
‘After Native Drawings’: early Western reproductions of ukiyo-e prints and book illustrations

Dr Ellis Tinios (Visiting Researcher, Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University)

E-mail p.e.tinios@leeds.ac.uk

要旨

本研究は、1850 年代から 1860 年代初頭に西洋諸国が日本に派遣した軍事・外交使節団の報告書に掲載されている、日本の浮世絵や「絵本」の複製画、挿絵について考察する。以上の報告書にある内容は、当時の時代背景を反映し、文化的優位性と根深い人種差別的な態度が各所でみられるにもかかわらず、全ての著者は、日本の芸術、日本の書籍の品質、そして高い識字率に対して、それぞれの観点で賞賛の意を表している。これらの発言は、単なる民族学的な興味から一歩進んで、日本の工芸品が「ある程度」の美的価値を持っていると西欧が認識する最初のステップを表しているといえるのである。

abstract

This study considers the illustrations based on ukiyo-e prints and ‘picture’ books included in the reports of the military/diplomatic missions sent by Western nations to Japan in the 1850s and early 1860s. Assumptions of cultural superiority and ingrained racist attitudes typical of the time inform those reports. Nonetheless, all the authors expressed varying degrees of admiration for Japanese art, the quality of Japanese books, and the high level of literacy evident in the country. These comments represent the first steps away from viewing Japanese artefacts solely as ethnographic curiosities, and acknowledging that they possessed ‘some’ aesthetic merit.

Introduction

This essay explores the examples of Japanese graphic art reproduced in the published accounts of the military/diplomatic missions sent by various Western powers to Japan in the 1850s and early 1860s. These expeditions had one purpose: to impose treaties of ‘trade and friendship’ on the Japanese. Illustrations in them present with varying degrees of fidelity ukiyo-e prints and images from ‘picture books’ that members of the missions purchased while in Japan. The focus here is on the illustrations in two books in particular, those linked to the British negotiations with the Japanese in Edo in August 1858. In what follows, the sources of those illustrations will be identified, the accuracy of their reproduction considered, and the authors’ understanding of them discussed.

These volumes reveal tentative steps toward the appreciation of ukiyo-e prints and ‘picture books’ as works of art rather than simply as curious sources of ethnographic and topographic data. However, any role these books might have played in promoting the wider appreciation of Japanese graphic art among Western artists and collectors was fleeting. They were soon forgotten

in the flood of actual ukiyo-e prints and illustrated books that inundated Europe and America following Japan’s forced re-engagement with the wider world. In the final section of this essay, the British authors’ comments will be augmented with extracts relating to art, bookshops, books, education, and reading habits in Japan found in the reports on the near contemporaneous American, French and Prussian missions. Taken as a whole, these reports reveal the initial responses of educated Westerners to Japanese graphic art. They also offer novel glimpses of the print and book trade in Japan in the late 1850s.

The British publications

Ten fine colour reproductions of ukiyo-e prints appeared in two books published in London and *Edinburgh* in 1859 and 1861. The first, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin’s Mission to China and Japan in the years 1857, ’58, 59*, was written by Laurence Oliphant (1829–1888), private secretary to Lord Elgin (1811–1863). The second, *Japanese Fragments with facsimiles of illustrations by artists of Yedo*, was a short monograph from the pen of Captain Sherard Osborn (1822–1875) of the Royal Navy, who had served under Elgin in East Asia.¹⁾ The primary

purpose of Elgin's mission was to engage with Chinese forces in what is commonly referred to as the Second Opium War (1856–1860). In the late summer of 1858, during a lull in operations in China, Elgin sailed to Japan on the frigate HMS *Furious*, which was commanded by Osborn. After calling at Nagasaki and Shimoda, he sailed into Edo Bay. The purpose of his 'peaceful' mission to Japan was two-fold: to present a steam yacht, a gift from Queen Victoria, to the emperor; and to conclude the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Commerce between Her Majesty and the Tycoon of Japan (*Nichiei shūkō tsūshō jōyaku* 日英修好通商条約). The treaty was signed in Edo on 26 August 1858. The British were in Edo for ten days, departing on 28 August. It was in that brief period that Oliphant and Osborn acquired the prints and books they drew upon to illustrate their publications.

The ten colour lithographs after ukiyo-e prints included in Oliphant and Osborn reproduced the work of two Utagawa school artists: Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) and Utagawa Kunisada II (1823–1880). Osborn reproduced a further five prints by Hiroshige as monochrome wood engravings in his book. In addition, both authors incorporated a number of wood engravings in their reports based on book illustrations. The latter were extracted almost entirely from titles by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849).

Lawrence Oliphant's *Narrative*

William Blackwood and Sons (Edinburgh and London) published Laurence Oliphant's 988-page narrative in two substantial volumes, which included in total four chromolithographs, twenty-four hand-coloured lithographs, fifty-five wood engravings, and five engraved folding maps. The volumes were sold in edition bindings ornamented with blind-printing and with a distinct gilded motif on the front cover of each. The set cost two guineas (£2.2s), a substantial sum at the time.²⁾ Such expensive books were intended, primarily, for purchase by subscription libraries.

Oliphant dealt with Japan in volume 2 of his *Narrative*. Just over half the text (265 pages), all fifteen of the lithographs, thirty of the thirty-five wood engravings, and two of the three maps in that volume relate to Japan. The four lithographs based on ukiyo-e prints were high-quality chromolithographs, in which the colours were printed from multiple lithographic stones; the remaining eleven lithographs, which were hand-coloured, were based on sketches by F. G. B. Bedwell (active 1850s), the official artist of the expedition, or on photographs taken by the expedition photographer. Sixteen of the thirty-five wood engravings were based on Japanese book

illustrations. Thus, in all, twenty illustrations in Oliphant reproduce examples of Japanese graphic art.³⁾

The four chromolithographs after ukiyo-e prints in Oliphant

Oliphant chose ukiyo-e prints from three series for reproduction by chromolithography:

- two designs from Utagawa Kunisada II's Murasaki Shikibu's Genji playing cards (*Murasaki Shikibu Genji karuta* 紫式部げんじかるた, 1857)
- one design from Utagawa Hiroshige's Illustrations of famous places in the sixty-odd provinces (*Rokujūyoshū meisho zue* 六十余州名所図会, 1853–1856)
- one design from Utagawa Hiroshige's Famous places in the eastern capital (*Tōto meisho* 東都名所, late 1830s)

Chromolithograph 1 (fig. 1)

The first ukiyo-e print in Oliphant's *Narrative*, which faces page 19, comes from the series *Murasaki Shikibu Genji karuta* by Kunisada II. This chromolithograph, printed from as many as thirteen lithographic stones, is titled, 'A Lady at Her Toilet from a Japanese Drawing.' Close examination of this facsimile reveals blind-printing on the interior of the shell cartouche and the outer kimono of the bathing woman, which replicates the blind-printing on the original. This effect was impressed into the chromolithograph from an un-inked cut metal plate or from an un-inked etched lithographic stone.

Oliphant chose to reproduce one of the extremely rare commercially-issued ukiyo-e prints that depict bare-breasted women. While the female nude was a frequent subject in Western art, it was only 'acceptable' in certain specific contexts: scenes from myth, legend and classical history; Orientalist fantasies of harem life and slave markets; or personifications of virtues and concepts (such as 'Prudence' or 'Liberty'). In the mid-nineteenth century, the portrayal of the unclothed body of a contemporary European or American woman in an ordinary, everyday context was considered indecent, even pornographic. If the woman represented was from an 'alien' (and by definition an 'inferior') culture, she became an ethnographic exhibit, in which case her nakedness was permissible. Oliphant does not comment directly about this 'provocative' image, but in the adjacent text, he observes that 'The women seldom wear anything above their waist; the men only a scanty loin-cloth' (pp.18–19).

Rutherford B. Alcock (1809–1897), who had represented the United Kingdom in Edo for three

years, also included an illustration of female nudity in his book, *The capital of the tycoon: a narrative of a three years' residence in Japan* (London, 1863). Alcock chose to reproduce the bathhouse scene in *Hokusai manga, Part I*. He justified his choice because, as he explained, it illustrates 'a custom of the country'. He wrote:

... I can not help feeling there is danger of doing great injustice to the womanhood of Japan, if we judge them by our rules of decency and modesty. Where there is no sense of immodesty, no consciousness of wrong doing, there is, or may be, a like absence of any sinful or depraved feeling. It is a custom of the country. . . . Any one of the real performers [women] in the above scene—a bathing saturnalia it may appear to us—when all is over and toilette is completed, will leave the bath door a very picture of womanly reserve and modesty...looking as irreproachable as the best of her sex. . . (pp. 230–31)

Alcock's fascination with public female nudity is obvious. His and Oliphant's responses to it were far calmer and more measured than that of the American Reverend Francis L. Hawks (1798–1866) in his *Narrative of Perry's mission* (see below).

Chromolithograph 2 (fig. 2)

The second chromolithograph, facing page 97, reproduces a print from Hiroshige's series *Rokujūyoshū meisho zue*: 'The pine shore of Miho in Suruga' (*Suruga Miho-no-matsubara* 駿河 三保のまつ原). Oliphant's caption reads: 'A View of Fusi-yama from a Japanese drawing.' The lithographers did not correct the mis-registration of the green block in the impression of this print from which they were working. This demonstrates the care with which they sought to replicate their models.

