poised beside silk manufacturing equipment, adjusting a hairpin, holding a fan or resting at the loom. The beauties are static and the prints lack industry. The women's clothing is modest but their appearances are well maintained. The following poems are signed and generally follow the 5-7-5 syllable structure of the *kyōku*. This is an unnumbered series comprising of five extant prints. The numbers that appear in parenthesis have been added purely for reference purposes, and correspond with the transcribed poems in the *honkoku* section

of this paper.

This series comically references the hardships that were associated with silk farming. For example, the poems describe how the job of rearing silkworms dominates the women's lives, taking up all of the space in the farmhouse, depriving the women of sleep and preventing them from finding time to pursue more romantic adventures. A *mitate* reading of the poetry reveals that in describing a *kaikobeya*, the *kyōku* capture the similarities between the confined and exhausting life of a young silk worker and that of a prostitute in a brothel or inn.

The first print in this series depicts a woman pushing back a sleeve with one hand, while clutching her blue apron with the other. At her feet lie silkworm egg papers and a feather brush used to transfer the eggs. This hatching of the grubs was called "Kuroko" 黒子. Fortunately, two versions of this design are extant: one printed in the muted organic dyes of the mid-1840s with an orange-red cartouche [Victoria and Albert Museum, London: E.14734:7-1886][Figure 8]; and the other, a Meiji reprint in bright aniline dyes taken from very worn woodblocks and issued with a bright pink cartouche [Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology. Ukiyoe 5_02; Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM][Figure 9]. An examination of these two states reveals that the kimono's textile design has been altered, replacing a brown floral repeat with a stylish black grid pattern. Although the prints purported to be about sericulture, they still fulfilled their traditional *bijinga* function of providing their female audience with fashion tips and their male audience with subtly erotic studies of women.

In these poems, the poets continue to exploit the parallel between women and silkworms for comic effect. In the first print, a woman is stood amidst the scattered egg papers, feather brushes, and empty trays associated with raising silkworms.

(1)
Neru sho mo
Naku omowaruru
Kaiko kana
-Sokyou 祖郷[43)]

It looks as though there is no
Place to sleep.
Those silkworms!

Figure 8. Utagawa Yoshitora, *Yōsan bijin kurabe*(1842-1846) ⓒ Victoria and Albert Museum, London [E.14734:7-1886]

Figure 9. Utagawa Yoshitora, *Yōsan bijin kurabe* (1842-1846) ⓒ Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology. [Ukiyoe 5_02; Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM]

In the second print, a beauty wearing a long blue and white floral kimono, and elaborate hairpins and combs, stands holding a pink *uchiwa* fan. The fan bears a *Genji-kō* (a pattern comprised of incense sticks), which correlates to the Mayfly ('Kagerō') chapter of Murasaki Shikibu's eleventh century novel *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*『源氏物語』). In the background, there is a deep square basket where silkworms can be seen feeding on mulberry leaves. To the beauty's left are receptacles for collecting mulberry leaves, and a chopping board and knife for cutting the leaves into smaller pieces for the young worms.

The poem may playfully refer to the silk farmers' practice of sleeping close to their silkworms during cold, frosty nights in order to regulate the temperature in the room with their body heat.[44] The process of raising silkworms was so labour-intensive that the women were fortunate to get any sleep at all. Morris-Suzuki summarizes Uegaki's observation that "from the seventh or eighth to the fifteenth or sixteenth day of the silkworms' life, their "guardians" or "mothers" (i.e., the silk workers) should not leave their charges unattended for a single moment."[45]

Toyoshima Yūsei 豊島由誓 (1789-1859) was an Edo poet that contributed to many published *haikai* collections. He started out working as the head clerk for the *fudasashi* moneylender's Izutsuya in Asakusa Kuramae and learned *haikai* from his employer, the poet Natsume Seibi 夏目成美 (Izutsuya Hachiroemon V, 1749-1816). [46]

(2)
Rou hitori
Kaiko no kata o
Makura kana
-Yuusei 由誓[47]

Aged and alone;
The shoulder of the silkworm
Is my pillow…

In the third print from this series, a woman in a boldly patterned blue and brown kimono looks down at two moths, one of which has alighted on a sheet of paper to lay its eggs. She is impractically dressed in a *hikizure* 'trailing skirt' kimono with long flowing sleeves.

