

Eyes of the Heart:
Illustration and the Visual Imagination in Modern Japanese Literature

By

Pedro Thiago Ramos Bassoe

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Committee in Charge:
Professor Daniel O'Neill, Chair
Professor Alan Tansman
Professor Beate Fricke

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Abstract

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My dissertation investigates the role of images in shaping literary production in Japan from the 1880's to the 1930's as writers negotiated shifting relationships of text and image in the literary and visual arts. Throughout the Edo period (1603-1868), works of fiction were liberally illustrated with woodblock printed images, which, especially towards the mid-19th century, had become an essential component of most popular literature in Japan. With the opening of Japan's borders in the Meiji period (1868-1912), writers who had grown up reading illustrated fiction were exposed to foreign works of literature that largely eschewed the use of illustration as a medium for storytelling, in turn leading them to reevaluate the role of image in their own literary tradition. As authors endeavored to produce a purely text-based form of fiction, modeled in part on the European novel, they began to reject the inclusion of images in their own work. This literary transformation, from a pictorial to logographic orientation, has previously been noted by scholars, but has often been mischaracterized as a sudden and total shift. In my dissertation, I show that, in fact, illustration remained a major component of literary publications in Japan well into the 20th century, as I argue that experimentation with verbal-visual form was a crucial element in the production of a modern literary idiom.

I begin my dissertation by analyzing the work of Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859-1935), who argued early on in his career that Japanese authors needed to replace illustration with descriptive language in order to develop a modern form of writing. I show that in his own fiction, however, Shōyō continued to use illustration extensively, including images that he designed himself. Eventually, he came to see the traditional illustrated fiction of the Edo period not as an early stage of literary development to be overcome, but rather as a unique form of verbal-visual art that deserved to be treated as a national cultural heritage. In my second chapter, I explore Ozaki Kōyō's (1867-1903) ambivalent relationship to illustration, which he vocally opposed in public statements, even while contributing personally to the visual design of his own work. According to contemporary artists, Kōyō was known for providing self-penned draft images with meticulous notes for his illustrators, while closely supervising every element of his work's visual expression. In his writing, Kōyō treated visual media as a metaphor for language, which he separated into two modes of representation: the photographic (unmediated) mode, which corresponds to literary realism, and the painterly (mediated) mode, which refers to early modern traditions of Japanese writing. The second half of my dissertation focuses on the work of Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939), a writer whose passion for Edo period picture-books (*ehon* or *kusazōshi*)

influenced his literary production throughout a nearly five-decade career. In his fiction, Kyōka created a complex visual matrix of symbolic imagery by combining references to art from the Edo period with extensive illustration and densely visual language. Evincing an attitude towards illustration that might best be described as reverent, Kyōka frequently wrote stories about popular images that transform into religious icons, while working closely with his favorite artists to produce spectral illusions that crossed the borders between text and image. His longest artistic collaboration was with Komura Settai (1887-1940), an artist whose romantic images of dark alleyways, faceless geisha, and Edo period architecture intersected with Kyōka's literary depictions of urban space to produce a ghostly vision of modern Tokyo.

This work is dedicated to my grandmother, Vilma, who took me on long walks to the comic book store on Sundays.

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Introduction
Setting the Stage:
Illustration and the Visual Imagination in 19th Century Japan

Eyes of the Heart

In his literary treatise *Essence of the Novel* (*Shōsetsu shinzui*, 1885),¹ Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859-1935) argues that the modern writer must learn how to project stories directly into the “eyes of the heart” (*kokoro no manako*) of the reader by the use of language alone.² During the Edo period (1603-1868), books had been almost universally illustrated with woodblock-printed images, which, especially towards the 19th century, oftentimes appeared together with text on every page of a publication. When Shōyō began formulating his literary treatise in the early 1880’s, most works of fiction published in Japan continued to be illustrated in this way. Despite his argument against the use of images, however, Shōyō continued to use illustration frequently in his own works of fiction, as did almost every other author during the Meiji period (1868-1912), including major figures such as Ozaki Kōyō (1867-1903), Kōda Rohan (1867-1947), Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939), Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), and dozens of others. Not only did Shōyō consent to have his own work illustrated, he even designed some of the illustrations himself. Behind his decree that modern writers should target the “eyes of the heart” lay an implicit understanding that fiction was a visually-oriented art form, to be perceived by the “eyes,” whether physical or metaphorical in nature. Like Shōyō, most writers in modern Japan were confronted by the same question of how to negotiate a shifting relationship of text and image as they sought out new configurations of literary form. Many of them continued to use illustration in their work, even while questioning its effectiveness, as their texts remained anchored in a visual mode of literary production. In this project, I set out to uncover the key role played by illustration and visual media in the formation of modern Japanese literature by examining the relationship of text and image in illustrated fiction from the 1880’s through the 1930’s.

In 1885, Shōyō published the first volume of his debut work of fiction, *The Characters of Modern Students* (*Tōsei shosei katagi*, 1885-1886), alongside his literary treatise, *The Essence of the Novel*, in part as an intended demonstration of its principles. Released in seventeen parts, each volume of his book featured a two-page illustrated spread, several of which were designed by the author himself. Shōyō’s level of involvement in his work’s illustration fell in line with common literary practice of the time, as writers throughout the 19th century either illustrated their own books or designed draft images to be completed by professional *ukiyo-e* artists.³ From the

¹ *Essence of the Novel* is the most widely used translation for the title of the work, although, as pointed out by Atsuko Ueda, “*shōsetsu*” in Shōyō’s usage does not translate precisely as “novel,” but in fact designates a hybrid form that lies in between classical Sino-Japanese traditions of fiction writing and the novel as it later came to be understood. See Atsuko Ueda, *Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment: The Production of “Literature” in Meiji Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 8-13.

² Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū* (Tokyo: Shun’yōdō, 1926-1927), suppl. vol. 3:38.

³ *Ukiyo-e*, or “images of the floating world,” are images of contemporary life, fashion, and culture that flourished in the Edo period. As a term of Buddhist origin, the “floating world” (*ukiyo*) initially implied the sorrowful nature of fleeting human existence; during the Edo period, however, it came to be used in reference to art that celebrated the ephemeral pleasures of life, such as geisha, kabuki, fashion, and travel. *Ukiyo-e* are most commonly associated with woodblock prints, which formed the bulk of the genre, although the term also covers paintings done on fabric, hanging scrolls, folding screens, and various other materials. For an introduction to *ukiyo-e*, see the following titles: Frederick Harris, *Ukiyo-e: The Art of the Japanese Print* (Tokyo; Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2010); Amy

Edo period to the Meiji period, authors as diverse as Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), Jippensha Ikku (1765-1831), Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848), Kanagaki Robun (1829-1894), Tsubouchi Shōyō, and Ozaki Kōyō are all known to have created illustrations or draft images for their own works⁴—one scholar even suggests that *most* authors in the Meiji period continued to be heavily involved in planning and directing the illustration of their stories.⁵ While modern writers such as Shōyō and Kōyō eventually came to question the necessity of including images in their fiction, they began writing at a time when literature and the visual arts were treated as naturally related forms.

Even the briefest foray into the archive of modern Japanese literature will quickly reveal that, far from having been extinguished, illustration continued to be a central feature of fiction well into the modern era. At times, the illustration of fiction could be perfunctory or generic, with images added on almost as an afterthought, more to appease consumer expectations than for any other reason. In other cases, authors developed close working relationships with artists and collaborated extensively on the illustration of their texts. When novels were published in newspapers, they often featured one illustration per episode, meaning that an entire work might feature dozens, if not hundreds, of illustrations by the end of its serialization. When printed as standalone books, stories tended to feature only a handful of images, which might include an illustrated cover, frontispiece, and endpapers, but even these were carefully constructed elements of the text, which continued to be a major draw for readers long accustomed to having pictures in their books.

Along with a continuity of illustrative practice in the modern period, however, there were also major changes in printing technology that altered the way in which words and images interacted on the page. Chief among these changes was a shift from woodblock printing to typesetting. In traditional woodblock printing, words and pictures were carved into the same block of wood, from which they could be printed directly onto the same sheet of paper.⁶ The facility of combining words and pictures in this manner led to a cross-pollination of forms—works of fiction published during the Edo period almost always featured *ukiyo-e*-style images, just as individual *ukiyo-e* prints tended to include brief passages of text. To read a book or look at a picture in early modern Japan often required the reader to cross-reference verbal and visual signs in order to gain a full appreciation of the work. From the Meiji period onward, however, the standardization of typesetting meant that words and pictures were shifted into separate spaces. The increased distance between word and image on the page also led to an increased gap between verbal and visual information. Illustration continued to be a main feature of fiction well into the modern era, but changes in its relationship to text meant that it generated new meanings and creative tensions.

Newland, Chris Uhlenbeck, et. al. *Ukiyo-e: The Art of Japanese Woodblock Prints* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1994); Kobayashi Tadashi, *Ukiyo-e: An Introduction to Japanese Woodblock Prints*, translated by Mark A. Harbison (Tokyo; New York: Kodansha International; New York: Distributed in the US by Kodansha America, 1992).

⁴ Ozaki Hotsuki, *Sashie no 50-nen* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1987), 8.

⁵ Deguchi Tomoyuki, “*Bungei kurabu no mokuhan tashokuzuri kuchi-e: shōsetsu to no kankei kara*,” *Nihon kindai bungaku*, 93 (2005): 152-159.

⁶ In the woodblock printing process, negative space is carved out from a block of pliable wood, often made of the cherry tree. Its raised surfaces are then covered in *sumi*, or black ink made from a mixture of pine soot and glue, or other colored ink, and then pressed directly onto paper. The process can be repeated until the block wears down, after which new blocks must be carved. For an illustrated depiction of the process, see Margaret Miller Kanada, *Color Woodblock Printmaking: The Traditional Method of Ukiyo-e* (Tokyo: Shufunotomo, 1989).

In “Modern Literature and the World of Printing,” Maeda Ai argues that the shift in printing technology that occurred during the Meiji period—from woodblock printing to typesetting—was largely responsible for the development of a new form of literary writing, as authors shifted from a reliance on visual explication to a focus on descriptive prose.⁷ Whereas writers could previously refer to illustrations as substitutes for verbal description, they were now forced to use words to describe that which could no longer be seen. In response to this change in material form, they developed new literary techniques to materialize the invisible worlds of their stories within the mind’s eye of the reader. Maeda describes the new language of modern literature by drawing on the analogy of linear perspective: in the modern (non-illustrated) novel, the narrator becomes an anchor point within the world of the story, from which invisible space is made “visually” available via literary description. In this setup, illustration is replaced by visual metaphor as text becomes the sole mediator of the fictional world, whose appearance is transmitted to the reader by means of skillful language.