Chromolithograph 3 (fig. 3)

Oliphant's third chromolithograph, which faces page 140, reproduces a pedestrian design from Hiroshige's series *Tōto meisho*: 'Evening view of Kasumigaseki' (*Kasumigaseki yūkei* 霞ヶ関夕景). Oliphant appears to have chosen it for its topographic interest. His caption reads: 'A Street in the Aristocratic Quarter of Yedo after a Japanese Drawing'. Perhaps he assumed that the English aristocracy would wish to view the residential district of their Japanese counterparts.

Chromolithograph 4 (fig. 4)

The fourth chromolithograph, facing page 180, reproduces another print from Kunisada II's

Genji karuta series. It also includes blind-printing. This illustration is surprising in two ways. Firstly, an examination of six impressions of the original reveals that the size of the snowflakes has been exaggerated in this facsimile. It is most likely that the lithographers enlarged the snowflakes so that they could be visible in this reduced reproduction of the original ōban-size print. It appears that the snowflakes here were modelled on those in the scene Fuji in deep snow (*Shinsetsu no Fuji* 深雪の不二) in the third volume of Hokusai's *Fugaku hyakkei* (One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji), which appears as a wood engraving on page 229 of the *Narrative*. Secondly, the rendering of the faces is very poor. This is out of line with the care otherwise taken to assure the accuracy of the facsimiles of ukiyo-e prints in Oliphant's book. Even the text in the blind-printed shell cartouche was copied with greater fidelity to the original.⁴⁾

Oikawa Shigeru, in his article 'Edo *Ukiyo-E* Prints in Works of European Artists', regards the chromolithographs in Oliphant as 'the first full colour ukiyo-e in a Western publication.'⁵⁾ He argues that Oliphant intended to include 'representative Japanese woodblock prints of that time' in his book (p.15). The bare-breasted woman from the Kunisada II's *Genji karuta* series and the lacklustre cityscape from Hiroshige's *Tōto meisho* are far from 'representative' of the range of prints then available in Edo. Oliphant lacked the knowledge that would have enabled him to select 'representative' prints during his brief stay in Edo. Indeed, it is unlikely it would even have occurred to him to attempt to do so. His primary concern was most probably to gather material of ethnographic or topographic interest for possible inclusion in his report. There is no evidence to suggest that he had a strong interest in Japanese graphic art per se or in Japanese printing methods.

Oliphant described each of the chromolithographs that reproduce ukiyo-e prints as 'from a Japanese drawing' and each of the wood engravings after book illustrations as 'from a native drawing'.⁶⁾ By identifying his sources as drawings, Oliphant unintentionally obscures the fact that he is reproducing printed images. He does, however, express a degree of admiration for some of the material he reproduces. For example, he writes that in one of the books he acquired, horses were 'drawn with such spirit and artistic talent'. He also observes: 'Though ignorant of the art of painting in oils, the Japanese are skilful in the management of water-colours, and some of their coloured prints are life-like and characteristic' (p. 181). In Europe at that time, painting in oils was regarded as the highest art form. From the standpoint of Oliphant and his

contemporaries, being ignorant of oil painting demonstrated Japan's cultural inferiority to Europe. While Oliphant acknowledges that the Japanese were 'skilful' in 'some' of their watercolours, for him and his contemporaries, watercolour, as a less valued medium, was largely the domain of amateurs and women. The 'watercolours' that he references were the ukiyo-e prints in his possession. He believed that they had been hand-coloured using watercolours, the technique often used to colour lithographs at that time.

The sixteen wood engravings after book illustrations in Oliphant

Oliphant's *Narrative* was the first publication to introduce accurate reproductions of Japanese book illustrations to a wider Western audience.⁷⁾ He commented that in Edo, '...bookstalls are numerous, and their contents were temptingly displayed toward the street. . .'. After listing the kinds of books Dutch sources informed him were published in Japan, he added that there were also 'books containing nothing but pictures' and 'works of fiction illustrated with woodcuts'. The illustrations in the latter, he explained, were 'engraved [sic] upon the same blocks with the type'.⁸⁾ Oliphant wrote approvingly about education and the high level of literacy in Japan:

. . .it will appear that a more widely diffused system of national education exists in Japan than in our own country; and that in that respect, at all events, if in no other, they are decidedly in advance of us. Often in passing along the streets I heard the pleasant babble of children learning their lesson.

He goes on to observe:

We may fairly presume that the Japanese are a reading people; and from all I could learn, the fair sex were not behind their lords in the improvement of their minds. (pp. 179–81).

While Oliphant 'managed to pick up a good-many picture books,' he knew neither their titles nor the names of the artists who illustrated them. Thus, he described *Fugaku hyakkei* as '...illustrative of the various trades in Japan . . . a most interesting study' (pp. 179–80). The illustrations reproduced in his *Narrative* reveal that in addition to *Fugaku hyakkei* he had also acquired volumes of the *Hokusai manga*, *Hokusai gafu* and *Hokusai gakan*.⁹⁾ All the books he (and Osborn) drew upon for illustrations were published by the Nagoya-based publishing house Tōhekidō (Eirakuya Tōshirō).¹⁰⁾

Not surprisingly, Oliphant misunderstood some of the images he chose to reproduce.

Consider, for example, his explanation of the woodcut he titled 'Pilgrims ascending a Mountain (from a native drawing)', which was based on the right half of the double-page illustration 'Fuji in the mists' (*Muchū no Fuji* 霧中の不二) from *Fugaku hyakkei*, Part I. (figs. 5 & 6) Oliphant wrote: 'Another favourite act of devotion, and one in which some enterprising Englishmen will doubtless, ere long, participate, is the ascent of the celebrated Fusi-yama, the "Matchless Mountain," ... The ascent is said to occupy three days' (p. 220).

There are four depictions of pilgrims ascending and descending Mount Fuji in *Fugaku hyakkei*. 'Fuji in the mists' is not one of them, as it has nothing to do with pilgrims. It presents a distant Fuji just appearing through a morning mist—a tour de force of the printer's art—while in the foreground a woman and four boys set off along a steep embankment to gather mushrooms.¹¹⁾ By reproducing just the right half of the double-page spread, Mount Fuji was omitted.

Sherard Osborn's Japanese Fragments

Sherard Osborn's *Japanese Fragments with Facsimiles of Illustrations by Artists of Yedo* was published in London in 1861 by Bradbury and Evans. The eight chapters of that book had been published serially in the preceding year in *Once a Week*, an illustrated weekly literary magazine also published by Bradbury and Evans. Osborn's book was a more modest publication than Oliphant's *Narrative*, smaller in format and containing just 139 pages, but it was rich in illustrations with six coloured lithographs and twenty-one wood engravings. (Only the latter had appeared in the serialisation of the book in *Once a Week*.) It sold for seven shillings, one-sixth of the price of Oliphant's two-volume work. Osborn was an admiral in the Royal Navy, an Arctic explorer, as well as an author. As captain of HMS *Furious*, he played a prominent role in the military operations of the Second Opium War. As already mentioned, Elgin sailed from China to Japan on Osborn's ship.

In his preface, Osborn explained that he wrote this book in order to present images of Japan by artists of Edo to 'the Public of England':

. . .I have found much encouragement in being able to illustrate my tale of the strange things of Japan with a series of beautiful illustrations, bought during my stay in the city of Yedo [in August 1858]. For a time, I could not find a publisher who would produce them in a manner likely to do justice without flattery to the skill of the Japanese artists, but at last the good taste of my friend the Editor of

Once a Week [Samuel Lucas, 1811–1865], together with the enterprise of [the publishers] Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, enabled me to place before the Public of England a series of perfect facsimiles [of those Japanese illustrations], which throw my humble letter-press [Osborn's own text], as I would desire, into entirely a secondary position. . .

London, Nov. 1860 (p. xii)

A publisher's advertisement also emphasised that the illustrations in the book were based on material acquired by the author in Japan:

This Work is illustrated with Facsimiles of Drawings purchased by the Author in the City of Yedo. Six of them have been reduced by the new patent process of the Electric Block Company, and are [hand] coloured after the originals. The Wood engravings, twenty-two in number, are accurately traced from the Japanese drawings.¹²⁾

In his main text Osborn writes:

. . .and I bring to that ancient knowledge [of Japan repeated in many earlier publications], modern information, and, what is better still, these native illustrations procured in the city of Yedo itself, which will bring before us in vivid relief the scenery, the towns and villages, the highways and byways of that strange land—the costumes, tastes, and, I might almost say, the feelings of the people—so skilful are Japanese artists in the Hogarth-like talent of transferring to their sketches the characteristics of passing scenes. (p. 3)

Osborn's concluding words are great praise from an Englishman. In the nineteenth century, the eighteenth-century William Hogarth (1697–1764) was one of the most highly regarded English artists.