(3)
Okure go mo
Ugokidashi keri
Ashita nari
-Kinchi 金池[48]

The late silkworms
Are becoming active!
It seems to be dawn.

The title cartouche of the fourth print is slightly different from the others, featuring a grey to blue gradation-printed (*bokashi-zuri*) ground in place of the red ground [British Museum: Album 2, Sheet 10; 1915,0823,0.392.1-4]. This suggests that at least three states of this series were issued. The earliest impressions have a red diamond artist's seal under the signature.

In the print, a beauty wearing a striped blue kimono fastened with a large black *obi* belt adjusts a hairpin. Striped fabrics were an urban fashion favoured by Edoites. Utagawa Kuniyoshi's 1845 series *Waterfall Striped Materials in Answer to Earnest Prayers* (*Taigan jōju arigataki shima*「大願成就有ヶ瀧縞」), published by Ibaya Sensaburō, reproduced a variety of fashionable striped designs.

Unlike the other women in this design who are barefoot, one worker wears thick-soled *geta* to conduct a silk production process that occurs outside of the home. Beside her is stood the stone basin for heating the cocoons, and apparatus for reeling the silk thread.

Born in Edo, the poet Seki Izan 関為山 (1804-1878) was a pupil of the previously quoted Sakurai Baishitsu. Izan worked as a field officer (*goyōsakan*)

for the *bakufu*, and later, during the Meiji period, became a teacher of *haikai* at the Ministry of Education (Kyōbushō). During his lifetime he published many *haikai*. [49]

(4)
Amayo kara
Oki soroitaru
Kaiko kana
-Izan 為山[50]

From the rainy night,
One and all awake.
The silkworms…

The fifth and final extant print from this series depicts a beauty seated at the loom with her back to the warp. Two states of this print exist: a more muted earlier edition [Victoria and Albert Museum, London: E.14773-022-1886], and a bolder Meiji reprint [British Museum: 1915,0823,0.392.1-4]. In both editions the woman is elegantly dressed, wearing a green kimono with a blue striped *haori* over-jacket.

(5)
Kinu tsukuru
Mono to wa mienu
Kaiko kana
-Chouzui 朝水[51]

It is hard to believe that
Silkworms are needed for
The job of making silk!

So far, only two of the poets have been identified. However, it is known that both poets were Edo-based and in the service of the *bakufu*. Both had worked as *haikai* instructors, established themselves in Edo's poetry circles and edited a number of *haikai*-related works.

F. Utagawa Yoshitora

Published between 1846/12 and 1852/2 by Aritaya Seiemon during the double *nanushi* censor seal period, these two unnumbered prints are from the same untitled series and feature signed *kyōku*. The numbers in parenthesis relate to the transcribed poems in the *honkoku* section of this paper. The relationship between publisher Aritaya Seiemon and poet Aritaya Sadakichi has not yet been identified.

The poems focus on silk as a textile to be worn as a garment, and may reference the elaborate kimono and changes of dress of the courtesans in the pleasure district.[52] In 1816, the social commentator and essayist, Buyō Inshi remarked that the price of a courtesan's silk bedding and her clothes for the four seasons annually amounted to a fortune.[53] Silk workers were expected to frequently change their clothes, but this was done to maintain high standards of hygiene when handling the worms. [54]

(1)
Kimi ga yo ni
Umarete ureshi
Koromogae
-Aritaya Sadakichi　有田屋定貴智[55]

Happy to have been born
In this reign,
I can change clothes with the seasons.

In this print of two women, one wears a blue *tenugui* head cover and a black and white checkered kimono. This fabric design is similar to those featured in Kuniyoshi's *A Series of Women in Benkei Checks* (*Shima zoroi onna benkei*「縞揃女弁慶」) published by Ibaya Kyūbei in 1844. The silk worker crouches on the floor scattering mulberry leaves onto the rush matting for the feeding silkworms. Standing behind the woman is her companion, whose kimono is decorated with large butterflies.