Maeda’s treatise offers an insightful look into the development of literary form through the prisms of technology, reading practice, and visual culture,⁸ and yet it is also curiously lacking in any discussion of illustration as it existed after the Edo period. At the center of his argument, Maeda compares an early modern illustrated book, Tamenaga Shunsui’s (1790-1843) *Spring Colors: The Southeast Garden* (*Shunshoku Tatsumi no sono*, 1833-1835), to a proto-novel of the Meiji period, Shōyō’s *The Characters of Modern Students*, without ever mentioning the fact that the latter was illustrated in much the same manner as the former. His omission is surprising considering the close attention that he pays to material form elsewhere in the same essay and might be interpreted as a symptom of his effort to cleanly separate texts that exist across a technological divide. Other scholars posit similar binaries between premodern and modern fiction based on their visual content. Charles Inouye, for example, argues that premodern Japanese literature was primarily pictocentric, or visually-oriented, while modern literature developed into a logocentric form of writing under the influence of Western literary tradition.⁹ While such arguments offer a convincing description of the transition from premodern to modern modes of writing, which they characterize as a shift from image-centered storytelling to text-based narratives, they tend to posit a sudden rupture, rather than a gradual transformation, which would more accurately capture the situation as it took place.

The idea that illustration ceased to be a central feature of literary production in the modern period is a presumption that has accounted for the omission of visual culture in many literary histories, especially those that focus primarily on canonical works, which tend to be valued by scholars for their linguistic content above all else. More to the point, even when illustration is acknowledged to exist in the modern period at all, it is rarely conceived of as having any kind of important relationship to the text. As such, illustration is the ultimately peripheral form, having no real home within the work. By ignoring illustration, however, or by insisting that it simply does not matter, one also implies that the peripheral elements of a work are incapable of affecting its center (whatever that imagined center may be). In suggesting that we reconsider the role of illustration in literary production, it is not my intention to argue that it

⁷ Maeda Ai, “Kindai bungaku to katsujiteki sekai,” *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1989), 343.

⁸ Maeda’s writings are a major inspiration for my own work and sparked the initial inquiries that led me to develop my dissertation topic.

⁹ See Charles Shirō Inouye, “Pictocentrism,” *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 40 (1992): 23-39. Also “Pictocentrism—China as a Source of Japanese Modernity,” *Imaging/Reading Eros: Proceedings for the Conference, Sexuality and Edo Culture, 1750-1850, Indiana University, Bloomington, August 17-20, 1995*, edited by Sumie Jones (Bloomington: East Asian Studies Center, Indiana University, 1996).

should be viewed as an essential component of every text in every situation. Sometimes illustration is distracting, counter-intuitive, poorly executed, or difficult to defend as anything other than eye-catching gloss for the consumer. Perhaps it is only in rare cases that illustration must be considered as an indispensable element of a given work, without which it would become incomprehensible. It is for all of these very reasons, however, and many others in addition, that the role of illustration in the development of modern literary form should be reexamined. Rather than asking if one *must* look at the original illustration of a work in order to fully appreciate it, I am more interested in asking what happens when one does, or decides not to, or, by looking closer, discovers harmonies, conflicts, and hidden corners in the text that were not apparent otherwise.

Recent work by scholars around the world has begun to bridge the gap between the early modern tradition, long-acknowledged for its verbal-visual form, and modern fiction, whose illustrations have remained all but invisible to scholarly inquiry. Nishimura Kiyokazu, in *The Rhetoric of Images: At the Intersection of Words and Pictures*, traces parallel developments between textual and visual arts in the Meiji period by arguing that both forms shift from a position of omniscience (*zenchi*) to one of embeddedness (*tomo ni aru*).¹⁰ On a linguistic level, the narrative goes from being delivered by a storyteller, who clearly references the audience in his or her remarks, to a character who exists within the story and through whom its imaginary world is perceived. Illustrations, moving in a similar arc, change from frontally-oriented, theatrical layouts, which likewise imply the presence of an audience, to worlds expressed in depth, where characters focus on the inner space of the image. The contemplative figure becomes a central theme: the viewer is no longer asked to observe the actor's spectacular pose, but rather to imagine the interiority that lies behind downcast gazes and melancholic stares.¹¹ Michael Emmerich traces changes in text-image relations from woodblock-printed materials to typeset reprints of the same works, a transformation that he labels as "bibliographic translation." He writes: "The re-creation of a work from a certain genre into another bibliographic form with its own conventions affects both the work's narrative structure and the particular material manner in which it *means*, thus bringing into sharper relief the concept of bibliographic translation itself."¹² In Japan today, scholars are just beginning to analyze the massive corpus of illustration that played such an important role in the formation of a modern literary mode.¹³

During the Meiji period, authors dealt with many of the same questions of text-image relations that are being raised in current literary scholarship. They asked, for example, if illustrations were essential, marginal, or even harmful to the textual form of the novel. They saw various possibilities for future illustrative practices, ranging from its complete exclusion to its recuperation as a central element of the text. In their own fiction, they confronted questions of linguistic style by drawing on the terminology of visual art and they explored the limits of text by experimenting with its ability to mimic or cross over into material form. All of this continues, however, to be formulated in the abstract, for the fact remains that, in addition to confronting illustration in allegorical terms, modern authors also worked directly with illustrators to redefine

¹⁰ Nishimura Kiyokazu, *Imēji no shūjigaku: kotoba to keishō no kōsa* (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2009), 409-413.

¹¹ Nishimura, *Imēji no shūjigaku*, 434-444.

¹² Michael Emmerich, *The Tale of Genji: Translation, Canonization, and World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 192.

¹³ Many have been scholars of Izumi Kyōka, whose frequent allusions to visual media provide a bridge between text-based literature and contemporary visual culture. Scholars who have published on Kyōka and illustration in recent years include Yoshida Masashi, Hinode Yumi, and Tominaga Maki.

the possibilities of verbal-visual form. Modern literature was built upon a renegotiation of text and image, which produced new meanings via a dialectical relationship.