The six hand-coloured lithographs after ukiyo-e prints in Osborn

The six hand-coloured lithographs included in Osborn's book are slightly smaller than those in Oliphant.¹³⁾ He selected prints from three print series, all by Hiroshige:

- one from Fifty-three stations along the *Tōkaidō* (*Tōkaidō gojūsan tsugi no uchi* 東海道五十三次の内, 1833–1834)
- three from Illustrations of famous places in the sixty-odd provinces (*Rokujiyoshū meisho zue* 六十余州名所図会, 1853–1856)
- two from Illustrations of famous places of the fifty-three stations (*Gojūsan tsugi meisho zue* 五十三次名所図会, 1855)

Osborn's coloured lithographs are less faithful to the originals than those in Oliphant. Osborn sanctioned the removal of the cartouches, signatures, publishers' marks and censors' seals from all the prints he published. In addition, the corners of each were scalloped even when the originals had square corners. Osborn's comments on the prints he chose for reproduction in colour are more revealing of his own attitudes and prejudices than they are about Japanese art and life. Two examples are included here to underscore this point.

Example 1 (fig. 7)

Osborn titled the coloured lithograph facing page 18, 'Labourers transplanting rice in the rains'. It was based on the print 'Ono in Hoki, with Oyama in the distance' (*Hoki Ono Oyama enbō* 伯耆大野大山遠望) from the series *Rokujiyoshū meisho zue*. He wrote of this image: 'Naked, swarthy, coarse, but hardy, look those tillers of the fields, as we view them in the midst of their labours transplanting the rice plants.. .' The activity of the peasants is correctly described: they are transplanting rice seedlings. They are, however, hardly 'naked, swarthy, or coarse'. Osborn's choice of words clearly reflects the prejudices of his social class toward 'peasants'.

Example 2 (fig. 8)

Osborn titled the coloured lithograph facing page 79, 'View of a Waterfall seen between cloud and spray'. It reproduces the print 'Rear-view of a Waterfall on Mount Nikko in Shimotsuke' (*Shimotsuke Nikkōsan Urami no taki* 下野日光山裏見ノ瀧), also from the series *Rokujiyoshū meisho zue*. Osborn commented:

Even the humble artists of that land become votaries of the beautiful, and in such efforts as the one annexed strive to do justice to the scenery. Their appreciation of the picturesque is far in advance, good souls, of their power of pencil, but our embryo Turner has striven hard to reproduce the combined effects of water, mountain, cloud and spray, touched by the bright beams of a rising sun. (p. 79)

The language in this passage is condescending. Osborn refers to the artists of Japan as 'humble'—which suggests that they are of low status and ability. They 'strive'—in other words, they are 'trying hard'—to do justice to the beauties of Japan but because of their limited technique ('their power of pencil'), they fall short of their goal. For him, the intensity of their appreciation of the picturesque in nature outstrips their abilities as artists. He calls the unnamed artist of this print—who was

Hiroshige—an ‘embryo Turner’. Turner was England’s greatest landscape painter. For Osborn, Hiroshige was a raw, half-formed version of that great artist. Such statements should not surprise us. Osborn’s aesthetics, like those of Oliphant, were firmly grounded in European art. What is noteworthy is that despite their deeply-rooted prejudices, Oliphant and Osborn both expressed in print a degree of appreciation of the work of ‘Artists of Yedo’ despite what they considered to be their obvious shortcomings.

The five wood engravings after ukiyo-e prints in Osborn

Unlike Oliphant, Osborn also reproduced ukiyo-e prints as monochrome wood engravings. The latter were based on prints from the same three Hiroshige landscape series from which he had selected the prints reproduced in colour in his book. Even greater liberties were taken in the preparation of these wood engravings than had been taken in the preparation of the coloured lithographs. I will focus on two: the one to which four figures had been added; and the one which is a startling pastiche of elements taken from three Hiroshige prints.

Example 1 (fig. 9)

The wood engraving ‘Wayside scene’ on page 7 reproduces ‘Mishima: the First Gate of Mishima-daimyōjin Shrine’ (*Mishima: Mishima-daimyōjin ichi no torii* 三島 三島大明神一の鳥居), print no. 12 in Hiroshige’s *Gojūsantsugi meisho zue* (popularly known as the ‘vertical Tōkaidō’ series), with the addition of four men in the foreground. Inexplicably, the men appear to be Chinese (at that time, Chinese would not have been free to roam the streets of Edo in search of entertainment). Osborn highlights these figures in his comments:

The hotels [brothels] are to be recognised by the courtesans, who both in the balconies and in the doorsteps are inviting the passers-by. The three travellers in the foreground are criticising the poor girls, and debating at which house to put up. Neither party seem in the least ashamed of the part they are performing. This is a truthful everyday scene, sadly illustrative of the remarks we have made [elsewhere about prostitution in Japan]. . . (p. 69)

Osborn wished to illustrate—and condemn—the ‘shameless’ openness of prostitution in Japan. The addition of the three figures on the right, one of whom points at the women on the balcony, allows him to write a more lurid description of the scene. He shares a view often expressed in the writings of the first wave of Westerners to enter Japan in the 1850s and early

1860s—that the Japanese, particularly in comparison with the Chinese, are a wonderful people, honest, industrious, clean, artistic, however, they are too relaxed about sex. These observers felt certain that once Japan was Christianised, this sad deficiency would be corrected, and the Japanese would rank among the best people on earth.

Example 2 (fig. 10)

My second example of a wood engraving based on ukiyo-e prints is the pastiche titled ‘A party crossing a ford’. This image is composed of elements taken from three prints: (1) Fuchū (*Fuchū* 府中), no. 19 in the series *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsugi no uchi*; (2) Kii Province: Waka Bay (*Kii: Waka no ura* 紀伊 : 和 加 之 浦), no. 53 in *Rokujūyoshū meisho zue*; and (3) Shimada: the Suruga bank of the Ōi River (*Shimada: Ōigawa sungan* 島田:大井川駿岸), no. 24 in *Gojūsantsugi meisho zue*. Figure 11 shows how elements from these three prints were combined to create this cluttered scene. The copyist who prepared the block-ready drawing created a design that displayed none of the expansive sweeps of sky and sea encountered in his three sources. The result is an unfortunate example of Japonaiserie. The copyists remained more faithful to their models in the other three wood engravings after ukiyo-e prints in Osborn, aside from removing all texts, seals and cartouches, and adding scalloped corners.

The sixteen wood engravings after book illustrations in Osborn

Osborn chose sixteen images from *Fugaku hyakkei*, *Hoku’un manga*, and *Hokusai manga*, Part IX and Part XII for reproduction as wood engravings. Five are considered here.

Example 1 (fig.12)

Osborn, in contrast to Oliphant, knew the title of at least one of the books he was using, *Fugaku hyakkei*, which he rendered as Hundred Phases of the Matchless Mountain.¹⁴⁾ However, he did not know the name of the artist who designed it. The woodcut Osborn titled ‘Travellers first sighting Fusi-hama’ was based on ‘The emergence of Fuji in Kōrei 5’ (*Kōrei gonen Fuji shūken* 孝霊五年不二出現) from *Fugaku hyakkei*, Part I (fig.13). In his commentary, he wrote, ‘...we rejoice like the travellers who, in the early morn, halt on the highway, and gaze upon her grand proportions in wonderment and love as she towers above the great empire, and daily blesses the millions at her feet.’ (pp.4-6) What we have here are not travellers, but officials sent by the Emperor Kōrei to investigate the miraculous

appearance of the sacred mountain in the year 286 BCE.

The rendering of the clouds in this wood engraving confirms that Osborn, like Oliphant, was in possession of a copy of the “pink” edition of *Fugaku hyakkei*. (I will explain the significance of this bibliographic detail below.) Osborn’s copyist removed the central ‘well’ from this majestic double-page spread. Such treatment of Japanese double-page book illustrations was the norm in Western publications into the twentieth century. In addition, the copyist took the liberty of ‘correcting’ what he must have assumed to be a miscalculation on the part of the Japanese designer that caused Fuji’s peak to break the image frame in the original.

Example 2 (fig. 14)

In the wood engraving titled ‘Pilgrims ascending Fusi-hama’, Osborn chose to reproduce just three-quarters of the powerful double-page design ‘Circling the crater of Fuji’ (*Hakkai meguri no Fuji* 八ヶ廻の不二) from *Fugaku hyakkei*, Part III. The artisan who prepared the block-ready drawing shifted two figures from the cropped portion of the design into the centre-left of the new image field and flipped one of them. These modifications made a nonsense of Hokusai’s carefully rendered terrain. Osborn wrote of this wood engraving:

Amongst other graphic illustrations of the toil and danger undergone by Japanese devotees [of Fuji], we give a fac-simile of one, which brings vividly before us the ‘antres vast and deserts idle’ [a quote Shakespeare’s Othello] through which they have to wend their way; and we can sympathise with the Alpine Club as they view our fac-simile, and regret that no artist has been found in Europe who could as truthfully portray their deeds of daring at the shrine of their mountain goddess. (pp. 11–12)

Osborn’s convoluted prose praises the unnamed artist (Hokusai) for evoking so powerfully the challenge Fuji presented to climbers and adds that there was no artist in Europe who could match this vivid portrayal of mountaineering. This again is strong praise from Osborn.