The 'change of clothes' (*kokorogae*) suggests a seasonal change from spring to summer, possibly indicative of the moulting of the silkworm and its final metamorphosis into a moth. It also relates to a woman's seasonal changes of dress.

The inspiration for this poem may have been Empress Jitō's 天皇持統 verse that was included in the imperial anthology *One Hundred Verses by One Hundred Poets*（*Hyakunin isshu*『百人一首』）compiled by Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241).

「春過ぎて　夏来にけらし　白妙の　衣干すてふ　天の香具山」
Haru sugite
Natsu ki ni kerashi
Shirotae no
Koromo hosu chou
Ama no Kaguyama

"The spring has passed
And the summer come again;
For the silk-white robes,
So they say, are spread to dry
On the 'Mount of Heaven's Perfume'"[56)]

References to the seasonal changing of clothes were traditionally linked to this poem in *bijinga mitate-e*. Another example is found in Suzuki Harunobu's 'Untitled series：Empress Jitō' from 1767-1768 that depicts two young women laundering their clothes in preparation for the summer season [Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: 21.4392].

In the second print, a modestly dressed woman crouches on the ground [Figure 10] preparing branch bundles for the silkworms feeding on leaves on the rush matting. This is the last stage of preparation before the silkworms spin their cocoons. Behind her, a female companion collects the cocoons, picking them off the branches. The following poem invites several readings beyond the straightforward interpretation that the silkworm will 'wear' its silken cocoon. The poem could also express the expectations of the 'silk worm' cultivator; this could refer to the filial daughter who has raised the silk grubs, as well as the mother of the filial daughter. The second translation suggests that the silk worker will enrich herself and consume the luxurious fabric.

Figure 10. Utagawa Yoshitora, Untitled (1846-1852)
© MAK; MAK–Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/ Contemporary Art [ki-8327-17]

(2)
Yagate kiru
Kinu o sodateru
Kaiko kana
-Shiseki 芝石[57)]

The silkworms
She has raised
Will soon wear silk garments.

She will one day wear
The silk of the silkworms
She has raised.

G. Utagawa Yoshikazu

Fortunately, in the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology's Library collection

there is a related earlier print by Utagawa Yoshikazu that provides more information about the identity of the poet Shiseki. This one extant sheet, No. 7-8 is from another poetry series titled *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* (*Kaiko yashinai-gusa*「蚕やしなひ草」). This print lacks a publisher's seal but was issued during the single seal period (1842/6-1846/11), immediately after the Reforms.

In this impression [Figure 11], one woman lifts a tray of cocoons while her companion extracts the silk thread from the basin of heated water. The print incorporates the following two poems:

Figure 11. Utagawa Yoshikazu, *Kaiko yashinai-gusa*, No. 7-8 (1842-1846) ©Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology. [Ukiyoe 2_09; Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM]

Dai shichi-hachi
E de mite mo
Nigiwashi kaiko no
Ito dokoro
-Takanawa Kougi　高輪 孝妓

Yu kagen ni
Jouzu heta ari
Oko no ito
-Matsushiro Shiseki 松代 芝石[58)]

No. 7-8

As seen in the picture,
The lively silkworms of
The thread worker's shop.

From the regulated warm water,
Some skillfully, some clumsily,
[Draw] the silkworm's thread.

From this print, we discover that Shiseki was from Matsushiro [Nagano] and Kōgi from Takanawa [Minato-ku, Tokyo]. Judging by the unusual alias (*haimyō*) of Kōgi the 'Filial Courtesan,' it is possible that the poet was a prostitute or geisha working in the unlicensed quarter of Takanawa in Edo. This print loosely connects Kōgi to the previously discussed poetry circle of Shiseki and Aritaya Sadakichi. The pseudonym conceals the poet's actual identity, and nothing more is currently known about Kōgi.

During the Edo period, impoverished families contracted their 'filial daughters' to brothels to avert destitution and famine. It is possible that Kōgi is alluding to this sympathetic narrative in his/her *haimyō*, and is consciously manipulating the public discourse on filial piety in order to defend the livelihood of the geisha. [59)]

In Kōgi's poem, the busy environment of what may be a brothel is compared to the lively activity pictured in the woodblock print, which is in turn compared to an *itodokoro* (糸所). During the Heian-period, *itodokoro* were imperial workshops where female courtiers produced silk offerings for ritual festivals.