My dissertation is intended as a history of verbal-visual form, meant to uncover the role of image as both metaphor and practice in modern Japanese literature. Although my focus is on the modern period, my work explores a visual idiom that has its roots in early modern fiction, which, I contend, must be kept within view in order to contextualize the tensions and transformations that took place in the modern period. My project considers both words and pictures as objects of study and incorporates literary and visual analysis as tools for exploring texts across media boundaries. It is, throughout, foregrounded by attention to the material form of the literary object, which is produced and circulated within a particular cultural context. As such, my project also challenges boundaries between disciplines, including those between art history, literature, and media studies. It returns, time and again, to the axis of the text-image relationship, asking how words and pictures compliment, challenge, and transform one another.

Before examining the fiction of the modern period, it is important to review the terms of the visual-literary culture of the Edo period, against which modern modes of writing were formulated. This is because, I argue, it can be difficult to fully appreciate the degree to which images proliferated in early modern fiction, or to understand why they continued to be such a major component of literary production up until the late 19th century, without examining the text-image relationship as it existed prior to that time. Granted, not all literature of the late 19th century was modeled on Japanese precedents—the translation of European texts into Japanese was a crucial element in the literary transformations that took place during the Meiji period—and yet, it is almost impossible to identify a writer born in 19th century Japan who was not at least familiar with the visual-literary culture of the Edo period, or one whose work did not include illustrations at some point in his or her career. For those who came of age during the late 19th century, most could still remember a time when nearly all books were illustrated, and when the very category of literature, or *bungaku*, had yet to come into existence. Rather than *shōsetsu*, or novels, they read *ehon* (picture-books), *kokkeibon* (comic tales), and *yomihon* (lengthy adventure narratives, often modeled on Chinese precedents). As evidenced in their essays and fiction, writers like Shōyō, Kōyō, and Kyōka spent entire childhoods deeply immersed in the visual-literary culture of the Edo period, which continued to influence the themes and styles of their fiction throughout their lives. In order to examine how the text-image relationship took on new meanings in their work, it is important to first assess how it existed in the fiction that informed their early understanding of how literature functioned.

Historical Background: Illustration in the Edo Period

The history of illustration in Japan goes back to the Nara period (710-794), when Buddhist sutras were first illustrated in the form of *emaki* (picture scrolls),¹⁴ and continued through the Heian Period (794-1185), when foundational works of Japanese fiction, such as *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*, ca. 1001) by Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 973-1014), were similarly illustrated;¹⁵ however, the visual culture that most affected writers of the Meiji period was that of

¹⁴ For more on *emaki*, see Okudaira Hideo, *Emaki: Japanese Picture Scrolls* (Rutland, VT: C.E. Tuttle and Co.), 1962; Murase Mikiyo, *Emaki: Narrative Scrolls from Japan* (New York: Asia Society, 1983).

¹⁵ See Yukio Lippit, “Figure and Factice in the *Genji Scrolls*: Text, Calligraphy, Paper, and Painting,” *Envisioning the Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, edited by Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 49-52.

the immediately preceding era, or the Edo period, when illustrated fiction known as *gesaku* became the most popular form of reading material. Literally meaning “lowly composition” or “frivolous writing,” the term *gesaku* emphasized an early modern distinction between fiction, traditionally seen as a lighthearted pastime, and more prestigious genres, such as official histories, classical poetry, and Confucian scholarship.¹⁶ By the Meiji period, *gesaku* had come to designate almost any work of fiction written in an early modern style, regardless of genre, and was applied equally to a wide variety of works, including humorous stories, didactic tales, historical epics, and romantic sagas. Uniting almost all the subcategories of *gesaku*, however, was the fact that they included illustrations, some of them only sparingly, but most of them as an essential component of their form. The least illustrated *gesaku* might include only a single black-and-white frontispiece, while the most illustrated examples featured detailed images on every page; by the mid-19th century, the latter was more typically the case. The profusion of images in *gesaku* was so thorough that it is safe to say that, in general, *gesaku* fiction was illustrated, and much of it extensively so.

The emergence of *gesaku* in the Edo period was made possible by the technology of woodblock printing, which enabled mass reproduction and circulation of texts for the first time. Prior to the Edo period, almost all texts had been handwritten, hand-painted, and produced in small numbers for a literate elite.¹⁷ In the popular sphere, stories were often related through oral recitation, as delivered by itinerant musicians, preachers, or storytellers, rather than through texts, which were far too rare and expensive to attain for the average person. Early on in the 1600’s, woodblock printing took hold in the *kamigata* area, or the region around the imperial capital of Kyoto, including nearby Osaka and Nara. The technology proved to be more flexible than type-setting for the reproduction of Japanese script, which features a vast number of Sino-Japanese logograms (*kanji*), syllabic *kana*, and alternate forms of characters, which would have been difficult to set for every page of text. With woodblock printing, characters could be cut directly into the wood and rendered freely by hand. Images could be carved into the same block just as easily as words—a technological advantage over typesetting that encouraged the production of materials that combined both text and image.

The first genre of popular literature produced via woodblock printing was also the first to feature illustrations. The so-called *kanazōshi* (*kana* books) were booklets written mostly in the *kana* syllabary, which was legible to a wider segment of the population than *kanji* characters, thus facilitating the spread of literary culture to a broader audience. The illustration of *kanazōshi* ranged from non-existent to extravagant, but most texts included at least a handful of black-and-white images. The *kanazōshi* were succeeded by the similarly-illustrated genre of *ukiyo-zōshi* (books of the floating world), or tales of urban life and contemporary manners that flourished throughout the 18th century in the *kamigata* area.¹⁸ Like most other fiction of the Edo period, *ukiyo-zōshi* featured illustrations almost as a rule. The most famous writer of *ukiyo-zōshi*, Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693), illustrated his own literary debut, *The Life of an Amorous Man* (*Kōshoku ichidai otoko*, 1682), whose illustrations were later reproduced by one of the most influential

¹⁶ Atsuko Ueda notes that *gesaku* originally referred to the author’s “secondary works,” treated in distinction to primary scholarship. She writes of early *gesaku* writers, “To retain their reputation as intellectuals, they needed to separate their ‘primary’ work from their ‘frivolous’ works, even if they enjoyed producing these writings. The more they produced secondary works, the more they needed to insist that they were *gesaku* and hence unrelated to their profession.” She goes on to write that later *gesaku* writers retained the term, even when they did not produce any primary scholarship. *Concealment of Politics*, 34.