Example 3 (fig.15)

Osborn had access to a translation of Hokusai’s caption for this image: ‘Picture of nurturing soldiers’ (*Shisotsu eikiyō* 士卒英気養図) from *Hokusai manga*, Part IX. He rendered the Japanese as follows: ‘How soldiers are fed in Nipon!’ Only the lower half of this single-page was reproduced, with the figures rearranged and a flask added on the left. (In the original, a boy was

depicted carrying it.) In his description, Osborn again reveals his ingrained class prejudices:

The coarse animal enjoyments of the lower classes in Japan are favourite subjects for the pencils of their artists, some of whom appear to desire to correct this vice by broad exaggerations and Punch-like sketches. Take, for instance, the one which is wittily entitled ‘How Soldiers are fed in Nipon!’ Were ever [our] soldiers so fattened up, ever so well entertained? Sigh, ye Guardsmen! (p. 99)

He compares this image to the satirical sketches that appeared in the popular London weekly magazine *Punch* and suggests that some Japanese artists may have sought to promote the moral improvement of their countrymen through their art. While the ‘correction of vice’ through art may often have been a concern to British artists like the aforementioned Hogarth, it is not an aspect of the art of Katsushika Hokusai.

Example 4 (fig. 16)

The wood engraving Osborn titled, ‘A Japanese hero in the rain taking off his hat to a lady of surpassing beauty’ (page 54) is based on a depiction of Ōta Dōkan 太田道灌 (1432–1486) in *Hoku’un manga* (1824). Osborn offers the following interpretation of the scene in his accompanying text:

A distinguished general—it may be the great Taiko-sama himself, although we fear the officer is not half ugly enough—encounters a beautiful maiden, in a heavy shower of rain. She has taken shelter under some rose bushes;—most appropriate shelter for one so lovely. But in spite of the rain, and despite of rank, the gallant son of the Japanese Mars uncovers to salute one so surpassingly beautiful—while she, blushing, trembling, with downcast eyes, acknowledges his courtesy by presenting flowers. A charming idyl—a picture of the combination of military and social virtues worth a whole bookful of type [text]. (pp. 53–55)

In fact, this scene depicts the fifteenth-century samurai poet-monk Ōta Dōkan approaching an inn on a rainy day to request the loan of a raincoat. Instead, a maid from the inn brings him a *yamabuki* flower on a tray. Her meaning was expressed by the poem: ‘Although having many petals, the *yamabuki*, to our regret, has no seeds [*mino*]’. There is word play in the poem: *mino* can mean both seeds and a grass raincoat.

Example 5 (fig.17)

Osborn titled the final illustration in *Japanese Fragments* 'Boys struggling with live eels.' It is based on 'Like a climbing eel' (*unagi nobori* 鰻登り) from *Hokusai manga, Part XII*. He wrote: 'The liveliness of the fish brought to market is frequently illustrated by the native artists, and a facsimile of a laughable scene, supposed to arise from their being too lively, will be found at page 138.' Here, Hokusai illustrated the expression 'like a climbing eel', which refers to a rapid, unexpected, uncontrollable increase. The illustration takes on a humorous sexual dimension when seen in the double-page spread in which Hokusai had placed it. The facing page, which Osborn did not reproduce, depicts women at a bathhouse.

Osborn's comments were well-intentioned. Descriptions such as these were the products of his fantasies and prejudices blended with his fragmentary knowledge of things Japanese. Their tone was typical of much of what was written in the early years of European (and American) engagement with Japanese art.

Reception of Osborn's Japanese Fragments

I have not been able to locate contemporaneous reviews of Oliphant that mention the illustrations in his book. This was not the case with Osborn. In a listing of 'new works published' by Bradbury and Evans, which was included as back-matter in various numbers of *Blackwood's Magazine* in early 1861, the publishers quote passages from reviews of Osborn that appeared in other periodicals. The review from the *Westminster Review* reads, in part: 'The little volume is a picture of a strange civilization that, perhaps, may not long endure, and may be confidently recommended to all who have a taste for a genuine artistic curiosity.' The anonymous reviewer makes the chilling observation that the "strange civilization of Japan" may not long survive contact with the West, but was sufficiently impressed by the illustrations in the book to recommend it to those with 'a taste for a genuine artistic curiosity.' This is praise of an ambiguous sort. To the reviewer, the images were not true art but strange things that aspire to art. A review that appeared in *The Times* was also quoted by the publishers:

Sherard Osborn's 'Japanese Fragments,' with facsimiles of illustrations by artists of Yedo, is a real novelty; in fact it has come upon the artist [sic] world as a surprise to find that there are artists in Japan who can draw with the vigour of Gilray (1756–1810) and the delicacy and humour of Richard Doyle (1824–1883). We look upon this as a genuine little book, which is quite a relief to the eye, among

the reproductions of mawkish [European] originals [in the illustrated books] which abound at this [Christmas] season, and which give such a dreary aspect to the drawing-rooms of deluded purchasers.

This reviewer condescendingly asserts that the "artist world" was surprised by the quality of the work of "artists of Yedo". He expresses undisguised astonishment that the Japanese were capable of creating vigorous images, and, like Osborn, compares the Japanese artists favourably with popular English artists. He concludes his review with a stinging critique of the original European art reproduced in so many Christmas picture books, contrasting the latter's 'mawkish' illustrations with the freshness of the Japanese images reproduced in Osborn.

More extensive comments about the images reproduced by Osborn appear in a rambling anonymous survey of new books published for the 1861 Christmas season that appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*. The following extract, about one-fifth of the passage devoted to Osborn, reveals the tenor of those comments:

Captain Osborn has scorned the smooth embellishments of European pencil or graver. The illustrations which he has given us. . .are genuine products of native art, facsimiles of drawings bought in Yedo. And very admirable drawings they are, as everybody will allow. True, the amount of beauty expressible by the Japanese artist is limited, not to say peculiar; but the downright and straightforward way in which he goes about it is quite refreshing to behold. . . . After all, what could landscape art do better than the "View of Yedo" in Captain Osborn's frontispiece? . . . Absolutely, this primitive sketch, with its broad simple realisation of tropical colour and straightforward symbolism, is more to the purpose than the most correct of drawings. . . . Captain Osborn deserves the highest credit for holding faithful to his illustrations. 15)

The 'primitive sketch' the reviewer refers to is 'Shinagawa' from Hiroshige's *Gojūsantsugi meisho zue* (1855). (fig. 18) As noted above, Osborn did not 'hold faithful to his illustrations'.

Oliphant and Osborn's selections of material

Oliphant and Osborn both selected prints from landscape series by Hiroshige, while Oliphant also selected two designs from the *Genji karuta* series by Kunisada II. It is not surprising that three recently published print series—*Rokujūyoshū meisho zue* (1853–1856), *Gojūsantsugi meisho zue* (1855) and *Murasaki Shikibu Genji karuta* (1857)—were available in Edo in

August 1858. However, it is noteworthy that they were able to purchase prints from Hiroshige's first Tōkaidō series twenty-five years after it was first published, and from his *Tōto meisho* some twenty years after its initial publication. (Exactly the same chronological range of prints by Hiroshige was available to the Americans in Shimoda in 1854 as were available to the British in Edo four years later (see below). The absence of landscape prints by Hokusai in these books suggests that they were not readily available in the 1850s.

While Oliphant and Osborn did not reproduce any sheet prints by Hokusai, all but one of the books they drew upon for illustrations were by him. The one exception, *Hoku'un manga*, was by Hokusai's pupil Katsushika Hoku'un (active 1810s & 1820s). The latter's work very much resembles that of his master.¹⁶⁾ The books used by Oliphant and Osborn were:

- *Hokusai manga, Part IX* (1819) and *Part XII* (1834)
- *Hokusai gakan*, 1858 reprint of *Denshin gakyō* (1818)¹⁷⁾
- *Fugaku hyakkei* ('pink' edition published in or shortly before 1858)
- *Hoku'un manga Part I* (1824)
- *Hokusai gafu* (first published complete in 3 vols., c. 1850)

The chronological spread of the initial publication dates of these books is broad. They remained in print thanks to the efforts of the Nagoya-based publisher, Tōhekidō.¹⁸⁾

Katano Yoshinori (片野善教, Eirakuya Tōshirō III), head of Tōhekidō from 1836 until his death in 1858) published the first complete edition of *Fugaku hyakkei* in 1849, within a year of Hokusai's death. All three volumes of that edition were printed in monochrome—the keyblock printing back; two further sets of blocks printing shades of grey—as Hokusai intended when he designed the book in the mid-1830s. Subsequently a drastically modified edition of the book was issued. The two sets of blocks cut to print shades of grey were discarded. They were replaced by two new sets of blocks, one to print a single shade of grey, and the other to print pink. Significant changes were made throughout, particularly to the skies and to the slopes of Fuji. The result was far from what Hokusai intended. Previously, it had been unclear whether Yoshinori or his successor had been responsible for this 'colourised' edition of the book because it is not dated. That Oliphant and Osborn acquired copies of the 'pink' edition in August of 1858 confirms that Yoshinori commissioned and published it. It seems odd, however, that Yoshinori should issue a 'pink' edition so soon after he had published the first complete monochrome edition of the book. The 'pink' edition appears not to have been popular, as

copies of it are rare. When in 1875 Yoshinori's son and successor formally asserted his ownership of the copyright for the book, he reprinted it in the original, monochrome rendering. The 'pink' edition of *Fugaku hyakkei* represents an aesthetic prevailing in the 1850s that differed from Hokusai's vision in the 1830s. It deserves closer study and evaluation.¹⁹⁾

Contemporaneous American, French and Prussian accounts

The reports of the American, French, and Prussian (German) missions to Japan of the 1850s and early 1860s also contain comments on the Japanese book trade, the types of books on sale, and popular reading habits. All of the authors of these accounts regarded the following phenomena worthy of note: the ubiquity of bookshops; the low cost of books;²⁰⁾ the extent of literacy; the remarkable prevalence of illustrated books, including many consisting entirely of illustrations; and the fact that lavishly illustrated erotica was openly offered for sale.