Superficially, Shiseki's poem refers to the sericulturist's skill at drawing silk thread from the warm bath. However, the poem may possess a double meaning. *Yu* (揺) could also refer to the tremulous style of playing a samisen or *koto*, using the fingertips of the left hand. In addition to meaning 'adjustment' or 'moderation,' *kagen* (加減) can also mean a lower chord or string (下弦) and describes the timbre (*onshoku* 音色) of the samisen.

During the Edo period, the samisen's body was sometimes made from mulberry wood, which gave a soft tone to the sound of *kouta* (小唄), the 'short ballads' favoured by geisha. This soft tone was suitable for small intimate venues.[60] The word *ito* (糸) in this poem may describe the samisen's silk strings (弦), and *kaiko* (蚕) or 'silkworm' could be a euphemism for 'young woman' or female musician. This reading provides the following interpretation:

Some are skilled and some are inexperienced at
Adjusting the tremor of the lower chords -
The strings of the geisha.

In this poem, *oko* is a reference to *okosama* or 'silkworms.' People from Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Chiba, Kanagawa, Nagano and Gifu used the respectful term *okosama*. *Okosan* was in use in Miyagi, Tokyo (Edo), Kanagawa, Nagano, Shizuoka and Shimane. [61]

Conclusion

References to agriculture and silk cultivation appeared in educational texts for women, such as *A Treasure Chest of Greater Learning for Women* (*Onna daigaku takarabako*『女大学宝箱』) [NDL: 10.11501/254323] [Figure 12]. This text informed its readers of the hardships (*shinku*) faced by silk farmers. The text quotes Zhang Yu's 張俞 (Japanese: Haku'un 白雲) poem titled "Female Silk Farmer" (*Kaiko fu*「蚕婦」) from c. 1039:

「昨日入城市
帰来涙満巾
遍身羅綺者
不是養蚕人」
Yesterday I entered the market
But I returned home with my handkerchief full of tears.
The people whose entire bodies were arrayed in fine garments
Were not the workers who had cultivated the silkworms.

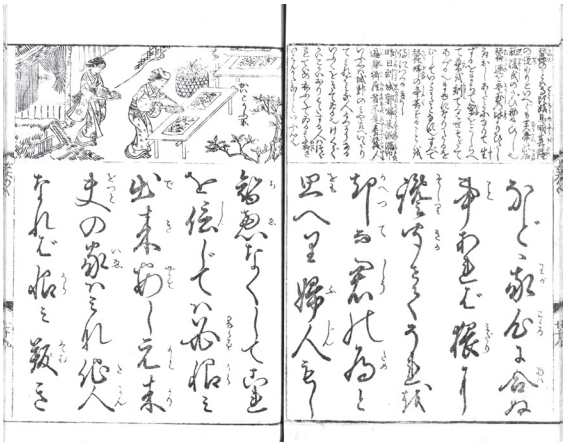

Figure 12. *Onna daigaku takarabako* (c. 1714)

Zhang Yu's poem dwells on the social injustices experienced by the impoverished silk farm labourers; a critical observation that is well situated in a moral text such as the *Greater Learning for Women*. This sentiment is not echoed in the *kyōka* and *kyōku* poems of ukiyo-e, which regarded the acquisition of wealth as a cause for celebration rather than tears. Ukiyo-e and *kyōka* were the artistic expression of Edo merchant culture, and consequently reflected the commercial values of its audience and their desire for social advancement.

Pre-Tenpō Reforms poets exploited the terminology of agricultural texts to metaphorically describe the cultivation of young women (silkworms) to the material benefit of her parents. This desire for riches and upward social mobility conflicted with the ruling elite's strategy of instilling Neo-Confucian values in the minds of the populace in order to perpetuate the rigid social divisions of the *shi-nō-kō-shō* system. The *kyōka* poems that appear on these prints parody the *joshi yō ōrai* narrative that emphasized the cultivation of diligence in young women in order to promote modesty and frugality. Kikugawa Eizan and Keisai Eisen's poetry series exploit this traditional Neo-Confucian ideal of

femininity. Filial daughters (treasured children) and attentive parents (silkworm mothers) are recurrent themes in the sericulture-related *kyōka* poetry from this era.