¹⁷ Ozaki Hotsuki, *Sashie no 50-nen*, 7-8.

¹⁸ Suzuki Jūzō, *Ehon to ukiyoe: Edo shuppan bunka no kōsatsu* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1979), 70.

ukiyo-e artists of the 17th century, Hishikawa Moronobu (1618-1694), in two bootlegged versions of the book that appeared in Edo.¹⁹ Back in the *kamigata* area, local *ukiyo-e* star Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671-1751) went on to illustrate for the Hachimonji-ya, a publisher famed for their lavish book productions, including the *ukiyo-zōshi* of popular writer Ejima Kiseki (1681-1741).²⁰ The situation was such that, by the mid-18th century, illustration had become an almost indispensable element of printed fiction.

In addition to creating popular interest and visual appeal, the illustrations in *ukiyo-zōshi* helped guide readers through texts by providing settings and contexts. Illustrators drew on visual methods to help anchor and clarify narratives, which were often delivered in elliptical poetic language that could make scenes difficult to imagine without the aid of images. Howard Hibbett writes of Saikaku that his novels seem almost to “demand pictorial amplification.”²¹ He writes: “Since [his] scenes are evoked with a strict *haikai* economy of language, they leave much to the imagination—or to the descriptive power of the illustrator. Often the point of an anecdote is sharpened by reference to the illustration.”²² Hibbett goes on to characterize the text-image relationship in *gesaku* as evidence of the linguistic insufficiency of early modern fiction. He describes the author as the arch-rival of the artist; as both maneuver to create the same story in different media, the writer often succumbs to the power of image and becomes overly dependent on illustration to tell the story. Ivan Morris, in a less critical tone, similarly suggests that illustrations helped readers to navigate difficult narratives:

Owing to the loose construction and scattered narrative that characterize so much of Saikaku’s writing, the illustrations served a useful explanatory function that would not be needed in a more coherent type of prose... For the contemporary reader the illustrations often served to bring out specific points in the story that might otherwise have been missed. They also provided certain descriptive details, not to be found in the text, which might enhance the enjoyment of the narrative.²³

Framing his argument in terms of historical reading practices, Morris sees illustration as a complimentary, rather than disruptive, element of early modern texts.

While not all *gesaku* relied so extensively on illustration, even lightly illustrated genres of *gesaku* included images as an important component of their form. In the genre of *kokkeibon* (books of humor), for example, a work might include only one or two illustrations per volume, but these continued to affect the reading experience by connecting the text to a wider visual culture. In Jippensha Ikku’s *Shank’s Mare* (*Tōkaidōchū hizakurige*, 1802-1809), for example, the author includes his own roughly-drawn illustrations of the story’s protagonists, whose comical appearance adds a visual register to the humor of the work. The faces that Ikku devised for the story’s famous duo, Yajirōbe and Kitahachi, became as much a part of their identity as their comical dialogue. *Shank’s Mare* also included a number of more technically demanding images,

¹⁹ Howard Hibbett, *The Floating World in Japanese Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 72-3.

²⁰ Hibbett, *The Floating World*, 68-9.

²¹ Hibbett, *The Floating World*, 74.

²² *Haikai* are short linked verses, often of a comic or lighthearted nature, which flow seamlessly from one scene or image to the next. The related term *haibun* refers to prose that imitates the flow of linked-verse poetry, while *haiku* is a modern term used to designate a single poem with a syllabic pattern of 5-7-5. Hibbett, *The Floating World*, 73-74.

²³ Ivan Morris, Introduction, *The Life of an Amorous Woman, and Other Writings* by Ihara Saikaku, translated and edited by Ivan Morris (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1963), 47.

including prints of famous Japanese landscapes, again designed by Ikku himself. Such illustrations served as a pivot point between the textual world of his fiction and the visual world of popular prints, particularly those of famous places, which included contemporary series by two of Japan's most famous *ukiyo-e* artists, Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) and Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858). They also clearly demonstrated that, although Ikku may have only been an “amateur” as an illustrator, he was thoroughly versed in the forms of visual art and woodblock printing that proliferated throughout the Edo period. Like most artists of his day, he was capable of switching back and forth between verbal and visual registers with ease.

Falling in the middle range for the prominence of illustration in *gesaku* were the *yomihon*, literally “reading books,” which were distinguished from other genres based on their emphasis on text; that is, they featured a higher ratio of text-to-image than most contemporary forms of popular fiction and were related in a dense, Sino-Japanese idiom that could only be fully comprehended by well-educated readers. The fact that even “books for reading,” then, included illustrations almost as a rule, suggests how far-reaching the permeation of image in the Edo period truly was. In the 19th century, *yomihon* were modeled on Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) epics, such as *The Water Margin* (Ch: *Shuihu zhuan*, Jp: *Suikoden*), *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Ch: *Sanguozhi*, Jp: *Sangokushi*) and *Journey to the West* (Ch: *Xiyouji*, Jp: *Saiyūki*), many of which were adapted by Takizawa Bakin, a prolific writer who possessed a particularly strong command of literary Chinese. The language of the original texts was translated into an elaborate form of Sinitic Japanese that was popular among highly literate readers of the late Edo period, including samurai, bureaucrats, and educated segments of the merchant and artisan classes. In addition to borrowing the language of Ming Dynasty novels, however, *yomihon* also imported the use of detailed character portraits known in Chinese as *xiuxiang* (Jp: *shūzō*).²⁴ In *yomihon*, *xiuxiang* became *kuchi-e*, or frontispieces, which depicted the story's main characters in dynamic poses, as though they were actors being introduced to the audience before the commencement of a play. The inner illustrations in *yomihon* borrowed visual elements of Chinese landscape painting, combining finely detailed Sino-Japanese architecture with large scale scenes of lofty mountains, waterfalls, and rivers.