The American Mission

The earliest of these reports, the three-volume edition of *The Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan*, was published by order of Congress in Washington in 1856.²¹⁾ Its author, the Reverend Francis L. Hawks, an Episcopal priest and prolific writer, had not been part of the expedition led by Commodore Matthew C. Perry (1798–1858). In fact, he never travelled to Japan. He fashioned his account under the close supervision of Perry, who gave him access to his notes and diaries, to the notes of other members of the expedition, and to books that they had bought in Japan. Hawks wrote of the bookshops in Shimoda and Hakodate—the Americans had been denied access to Edo—noting that they were filled with a remarkable number of books that sold for very low prices: 'cheap works of elementary character, or popular story books or novels'. He remarked that those books 'were evidently in great demand, as the people are universally taught to read and are eager for information'. (p.463) The overall assessment of the publishing industry he offered was reasonably accurate and complimentary:

There are immense numbers of cheap, easy books continually issuing from the Japanese press, which are designed for the instruction of children or poor people; so it will be seen they have their 'cheap literature.' Books innumerable of a higher order are provided for the rich, and all, of both kinds, are profusely illustrated with wood-cuts, engraved on the same block with the type. Some of these books, which

we have examined, show also that an art but recently introduced in Europe and America is very old in Japan, viz: that of printing in colors. So that in our modern inventions of stereotyping and printing in colors, and in our manufacture of cheap literature for the people generally, Japan has anticipated us by centuries. (p.58)

Examining the books brought back to the United States by members of the mission led Hawks to realise how advanced printing was in Japan; in particular, 'printing in colors'. He exaggerated, however, how long that technology had been in use there. At the time Hawks was writing, printing in colour had been employed in commercial publications for about a century, not for 'centuries'. He understood that text and image were cut into 'the same block with the text,' which was not standard practice in the West. His description of a book he described as intended for children matches closely the content and layout of a volume of the *Hokusai manga*. (pp.462–3) There was nothing in his experience to suggest to him that books composed entirely of illustrations could have been intended for any audience other than children.

His response to *shunpon* was one of shock and the strongest disapproval:

A scene at one of the public baths [which we encountered daily], where the sexes mingled indiscriminately, unconscious of their nudity, was not calculated to impress the Americans with a very favorable impression of the morals of the inhabitants. . .the Japanese people of the inferior ranks are undoubtedly, notwithstanding their moral superiority to most oriental nations, a lewd people. Apart from the bathing scenes, there was enough in the popular literature, with its obscene pictorial illustrations, to prove a licentiousness of taste and practice among a certain class of the population, that was not only disgustingly intrusive, but disgracefully indicative of foul corruption. (p. 469)

Hawks could not have used stronger language than 'indicative of foul corruption' to condemn the 'licentiousness of taste and practice' revealed by the disgusting images in *shunpon*. He assumed that the consumption of such material was reserved for 'a certain class of the population', those 'of the inferior ranks', ²²⁾ and noted in amazement that 'the women think nothing of looking at obscene pictures'. For him, *shunpon* and public nudity were equally repugnant (p. 403). Hawks reflected the arrogant sense of moral superiority many Westerners felt toward the heathen 'Oriental nations'. (For a more tolerant

approach to nudity in the bathhouse, see Alcock's comments above.)

The three-volume edition of the *Narrative* includes excellent coloured lithographs after two prints by Hiroshige: a triptych depicting a ford across the Ōi River (*Ōikawa hokō watari*), published in 1853, and the Yodo River (*Yodogawa*) from the series Famous views of Kyoto (*Kyōto meisho no uchi*), published in 1834. (between pages 462 and 463) These Hiroshige prints were bought by the Americans in Shimoda. In Shimoda, as in Edo four years later, the same mixture of newly issued prints and prints first published twenty-five years earlier, was available.

The third lithograph is after a design by the obscure artist Yoshisada illustrating the execution by crucifixion of Asakura Tōgo, a scene that derives from the kabuki play *Higashiyama sakura zōshi*. (between pages 486 and 487) This lithograph has no artistic merit. It is a poor rendering of what would have been a mediocre original. We can only imagine that the members of Perry's mission purchased the original because its gruesome subject matter attracted their attention. We learn from Hawks that those who acquired the print showed it to their Japanese informants and asked if crucifixion was a mode of execution in Japan. They explained that the scene depicted in the print came from a play and that beheading was now the preferred means of execution.

The French Mission

The French emissary, Charles de Chassiron (1818–1871), arrived in Japan in the autumn of 1858, just weeks after Lord Elgin. In his book *Notes Sur Le Japon, La Chine, L'Inde: 1858-1859-1860*, published in Paris in 1861, he wrote:

. . .I was also very easily able . . . to make a quite complete collection of textbooks on Japanese sciences, arts and trades; even a collection of caricatures. These small books, printed or engraved with the greatest care on wood or some other material, are much better than similar textbooks in France and they are used for the education of the people; they are very inexpensive, about 25 or 30 centimes in our money, thus anyone can buy them. There are more illustrations than text, according to the principle adopted in Japan that the education of the lower classes should speak to the eyes rather than occupy the mind. ²³⁾

In this passage, Chassiron is referring to the *Hokusai manga*, among other titles. That he had acquired volumes of the latter, as well as *Hokusai gafu* and the 'pink' edition of *Fugaku hyakkei*, is confirmed by the illustrations included in the

section of his book titled 'Specimens des Manuels Populaires du Japon (fac-simile.)'. The fine colour lithographs of pages from the *Hokusai manga* deserve special mention. They are far superior to the wood engravings after various Hokusai books seen in Oliphant and Osborn and much truer to the originals. Chassiron had the full margins and even the *hashira* included in the lithographs reproducing single pages from *Hokusai manga*. The gutter was, however, removed from his 'fac-similes' of double-page designs from *Fugaku hyakkei* and *Hokusai gafu*. Although Chassiron may not have known exactly how these books were made, he nonetheless understood they were produced 'with the greatest care' and were 'much better than similar textbooks in France'. Chassiron not only remarked on the low prices asked for the books, but offered proof of how inexpensive they were from a European's perspective by remarking that they cost 'about 25 or 30 centimes'. At that time in Paris, 50 centimes bought a kilo of bread; a luxury cigar cost between 25 and 50 centimes; an oyster 10 centimes; a round trip on the urban railway 75 centimes. For a man of Chassiron's class, the books in Edo were indeed very cheap.²⁴⁾

Chassiron was mistaken in his closing observation that the illustrated books he saw were textbooks aimed at the 'lower classes'. They were not textbooks. His misunderstanding arose from ignorance of the high rate of literacy in Japan and the absence in the West of comparable books-without-words—that is, books meant to be enjoyed solely for the images that filled their pages. (As noted above, Hawks similarly misunderstood the books of images he encountered.) For many years, this lack of comparable material distorted Western understanding of a significant portion of the books published in Japan in the Edo period.

The Prussian Mission

Perhaps the fullest, the most insightful, and the most complimentary remarks about the book trade and popular reading habits in Japan are found in the report of the Prussian mission of 1860–1861, *Die preussische Expedition nach Ost-Asien*, edited by Albert Berg (active 1860s) and published in Berlin in 1864. The Prussians were also impressed by the high level of literacy in Japan and the apparent thirst for knowledge on the part of the Japanese:

... even the soldiers on guard do read, and one can see children, women and girls, delving into books. Their novels and novellas must be very extensive, and without doubt contain much attractiveness that would merit a translation into European languages.