After the Tenpō Reforms, this official narrative continued to be exploited by poets for erotic and comic effect in *yōsan-e* series that purported to be educational. Despite the government ban on 'courtesan prints,' publishers had found a way to continue issuing *bijinga* by depicting hardworking, 'rural' women. The poems that accompany post-Tenpō Reforms era prints subtly reference the entertainment districts and the female companionship of the women working there. For example, in the poems from *Beauties Compared to Sericulture* a focus is placed on the activities of sleeping and waking. The 'old and lonely' poet jokes about using the 'silkworm's' shoulder as his pillow. The poems from an untitled series published by Aritaya Seiemon, describe the desire to acquire silk clothing and the luxurious pleasure of changing garments. The *kyōka* from *A Text on Cultivating Silkworms* refer to the lively activity in a 'thread worker's shop,' and the women's skill at extracting silk (wealth) from the cocoons. There is also an allusion to the plucking of samisen strings – an instrument frequently associated with the brothel districts.

The *kyōka*, and *Kaiko yashinai-gusa* text from *A Picture Book of Brocades with Precious Threads* served to legitimize *bijinga* by imbuing 'pictures of beauties' with a sense of educational purpose and morality. During a time of heightened censorship, the diversions of the pleasure industry and the superfluities of women's fashion had been successfully remarketed under the guise of feminine modesty, industry and diligence.

Transcriptions・翻刻

A 菊川英山
「蚕養草」江崎屋吉兵衛
「第一」
「しこ」
くり出す春の / 柳のいとよりは / つくる / かひこの眉毛よりして

「第二」
「たけこ」
たをや女が外へ / ちらさぬ / こゝろばへ / 花のかいこの / そだち / かたよき

「第四」
「にわこ」
幸ひを / むすふ糸をや / くり / いてん / むすめ / も / くは / の / はたらきも / よし

B 渓斎英泉
「蚕養艸」江崎屋吉兵衛
「第三」
したにさへ / おかでそだてつ / 手弱女の / てより / 手に / とる / たなの / 蚕は
柳想堂糸満

「第四」
せはしなく / やしなふ末は / そこばくの / 黄金に / かへん / 棄の子宝
琴樹園二喜

C 渓斎英泉
「蚕養艸」江崎屋吉兵衛
「第四」
「庭子」
位よき / 人の袴に / なる糸そ / 蚕の時より / 行義（ぎょうぎ）のつけて
黄雀樓夏躬

「第五」
「まゆ」

桑の葉に /　あらき風さへ /　いとはりて /　蚕かふ /　身や /　親 /　こゝろ /　なる /
凌雲亭守丸

D　渓斎英泉
「蚕養草」森屋治平衛
「にわ子」
蚕すてに大眠起して後は桑の葉を食すること前／＼よりは日にまし多くなる故に採製することせわしく夫ほり日を重まゆを作時に到る是をはいるといふとぞひきりたる蚕まゆを張作なりまゆはるものを簇と言

むつましき /　ふたりこもりの /　眉の糸 /　かふにもあらき /　声たてぬなり /
倉ヶ野　亀の屋簑雄

E　歌川芳虎
「蚕美人競」和泉屋市兵衛
（1）
寐る処も /　なくおもわるゝ /　蚕かな /
祖郷

（2）
老一人 /　蠶のかたを /　枕かな
由誓

（3）
おくれ蚕も /　動き出しけり /　朝なり
金池

（4）
雨夜から /　起揃（い）ひたる /　蠶かな
為山

（5）
絹つくる /　ものとハ見えぬ /　蚕かな
朝水

F 歌川芳虎
「無題」有田屋清右衛門
（1）
君か代に /　生れて嬉し /　衣更
有田屋定貴智

（2）
頓て着る /　衣を /　育る /　蚕かな
芝石

G 歌川芳員
「蚕やしなひ草」版元印なし。
第七八
絵て /　見ても /　にき /　はし /　蚕の糸所
高輪孝妓

湯かけんに /　上手下手あり /　をこのいと
松代芝石

Acknowledgments

With regard to the transcription and translation of the *kuzushiji*, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous assistance of Dr. Kurahashi Masae and Ms. Kawauchi Yūko at Ritsumeikan University.