Although one might imagine that the illustrations in *yomihon* were only a peripheral element of the text, and thus not a focus of the work's literary production, the images in “reading books” were actually among the most finely-crafted woodblock prints of the Edo period. Take, for example, Hokusai's artwork for Bakin's *A Dream under the Southern Bough: The Story of Sankatsu and Hanshichi* (*Sanshichi zenden Nanka no yume*, 1807).²⁵ Hokusai's Chinese-inspired landscapes are finely detailed, displaying a level of technical precision that goes far beyond the average work of *gesaku*; they were, in fact, so successful that they caused a major rift between author and artist, with Bakin accusing Hokusai of ignoring his text and creating prints so lavish that they stole attention away from his story's words.²⁶ Nearly three decades later, Bakin continued to complain about the ubiquity of illustration in contemporary fiction, this time in a personal correspondence in which he claimed that it was still nearly impossible to publish any work of fiction without images.²⁷ He lamented that readers had become incapable of enjoying books that included only text, thus causing them to remain ignorant of the excitement that could be offered by words alone.

²⁴ Suzuki, *Ehon to ukiyoe*, 81; Emmerich, *The Tale of Genji*, 61-62.

²⁵ For details on Hokusai's work with Bakin see Suzuki, *Ehon to ukiyoe*, 161-174.

²⁶ W. G. Aston, *A History of Japanese Literature* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1899), 354.

²⁷ Suzuki, *Ehon to ukiyo-e*, 164-165.



Figure 1 - *A Dream under the Southern Bough* (1808), written by Takizawa Bakin, illustrated by Katsushika Hokusai

Ninjōbon (books of sentiment), a genre of *gesaku* related to *yomihon*, similarly included only a handful of illustrations per volume, but they were so extravagant a feature of the genre that, according to Bakin, they were a main cause for its censure during the Tenpō Reforms (1830-1844).²⁸ Tamenaga Shunsui created the genre of *ninjōbon* in the 1830's by combining the long narrative format of *yomihon* with the social perspective of pleasure quarter fiction, but he distinguished his work by focusing on the emotional lives of his story's protagonists, mostly geisha, who received an uncommonly sympathetic treatment for the time.²⁹ The genre was especially popular with women, an emergent demographic of readers, who were the target audience of embedded advertisements for cosmetics, kimono, and popular restaurants (although, as attested to by Shōyō and numerous other modern writers, the genre was quite popular with men as well). Following the precedent established by the *yomihon*, *ninjōbon* almost always featured elaborate *kuchi-e*, but they added further visual appeal by including series of *nishiki-e* (brocade images), or richly colored woodblock prints, in their opening pages. The images were often of geisha wearing the latest fashions from Fukagawa, a trend-setting neighborhood in southeast Tokyo, and were a main draw of the genre.³⁰ In Shunsui's foundational work of *ninjōbon*, *Spring Colors: The Plum Calendar* (*Shunshoku umegoyomi*, 1832-1833), artist Yanagawa Shigenobu (1787-1832), modeled the protagonists' faces on popular kabuki actors of the time, such as Segawa Kikunōjō V (1802-1832) and Onoe Kikugorō III (1784-1849),³¹ while

²⁸ See Maeda Ai in *Sharebon, Kokkeibon, Ninjōbon*, Edited by Nakano Mitsutoshi, Jinbō Kazuya, and Maeda Ai (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2000), 602.

²⁹ Nakamura Yukihiro, Introduction, *Shunshoku umegoyomi* by Tamenaga Shunsui (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1962), 15.

³⁰ Nakamura, Introduction, *Shunshoku umegoyomi*, 19-21. Alan S. Woodhull, *Romantic Edo Fiction: A Study of the Ninjōbon and Complete Translation of Shunshoku Umegoyomi* (Dissertation, 1978), 1.

³¹ Nakamura, headnotes, *Shunshoku umegoyomi*, 44-45.

in most of Shunsui's other *ninjōbon*, Utagawa Kuninao (1793-1854) provided minutely detailed images of living spaces and cityscapes, many of them arranged in linear perspective, as though to draw the reader directly into the image. Other visual innovations registered at the material level of the paper, such as pages that mimicked scrolls or featured shaded color backgrounds of clouds and plants.