They are rich in history books and encyclopedias; numerous descriptive and educating works from the realms of nature, the sciences, arts and crafts, give evidence of the eager thirst of the people for knowledge. (vol. 1, pp. 314–15)²⁵⁾

They also commented on the low cost of books, which they rightly attributed to a 'high consumption' of them by the Japanese:

Reading was the main activity of the Japanese of all classes in their leisure hours; in every street bookstores can be found, where not only Japanese and Chinese writings but also translations of European works on geography and regional geography, on medicine, tactics, weaponry, etc. can be found, and the books are so unbelievably inexpensive that one has to assume a very high consumption. (vol. 1, p. 131)

As to the nature of the books they encountered:

In all book stores, one finds illustrated works in disproportional numbers and hundreds of mere picture books. . . . Their picture books contain now this now that; here, landscape representations, there, scenes of daily life and nature in miniature. . . . The majority of picture books contain a multi-coloured mixture of these; often, one can find the most contradictory things wildly thrown together onto one and the same page in a boisterous mood. They are inexhaustible with comical humour . . . a few of them, however, surpassing in terms of audacity and extravagance anything which has been ever achieved by European schools. All their representations are, in spite of many drawing mistakes, of unbelievable liveliness, showing comprehension and a sense of meaning and characteristics of shapes. (vol. 1, pp. 312–313)

This paragraph describes what can only be the *Hokusai manga*: 'often, one can find the most contradictory things wildly thrown together onto one and the same page in a boisterous mood'. Unlike Hawks and Chassiron, the Prussians did not assume that such books were meant for children. The existence of *shunpon* is also noted. They are described, discretely, as books 'surpassing in terms of audacity and extravagance anything which has been ever achieved by European schools'. We are spared the moral outrage that animated so many Western observers of Japan. As with Oliphant and Osborn, the Prussians found fault with the technique of Japanese artists—'many drawing mistakes'—but at the same time were deeply impressed that they

could achieve ‘unbelievable liveliness’. None of these images that so impressed the Prussians were reproduced in the official publication of the mission.

A final note

Assumptions of cultural superiority and ingrained racist attitudes typical of the time inform the publications of Hawks, Oliphant, Osborn, Chassiron, and Berg. Nonetheless, they all expressed varying degrees of admiration for the Japanese art they encountered, for the quality of the books they acquired, and for the high level of literacy evident in the country. Theirs were the first steps away from viewing Japanese artefacts simply as ethnographic curiosities, and acknowledging that they possessed some aesthetic merit. Then, with startling rapidity, in the mid-1860s the dominant Western response to Japanese graphic art shifted from their qualified admiration to something approaching uncritical adulation among artist, collectors and connoisseurs in Europe and North America. Tracing that transformation is beyond the scope of this article.

Acknowledgements

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All the images from Oliphant and Osborn reproduced in this article are taken from copies of those books in the author’s library.

[Endnotes]

- 1) A few years earlier, three colour lithographic reproductions of ukiyo-e prints had been included in the three-volume edition of the *Narrative of the Expedition to the China Seas and Japan, performed in the years 1853, 1853, and 1854, under the Command of Commodore M. C. Perry*, written by Reverend Francis L. Hawks, and published by order of the Congress of the United States in Washington in 1856. See below.
- 2) At that time in London a clerk might earn £2.6s for a six-day week, an artisan £1.16s and a labourer £1.
- 3) In 1860, the year after Oliphant's book was published in Britain, a cheaper American edition, in one volume with just one lithograph and thirty-nine wood engravings, was published by Harper & Brothers in New York. It sold for \$2.75. At that time the value of £1 was \$5. The price of this one-volume American edition was approximately one quarter the price of the two-volume British edition.
- 4) This chromolithograph was the only one included in the more cheaply produced one-volume 1861 American edition of Oliphant's *Narrative*. In that edition, the blind-printing was omitted.
- 5) Oikawa Shigeru. 'Edo ukiyo-e prints in European artists' works' in *Daruma: Japanese Art and Antiques Magazine*, issue 41, vol. 11, no.1, (Winter 2004): pp. 12–31; here p. 15. This statement is not entirely accurate. As noted above, three colour reproductions of ukiyo-e prints were included in the three-volume edition of the report on Perry's mission (1856). In addition, in M. Breton. *La Japon* (Paris, 1818) all seven spreads from (*Yoshiwara keisei*) *Shin bijin awase jihitsukagami*, illustrated by Kitao Masanobu (Edo, 1784), were reproduced as line engravings. In some copies, these engravings were carefully hand coloured. The women depicted were misidentified as ladies of quality. The author was not aware—or refused to admit—that they were all courtesans. Shading was added to the women's faces by the engraver; the result is grotesque. Breton acquired the book from the 1818 auction of the estate of Issac Titsingh, who was in Japan from 1779 to 1784. See Widar Halén, 'Japan revealed—collecting Japanese art around the opening of Japan' (1991), and Hirano Akira. 'Treasure of the Library: *Le Japon* by M. Breton' (2017).
- 6) 'Native' can mean 'alien', 'foreign', 'indigenous' and also suggests 'primitive'. The term can also carry racist connotations. Something identified as 'native' was regarded at that time as being of lesser quality than the cultural products created by white Europeans.
- 7) In his article, Oikawa Shigeru mentions in passing that Oliphant "used many small illustrations from Hokusai's albums [sic]..." (p.15) What Oikawa refers to as 'albums' were commercially printed books by Hokusai. Franz von Siebold illustrated his *Nippon* (1831) with landscapes from *Hokusai manga* redrawn by the lithographer L. Nadir. No attempt had been made in these 'lithographed paraphrases' to reproduce the graphic qualities of the woodblock-printed originals. See Hillier. *The Art of Hokusai in Book Illustration*, pp.109–111 (1980). The same may also be said of the martial figures from *Hokusai manga, Part VI* reproduced by line engraving in Siebold's book. Elements of Japanese woodblock-printed book illustrations had been reproduced in the West shortly before the publication of Oliphant's *Narrative* in a peculiar book, *Japanese Botany*, published in Philadelphia (USA) in 1855. The illustrations in it were adapted from Tachibana Morikuni's *Ehon ōshukubai* (1739). Peter Kornicki has shown that that book did not attract wide notice. Peter Kornicki. 'The American Oriental Society and the First Japanese Book Printed in the United States (1855)' (2020).
- 8) Here Oliphant may be quoting from Hawks's *Narrative* of Perry's mission: 'engraved on the same block with the type'. The books he is describing were undoubtedly *gōkan*.
- 9) *Hokusai gakan*, published by Eirakuya Tōshirō in 1858, was a revised reprint of *Denshin gakyō*, first published in 1818. In 1878, Eirakuya Tōshirō incorporated figures and designs from *Denshin gakyō/Hokusai gakan* into the pastiche *Hokusai manga, Part XV*. See Tinios. 'A Chronological List of Late Hokusai Books with Bibliographic Notes' (2023).
- 10) For a detailed account of Tōhekidō and Hokusai, see Tinios. 'The publisher Eirakuya Tōshirō (Tōhekidō) and the Hokusai "Brand"' (2023).
- 11) The depictions of climbers in *Fugaku hyakkei* are: 'Circling the crater of Fuji' (*Hakkai-meguri no Fuji* 八ヶ岳廻の不二); the paired images 'The opening of Fuji and sliding down [Fuji]' (*Fuji no Yamaaki / Suberi* 不二の山明き / 下り); and 'A rock shelter on Fuji' (*Fuji no muro* 不二の室).
- 12) From an advertisement listing books available from the London publishers Bradbury and Evans that appeared as back matter in issues of *Blackwood's Magazine* published early in 1861. The 'new patent

process of the Electric Block Company' was a mechanical means of reducing or enlarging images for lithographic reproduction by manipulating sheets of specially treated rubber. An image was transferred to the rubber sheet. The sheet was then stretched or compressed to the desired size and pressed onto a lithographic stone in order to transfer the image from the rubber sheet to the surface of the stone.

- 13) In Osborn the lithographs measure 15.3×10.3 cm; in Oliphant they measure 16.4×11.2 cm.
- 14) Osborn's translator derived 'matchless mountain' from 不二 (*fujī*) 'without peer/matchless', which appears in the captions in *Fugaku hyakkei*. The title slip and the *hashira* (pillar) of the book render the title using the characters 富嶽 (*fugaku/fuji*), literally 'blessed peak'. As noted above, Oliphant knew neither the name of the artist nor the title of this book. He described it as a book depicting 'the various trades of Japan'.
- 15) *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. 89, pp. 110–11.
- 16) The resemblance was so strong that the publisher Eirakuya Tōshirō offered *Hoku'un manga* for sale as a book by Hokusai soon after 1858 under the title *Hokusai gazu*.
- 17) *Hokusai gakan* is an 1858 reprint of *Denshin gakyō*, which was first published in 1818. Twenty years later, in 1878, the then head of Tōhekidō reworked designs from this book to make up the bulk of *Hokusai manga, Part XV*. He did not expect buyers of the latter would notice that he was recycling material published and then republished decades earlier.
- 18) See Tinios. 'The publisher Eirakuya Tōshirō (Tōhekidō) and the Hokusai "Brand"' (2023).
- 19) Inexplicably, *Fugaku hyakkei* was reprinted by Unsōdō in 1979 in the 'pink' edition. It was poorly printed from worn blocks. A copy of the colourised edition was reproduced in facsimile in Nelly Delay. *Hokusai: Les Cent vues du Mont Fuji* (2008). Nowhere in Delay's commentary is the anomalous nature of the 'pink' edition mentioned. Thanks to Alessandro Bianchi for identifying the copy reproduced by Delay as having been in the collection of Prosper-Alphonse Isaac.
- 20) What seemed inexpensive to foreign visitors may not have been quite as inexpensive to most Japanese. Many in Japan rented books rather than purchasing them. None of the authors appear to have been aware of the *kashihon'ya* (commercial rental libraries) that played such an important role in the circulation of books in Japan.
- 21) In the same year, 1856, a commercial edition in one volume without the colour lithographs

was published in New York by A. Appleton and Company and in London by Trübner & Co.