Notes

1) The first of these treaties, the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed in 1854, and the trading port of Yokohama was opened in 1859. The Japanese Embassy attended the Second London International Exposition of 1862, and participated in the Exposition Universelle that was held in Paris in 1867.

2) Hoston, *Germaine Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 111 referencing Hattori Shisō, 'Ishin shi hōhō-jō no sho mondai' in *Hattori Shisō chosaku shū*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Rironsha, 1955, 1960), p. 123.

3) Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, 'Sericulture and the Origins of Japanese Industrialization,' (*Technology and Culture*, Vol. 33, No. 1, The John Hopkins University Press and the Society for the History of Technology, (Jan., 1992), pp. 105-106. Cited examples are the Tsugaru Domain's commissioning of a sericulture handbook in 1701, and the Yonezawa Domain's handbook *Manual of Sericulture* (*Yōsan tebiki*) published in 1806. Yamamoto Saburō, *Seishigyō kindaika no kenkyū*, (Maebashi: Gunmaken Bunka Jigyō Shinkōkai, 1975), pp. 4-7.

4) Shrively, Donald, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status

in Tokugawa Japan" Harvard-Yenching Institute *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. Vol. 25 (1964-1965), pp. 123-164.

5) Bernstein, Gail Lee, *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 49. Walthall references *Kanagawa kenshi shiryōhen 7: Kinsei*, Vol. 4 (Yokohama: Zaidan Hōjin Kanagawa-ken Kōsaikai, 1975), p. 780.

6) Furegaki No. 13646, dated Tenpō 13, 6th month, 4th day; Kinsei shiryō kenkyūkaihen (Ed.), *Edo machibure shūsei*, Vol. 14, (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1994-), pg. 128.

7) Seigle, Celia Segawa, *Yoshiwara: The Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), pp. 209-210.

8) Mizuno Yūko, *Edo/Tokyo musume gidayū no rekishi*, (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 2003), p. 20.

9) Suzuki Tōzo and Koike Shōtarō, (Eds.), *Kinsei shomin seikatsu shiryō: Fujiokaya Nikki*, Vol. 2, (1987-1995), pp. 231-232.

10) The guilds returned in 1851, and incorporated the new wholesalers that had emerged during the 1840s.

11) Furegaki No. 13807, dated Tenpō 13, 11th month, 30th day; Kinsei shiryō kenkyūkaihen (Ed.), *Edo machibure shūsei*, Vol. 14, (1994-), p. 257.

12) Marks, Andreas, *Publishers of Japanese Woodblock Prints: A Compendium*, (Leiden, Boston: Hotei Publishing, 2011), pp. 477-479.

13) Marks, Andreas, (2011), p. 475.

14) Tajima Tatsuya, 'Toyohara Kunichika "Kōkoku kaiko no yōiku" o meguru mondai – Meiji zenki bijinga no ichidanmen' (Shiryōkan Kenkyū Kiyō 34, (2003.03) / Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryōkan Hen), p. 24;「作業の内容が上部に文書で記されていること、絵も説明的にわかりやすく表現していること、描かれている女性が比較的質素な着物であることなどから、このシリーズの企画には、教養・養育的な意図がかんじられる。江戸時代中期には養蚕を取上げた絵本も出版されるようになっていることから、それを錦絵として独立させる発想が生まれても不思議ではない。」

15) Francks, Penelope, *The Japanese Consumer: An Alternative Economic History of Modern Japan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 47-73.