Figure 2 - *Spring Colors: The Southeast Garden* (1833-1835), written by Tamenaga Shunsui, frontispiece by Utagawa Kuninao

Within the rubric of *gesaku*, the genres of *kokkeibon*, *ninjōbon*, and *yomihon* might be grouped together as genres that featured only moderate levels of illustration and a predominance of text. On the other side of *gesaku*, however, were the *kusazōshi* (grass books), also known as *ezōshi* or *ehon* (both “picture-book”), which were visually-oriented works that featured a combination of text and image on every page, with both elements integrated into a tightly synced verbal-visual mode of storytelling.³² *Kusazōshi* emerged in the mid-17th century in the city of Edo, where they coalesced from a group of loosely affiliated genres of children's books and popular tales. Originally published in small numbers, they eventually became the most widely printed category of fiction in early modern Japan. By the late Edo period, most popular works of fiction were published in the form of *kusazōshi*, and specifically *gōkan* (collected volumes), which were stitched-together collections of picture-books. The most popular titles were serialized annually over decades and could reach up to two-thousand pages in total combined length, with every page of every volume filled to the brim with both text and image. As *gōkan* became increasingly popular, authors of all genres joined the picture-book craze and began writing their own titles, including Ikku, Bakin, and Shunsui. According to Bakin, the most

³² Andrew Lawrence Markus writes that the term *kusazōshi* probably arose as a “reference to their ephemeral or trivial character,” in *The Willow in Autumn: Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783-1842* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 62. Adam Kern offers an alternative etymology, writing that they were named after the “squiggly-looking grass (*kusa*) script” that filled the blank spaces in the images, in *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 184.

popular *gōkan* titles sold between 10,000 and 15,000 copies, at a time when a print run of 5,000 copies would be considered a solid success.³³ Bakin himself, though vocally critical of illustration in other circumstances, wrote two of the most popular *gōkan* of the Edo period, *Beauties of the Water Margin* (*Keisei suikoden*, 1825-1835) and *New Jin Ping Mei* (*Shinpen kinpeibai*, 1831-1847), both richly illustrated adaptations of Ming Chinese epics.³⁴

Initially, *kusazōshi* centered on illustration and included only scant passages of textual narrative amid pages of woodblock-printed images.³⁵ The earliest genre of *kusazōshi*, the *akahon* (red books), were picture-books for children and the semi-literate, featuring ghost stories and fairy tales related primarily through illustration.³⁶ *Akahon* in turn gave rise to the *kurohon* (black books) and *aohon* (blue books), two genres that flourished simultaneously in the Kyōhō era (1716-1736), and that were nearly indistinguishable from each other, apart from the color of their covers. The *kurohon* and *aohon* continued to feature stories of ghosts and heroes, but they also drew more of their content directly from the theater, including from war tales and vendetta stories that were popular on the contemporary kabuki stage.³⁷ Because they began to handle longer and more complex narratives, *kurohon* and *aohon* necessarily included more text per page, even if only marginally at times. This does not mean, however, that illustration became less important; in fact, just the opposite might be said. As the narratives of *kusazōshi* advanced in complexity, so too did their images, which became increasingly detailed and technically demanding. Authors trained in the visual arts often rose to the challenge of illustrating their own texts, such as Tomikawa Fusanobu (fl. ca. 1760-1777), who self-penned and illustrated around 170 *kurohon* titles.³⁸ At the same time, schools of *ukiyo-e* artists began to specialize in the illustration of *kusazōshi*, an increasingly lucrative business, beginning with the Torii school headed by Torii Kiyonaga (1752-1815).

The relationship of author to artist would only become more entangled with the *kibyōshi* (yellow covers), a genre of *kusazōshi* that included even longer and more complex narratives, now oftentimes directed specifically at educated, adult audiences able to recognize frequent allusions to classical literature. *Kibyōshi* featured humorous tales that were at turns satirical, parodic, and didactic, often concerning the pleasure quarters (a perennial favorite location of early modern fiction) and its denizens. The most popular writer of *kibyōshi*, Santō Kyōden, was also an *ukiyo-e* artist, who designed woodblock prints under the moniker of Kitao Masanobu. Like Saikaku before him, Kyōden sometimes illustrated his own books, including his seminal bestseller, *Playboy, Roasted à la Edo* (*Edo umare uwaki no kabayaki*, 1785). Other authors of *kibyōshi* did likewise, including Koikawa Harumachi (1744-1789) and Shikitei Sanba (1776-1822).³⁹ Even when authors were not the final illustrators of their own works, however, they were still responsible for designing the visual layout of their pages, including draft images to be completed by professional *ukiyo-e* artists. Thus, as Adam Kern argues, the writer of *kibyōshi* was less an author, who might be said to work primarily with verbal language, and more an *auteur*,

³³ See Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 43.

³⁴ *Keisei Suikoden* was illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-1825) and Utagawa Kuniyasu (1794-1832). *Shinpen kinpeibai* was illustrated by Kuniyasu and Utagawa Kunisada (1786-1864).

³⁵ For histories of *kusazōshi* and their illustration, see Suzuki Jūzō, *Ehon to ukiyoe*, 16-20; Markus, *The Willow in Autumn*, 61-67; Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 187-191.

³⁶ See Satō Yukiko, *Edo no eiri shōsetsu: gōkan no sekai* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2001), 15; Suzuki, *Ehon to ukiyoe*, 16.

³⁷ Suzuki, *Ehon to ukiyoe*, 17.

³⁸ Suzuki, *Ehon to ukiyoe*, 72.

³⁹ Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 38.

who, like a film director, “articulates the visual and verbal texts at more or less the same time, in a single creative stroke.”⁴⁰ If the images in *kibyōshi* seem to hog the page, forcing text into uncomfortably tight corners, this is not because of a rivalry between author and artist, but rather because the “text” is simultaneously text and image—conceived, coordinated, and executed by a single figure who is both author and visual director. For this reason, *kusazōshi* are often compared to animation and film, both as mediums where the work is conceived of visually, as a series of scenes involving movements through space and time, at the same time that they utilize language to express dialogue and narrative.⁴¹

On the other side of the market for *kusazōshi* were the readers, who, as considerable evidence suggests, were just as interested in the images as they were in the texts. Part of this reality may be surmised based on the physical format of *kusazōshi* themselves: *kusazōshi* were always illustrated, but the prints in later examples show a level of detail and precision that would have required a considerable input of time, money, and skilled labor, including that of copyists (*hikkō*), printers (*hanzuri*), and artists (*gakō*), all of whom were backed by publishers (*hanmoto*) with a deep investment in the success of their books.⁴² Judging by the extravagant literary productions of the late Edo period, there was clearly an expanding market for beautiful books, whatever their linguistic content. A modern reader might confirm today, if given the chance to flip through an artifact of *kusazōshi*, that it is difficult to ignore the sumptuousness of the images included therein. As though to assuage any doubt about the central importance of the illustrations, the illustrator’s name usually appears right next to the author’s name on the credits page, in the same large font, and many times even precedes it.