- 22) A distinguished American historian of nineteenth-century Japan made the same assumption as recently as 2010 at a seminar in which I introduced *shunpon*.
- 23) Quoted in Geneviève LaCambre, 'The Flow of Hokusai Works to the West (Texts and Works)', in *Hokusai and Japonisme*, p. 331. Article translated from the French by Judith Andreyev.
- 24) Figures extracted from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_during_the_Second_Empire. Not everyone in France would have considered the books 'very inexpensive'.
- 25) This and the following translations are taken from the Staatsbibliothek Berlin website. <https://themen.crossasia.org/japan-sammlung/?lang=en>.

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Note: Extended passages from this book relating to books and bookshops in Edo are available translated into English at

<https://themen.crossasia.org/japan-sammlung/?lang=en>

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Figures



Fig. 1. 'A Lady at her toilet from a Japanese drawing.' Chromolithograph after Utagawa Kunisada II. *Murasaki Shikibu Genji karuta* (1857), No. 9 'Aoi'. Oliphant. *Narrative*, facing page 19.

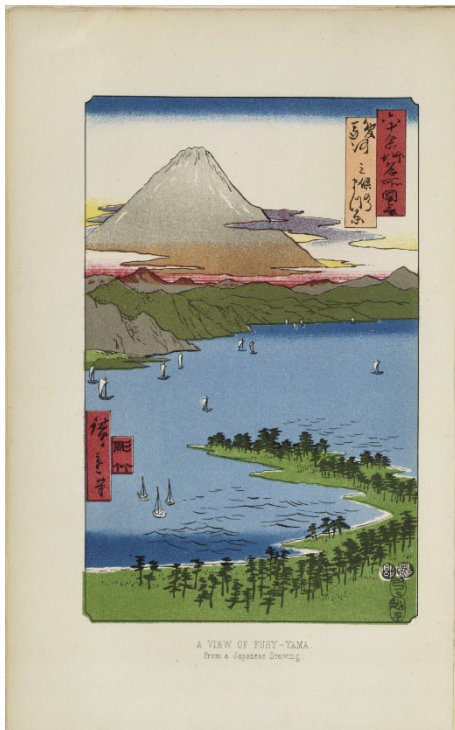


Fig. 2. 'A View of Fusi-yama from a Japanese drawing.' Chromolithograph after Utagawa Hiroshige. *Rokujūyo-shū meisho zue* (1853-56), 'The Pine Shore of Miho in Suruga'. Oliphant. *Narrative*, facing page 97.



Fig. 3. 'A Street in the Aristocratic Quarter of Yedo after a Japanese drawing.' Chromolithograph after Utagawa Hiroshige. *Tōtō meisho* (1840-42), 'Evening View of Kasumigaseki'. Oliphant. *Narrative*, facing page 140.



Fig. 4. 'A Winter Scene in Japan after a Japanese drawing.' Chromolithograph after Utagawa Kunisada II. *Murasaki Shikibu Genji karuta* (1857), No. 6. 'Suetsumuhana'. Oliphant. *Narrative*, facing page 180.

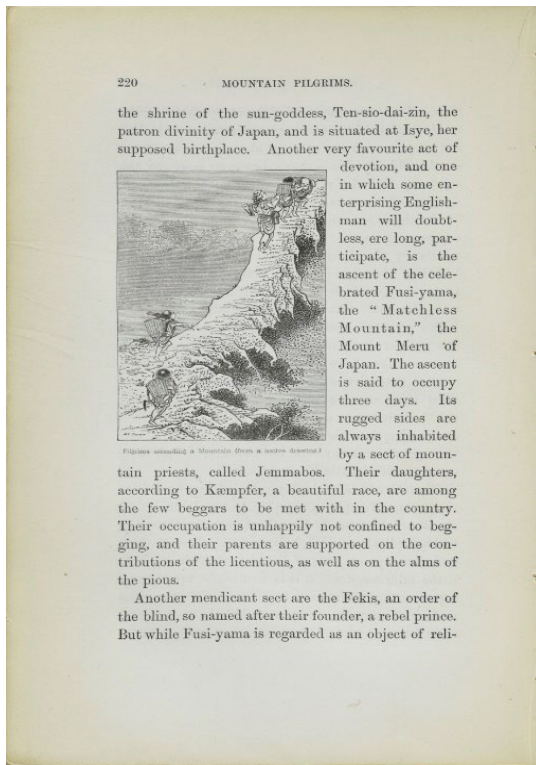


Fig. 5. 'Pilgrims ascending a Mountain (from a Native Drawing).' Wood engraving after the 'pink' edition of Katsushika Hokusai. *Fugaku hyakkei*, Part I. (1834/c.1858) 'Fuji in the mists'. Oliphant. *Narrative*, page 220.

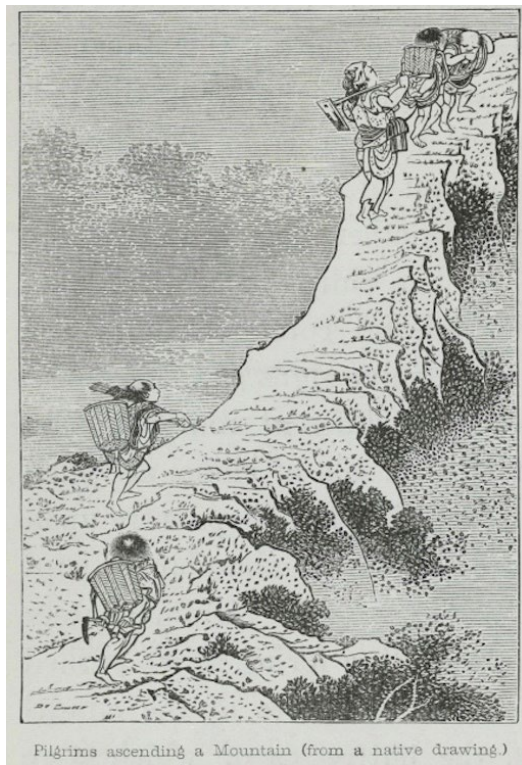


Fig. 6. Detail of figure 5.



Fig. 7. 'Labourers transplanting rice in the rains.' Hand-coloured lithograph after Utagawa Hiroshige. *Rokujūyo-shū meisho zue* (1853-56), 'Ono in Hoki, with Oyama in the distance'. Osborn. *Fragments*, facing page 18.

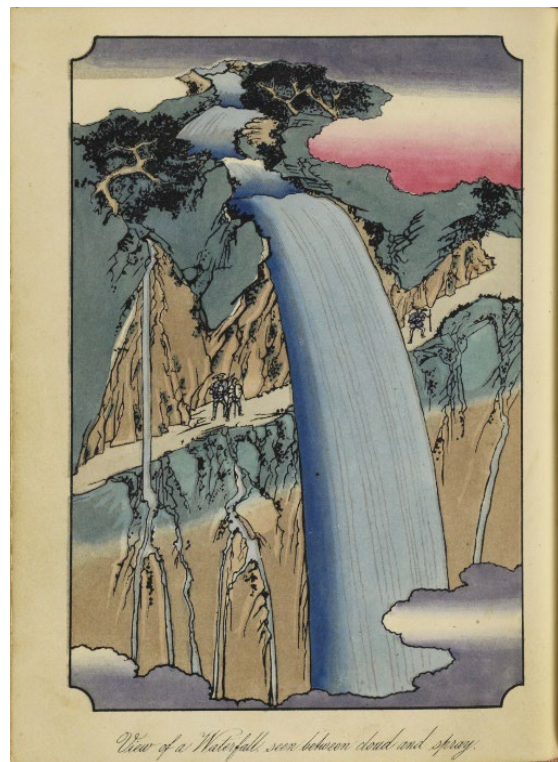


Fig. 8. 'View of a Waterfall seen between cloud and spray.' Hand-coloured lithograph after Utagawa Hiroshige. *Rokujūyo-shū meisho zue* (1853-56), 'Rear-view of a waterfall on Mt. Nikko in Shimotsuke'. Osborn. *Fragments*, facing page 79.

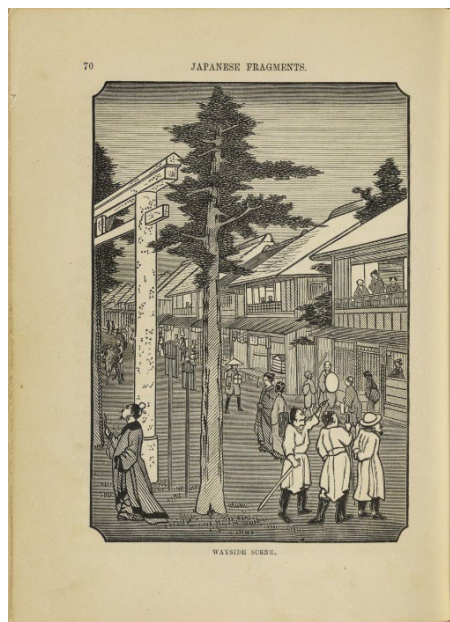


Fig. 9. 'Wayside scene'. Wood engraving after Utagawa Hiroshige. *Gojūsan-tsugi meisho zue* (1855), No. 12. 'Mishima Mishima-daimyōjin ichi no Torii' with the addition of the four figures in the foreground Osborn. *Fragments*, page 70.