16)「せなが江戸みやげにあづまにしきと云色絵を見たら、気がわるふなつた
「これ申、おこさまのまへでけがれますぞへ
「何だか大ぶんみちつくがおこさまへ鼠がつきはせぬか

17) Within print culture, this genre is best exemplified by Hishikawa Moronobu's *Ukiyo hyaku nin onna e*『うき世百人女絵』(1681) [British Museum: BM-JH030], Nishikawa Sukenobu's *Hyaku nin jorō shinasadame: ezōshi*『百人女郎品定：絵草紙』(1723) [Waseda: 文庫ヲ 06 03117] and Nishikawa Sukenobu and Ejima Kiseki's *Jochū fūzoku tama kagami*『女中風俗玉鏡』(1732) [Waseda: 文庫チ 05 01281].

18) The publishing date for *Onna daigaku takarabako*『女大学宝箱』is listed in Emori Ichirō, *Edo jidai josei seikatsu ezu daijiten henshū*, No. 1, Shutten ichiran, (Tokyo: Ozorasha, 1993.5-1994.6) and the date for *Onna kanninki yamato bumi*『女堪忍記大倭文』listed in Emori Ichirō, *Edo jidai josei seikatsu ezu daijiten henshū*, No.1, (1993.5-1994.6), pp. 220-235.

19) Haft, Alfred, *Aesthetic Strategies of the Floating World: Mitate, Yatsushi and Fūryū in Early Japanese Popular Culture*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 39, 46.

20) "Silkworm mothers" (蚕母) were the ladies among China's high-ranking courtiers who administered to silkworm cultivation with 'a correct heart.'「又種は清浄なる座敷のうへにつり、是に蚕母といふて、心正しき婦人を附置、これを守等世合ふとかや。」Yamada, Tatsuo et al., *Nihon nōsho zenshū*, vol. 35, (*Yōsan hiroku*), (Tokyo: Nōzan Gyoson Bunka Kyōkai, 1976; 1989), pp. 36-37.

21) Theodore De Bary, Wm, (Ed.), *The Manyōshū: The Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai Translation* of *One Thousand Poems*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 278. No. 835; Poem 3350, *Azuma Uta*, Six Poems from the Province of Hitachi, Book 14.

22) The transcriptions and bibliographical data are from Yamada, Tatsuo et al., *Nihon nōsho zenshū*, vol. 35, (*Yōsan hiroku*), (Tokyo: Nōzan Gyoson Bunka Kyōkai, 1979), pp. 104-168.

23) Ōshima Ryōta (大島 蓼太, 1718-1787) was from Shinano [Nagano], Takakuwa Rankō (高桑 蘭更 , 1726-1798) was a doctor from Kanezawa [Akita], Tan Taigi (炭 太祇 , 1709-1771) came from Edo, Katō Gyōtai (加藤 暁台 , 1732-1792) was from Nagoya, and Yosa Buson (与謝 蕪村, 1716-1784) from Kenma in Settsu [Osaka]. Unfortunately, biographical information relating to Shichizawa, Shōken and Gashō has not survived.

24) Ikegami Eiko, *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 193.

25) Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, [Ukiyoe_1-062: Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM].

26) *Daijirin daisan hen no kaisetsu* (The Asahi Shimbun Company, Voyage Group, Inc.), available through the

'Kotobank' database.

27) Hilofumi Yamamoto (Ed.), *Kokinwakashū* database (2007); Kondō Miyuki and Kondō Yasuhiro research on the Umezawa version of the *Kokinwakashū*. English translations by Rodd, L. R. and Henkenius, M. C., *Kokinshu: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984)

28) Sturgeon, Donald (Ed.), 'The Chinese Text Project,' (Chinese: 中國哲學書電子化計劃), (2016-2017). Translation by James Legge; http://ctext.org

29) 「此夫身女好而頭馬首者與」in Matsumura Kazuo "Alone Among Women: A Comparative Mythic Analysis of the Development of Amaterasu Theology" from *Mythical Thinkings: What Can We Learn from Comparative Mythology*; originally published as 'Josei no naka de tada hitori: Amaterasu shingaku seisei no hikaku shinwagakuteki kōsatsu' in Kojiki Gakkai, (Ed.), *Kojiki no sekai*: Vol. 1. *Kojiki kenkyū taikei*, Vol. 11, (Tokyo: Takashina Shoten, 1996).

30) Manos Collection- Corfu Museum of Asian Art, [In. No. AE-7047].

31) Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, [Ukiyoe 1_061: Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM].

32) *Bijutsu jinmei jiten no kaisetsu* (The Asahi Shinbun Company, Voyage Group, Inc.), available through the 'Kotobank' database.

33) Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Leiden, [RV-1327-325].

34) Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Leiden, [RV- 1327-326]

35) *Bijutsu jinmei jiten no kaisetsu* (The Asahi Shinbun Company, Voyage Group, Inc.)

36) National Museums Scotland, [A.1887.745.49.58].

37) Victoria and Albert Museum, London, [E.14777:19-1886].

38) Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, [Ukiyoe 1_065; Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM].

39) Morris-Suzuki, (1992), p. 111.

40) Morris-Suzuki, (1992), p.119 referencing De Rosny, L, *Traité de l'education des vers à soie au Japon*, 2nd Edition, (Paris: 1868), p. 118.

41) Theodore De Bary, Wm, (Ed.), (1969), Poem 2495, Book 11.

42) Como, Michael, 'Silkworms and Consorts in Nara Japan, *Asian Folklore Studies*, Volume 64 (2005), p. 116. Referencing Honda Jirō, (Ed.), *Shūrai*, (Tokyo: Hideo Shuppan, 1980), p. 218.

43) Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, [Ukiyoe 5_02; Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM].

44) Morris-Suzuki, (1992), p. 110 referencing *Yo-San-Fi-Rok: l'art d'élever les vers à soie au Japon par Ouekaki-Morikouni*, translated by Hoffman. J, annotated by Bonafous, M, (Paris and Turin: 1848), pp.104-105; Uegaki Morikuni, *Yōsan hiroku* (1803), reprinted in *Edo kagaku koten sōsho*, Vol. 13, (Tokyo: Kōwa Shuppan, 1978), pp. 109-110.

45) Morris-Suzuki, (1992), p.112; Uegaki, *Yōsan hiroku* (1803), reprinted in *Edo kagaku koten sōsho*, Vol. 13, (1978), p. 90.

46) *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2000-2002); *Kōdansha Nihon jinmei daijiten*, (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2001). Both are available through the 'Japan Knowledge' database.

47) British Museum: Album 2, Sheet 6, [1915,0823, 0.392.1-4].

48) Victoria and Albert Museum, London, [E.14773:97-1886].

49) *Kōdansha Nihon jinmei daijiten*, (2001)

50) Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, [Ukiyoe 2_011. Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM].

51) British Museum: Album 2, Sheet 19, [1915,0823, 0.392.1-4].

52) Seigle, *Yoshiwara* (1993), p. 250, f.n. 30, references *Shōrō shigo* in *Ōta Nanpo shū*, (Yūhōdō Bunko, Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1926), pp. 713, 716. "Ōta Nanpo's [1749-1823] concubine, Oshizu, said that the livery issued [by the brothel] on the fifteenth of the seventh month was never worn more than once. She said that for the New Year, *chūsan* courtesans prepared about five changes of kimono, the *heyamochi* four changes, and the *shinzō* only three changes including the livery."

53) Seigle, *Yoshiwara*, (1993), p. 208 referencing Buyō Inshi, *Seji kenbunroku*, (Tokyo: Seiabō, 1966), p. 241.

54) Morris-Suzuki, (1992), p.119 referencing De Rosny, L, *Traité de l'education des vers à soie au Japon*, 2nd Edition, (Paris: 1868), p. 118.

55) Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, [Ukiyoe 2_017; Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM].

56) http://jti.lib.virginia.edu/japanese/hyakunin/hyakua.html

57) MAK - Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/ Contemporary Art, [KI 8327-17].

58) Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, [Ukiyoe 2_09; Ukiyoe-VR-Museum, CD ROM].

59) Stanley, Amy, *Selling Women: Prostitution, Markets, and the Household in Early Modern Japan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), pp. 70; 85.

60) Inoue Shigeharu, *Muruberi- no megumi*, (Fureguransu Ja-narusha, 2011), p. 95.

61) *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, (200-2002)

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[Waseda文庫] http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/search.php

[Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryōkan] http://base1.nijl.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/G0001401KTG