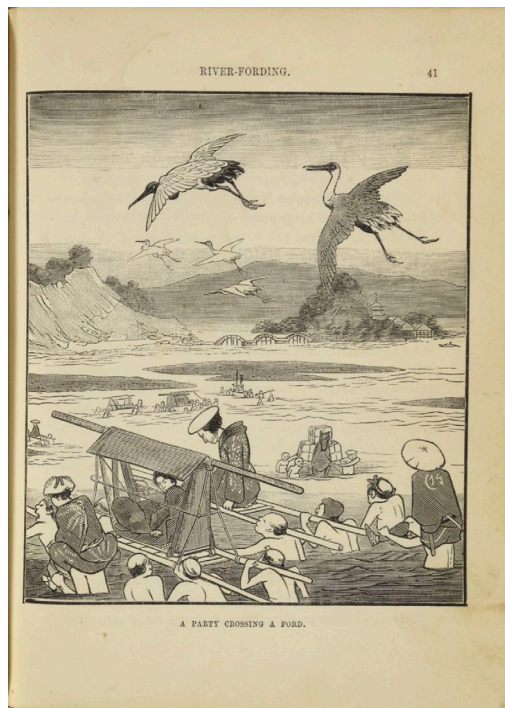


Fig. 10. 'Party crossing a ford.' Wood engraving. A pastiche combining elements from three prints by Utagawa Hiroshige. See Fig.11. Osborn. *Fragments*, page 41.



Fig. 11. The three prints by Utagawa Hiroshige drawn about upon to create the pastiche wood engraving 'Party crossing a ford.': (right) *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsugi no uchi*. (1833-34) No.19. 'Fūchū.' Minneapolis Institute of Art (P.77.39.7.1t); (top left) *Rokujūyo-shū meisho zue* (1853-56), 'Kii Province, Waka-no-ura bay'. Art Institute of Chicago (1965.995); and (bottom left) *Gojūsan-tsugi meisho zue*. (1855) No.24. 'Shimada, the Suruga bank of the Ōi River.' British Museum (1915,0823,0.745).

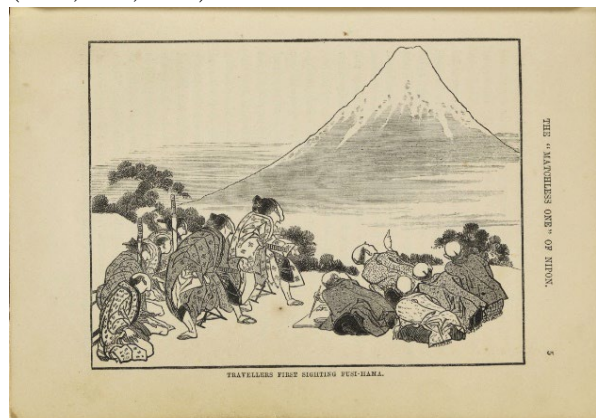


Fig.12. 'Travellers first sighting Fusi-hama.' Wood engraving after the 'pink' edition of Katsushika Hokusai. *Fugaku hyakkei*, Part I. (1834/c.1858) 'The emergence of Fuji in Kōrei 5'. Osborn. *Fragments*, p.5.

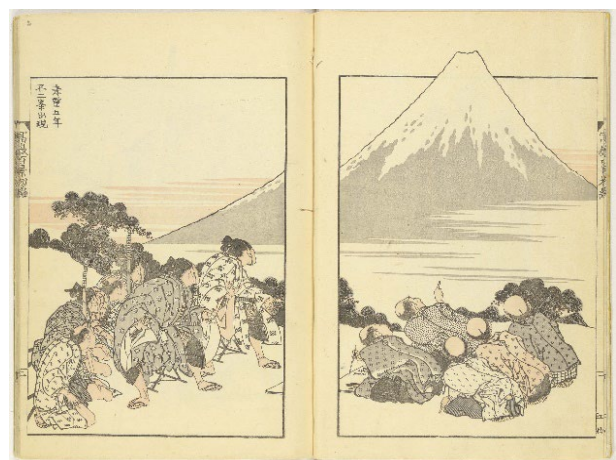


Fig.13. Katsushika Hokusai. *Fugaku hyakkei*, Part I. (1834/c.1858) 'The emergence of Fuji in Kōrei 5'. From the 'pink' edition. Ebi Collection (Ebi1440).

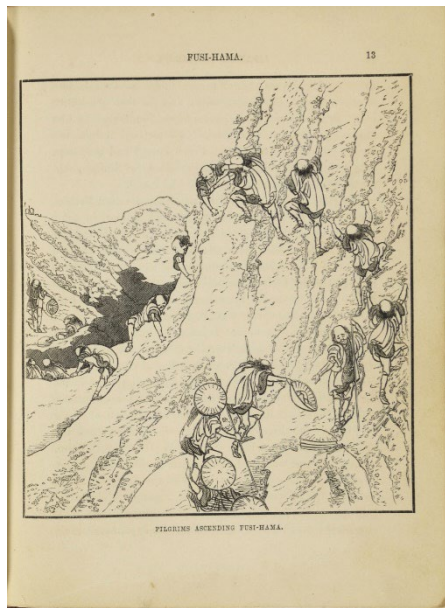


Fig.14. 'Pilgrims ascending Fusi-hama.' Wood engraving after the 'pink' edition of Katsushika Hokusai. *Fugaku hyakkei, Part III.* (1849/c.1858) 'Circling the crater of Fuji.' Osborn. *Fragments*, p.13.

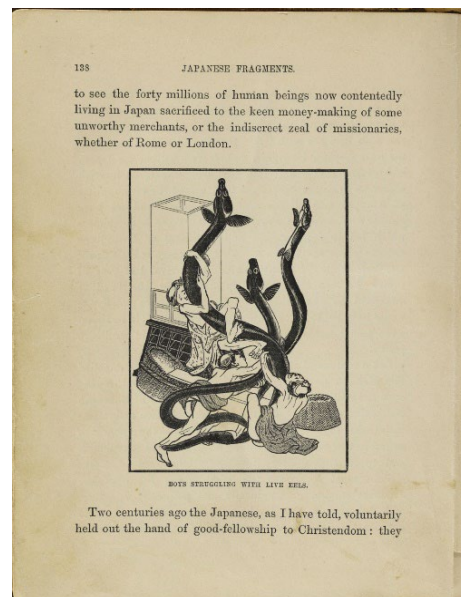


Fig.17. 'Boys struggles with live eels.' Wood engraving after Katsushika Hokusai. *Hokusai manga, Part XII* (1834) 'Surging upward.' Osborn. *Fragments*, p.138

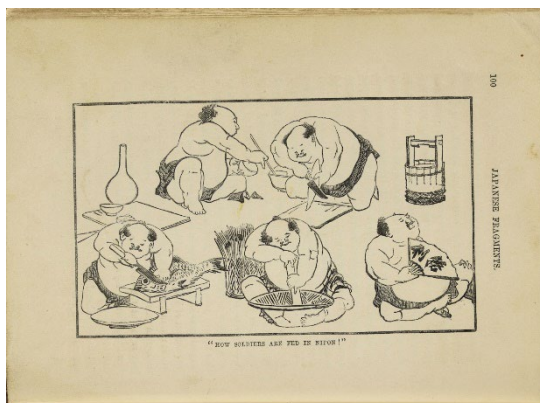


Fig.15. 'How soldiers are fed in Nipon!'. Wood engraving after Katsushika Hokusai. *Hokusai manga, Part IX* (1819) 'Picture of nurturing soldiers'. Osborn, *Fragments*, p.100.



Fig.16. 'A Japanese hero in the rain taking off his hat to a lady of surpassing beauty.' Wood engraving after Katsushika Hoku'un. *Hoku'un manga.* (1824). [Ōta Dōkan]. Osborn. *Fragments*, p.54.

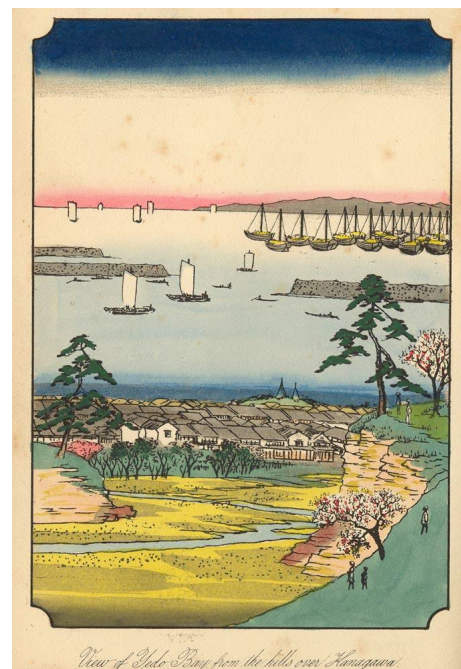


Fig.18. 'View of Yedo Bay from the hills over Kanagawa'. Hand-coloured lithograph after Utagawa Hiroshige. *Gojūsan-tsugi meisho zue* (1855). No.2 'Shinagawa'. Osborn. *Fragments*, frontispiece.