In addition to evidence based on physical format, there are also plentiful anecdotes left over from the age of *kusazōshi* that suggest a visually-centered reading practice. Sanba, for example, writes in his extensively illustrated “reading book” *Songs of the Past, Beginning of the Pleasure Quarters* (*Mukashi uta kuruwa no hajimari*, 1809) that the reader should begin first by reviewing the images, then the *kakiire* (inserted words), which are bits of dialogue and explanatory notes fitted directly into the illustrations, and finally the main narrative text (*honbun*).⁴³ Kyōden, perhaps with a hint of sarcasm, tells his readers in *Asazuma Pleasure Boat: Willow under the Crescent Moon* (*Asazuma-bune yanagi no mikazuki*, 1813) that if they are unable to follow the words, or simply do not care to waste their time on the text, they can always enjoy the images as though they were seated in the far back seats of the theater (*tsunbo sajiki*, literally “deaf seats”) where no one can hear the play anyway.⁴⁴ He then argues that this is one of the attractive qualities of *ezōshi*—that they approximate the experience of watching live theater.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the *kibyōshi* evolved into *gōkan*, the most elaborately illustrated genre of all. *Gōkan* originated as stitched-together collections of *kibyōshi*, which were combined in order to handle longer and more complex narratives.⁴⁵ The lengthy *gōkan* arose in part as a response to the Kansei Reforms (1787-1793), an official set of sanctions

⁴⁰ Kern, *Manga of the Floating World*, 160.

⁴¹ See, for example, Suzuki, *Ehon to ukiyo-e*, 42-43 and 254; Markus, *The Willow in Autumn*, 83; Kern, *Manga of the Floating World*, 67.

⁴² Kern, *Manga of the Floating World*, 35-6.

⁴³ See Satō, *Edo no eiri shōsetsu*, 16.

⁴⁴ See Satō, *Edo no eiri shōsetsu*, 65.

⁴⁵ *Gōkan* were literally stitched-together chapter books consisting of several pamphlet-sized fascicles (*kan*) woven together with string. Whereas the *kibyōshi* had been standardized at ten pages (or one *kan*) per volume, often with three volumes to a work, the *gōkan* typically featured forty pages per chapter (*hen*), and a single title could easily consist of dozens of chapters, often written out over decades.

spearheaded by the conservative shogunal counselor, Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829), which included *kibyōshi* among its targets. With their irreverent tone and extravagant production values, the *kibyōshi* ran afoul of the Tokugawa government, which was turning increasingly to traditional Confucian morality in an attempt to promote fiscal and social restraint. Writers of popular fiction were faced with either quitting literature altogether or searching for materials that would fall in line with official policy. In response, many turned to the classics of the Japanese canon, the epic novels of Ming Dynasty China, and traditional folkloric sagas, all of which could be approvingly recast as tales of the triumph of good over evil. As an unintended consequence, in order to handle increasingly complex and lengthy narratives, writers of *kusazōshi* responded by writing more text per page, as well as by increasing the number of pages per volume. As the narratives grew in complexity, so too did the images, eventually reaching their greatest level of technical precision in the *gōkan*. With their extended narratives, *gōkan* provided the perfect platform for refining the text-image relationship, in an era when verbal and visual art had already reached an unprecedented level of complexity.



Figure 3 - Fake Murasaki, *Country Genji* (1829-1842), written by Ryūtei Tanehiko, illustrated by Utagawa Kunisada

Offering one of the most intricate examples of verbal-visual writing in the early modern period is the work of Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783-1842), one of the founders and most widely read writers of *gōkan*, and his star illustrator, Utagawa Kunisada (1786-1864). As with most *kusazōshi* writers, Tanehiko designed the text-and-image layouts for the pages of his own books, but he also demonstrated an unusual degree of interest in their visual composition, as seen in draft images that include extensive notes on how to draw aspects such as “vegetation and architecture... costumes, postures, and even physiognomies.”⁴⁶ His most frequent collaborator, Kunisada, contributed fundamentally to the success of best-selling series such as *Fake Murasaki, Country Genji* (*Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* 1829-1842), whose intricate illustrations rivalled any other work of *ukiyo-e* created during the Edo period, in terms of both their extravagant detail and

⁴⁶ Markus, *The Willow in Autumn*, 83.

complex design. In a close analysis of the rich visual detail seen in *Country Genji*, Michael Emmerich writes:

The artwork in the main body of the book [is] magnificently executed. It features many more indoor scenes than is common, particularly toward the end—a circumstance that stems from Tanehiko's use of *Genji monogatari* as a major source—and these rooms are sumptuously, meticulously realized in every detail, from the pictures and patterns that decorate walls and folding screens to the joints of bamboo fences; from the particular hanging scrolls selected to adorn certain characters' rooms to the grains of different woods used to build the rooms themselves.⁴⁷

Continuing his nuanced reading of *Country Genji* through a combination of text and image, Emmerich traces the development of the story across both space and time. He argues that Kunisada's illustrations function in the manner of a camera, as they zoom in and out, rotate 360 degrees, and move through walls and doors in order to follow the progression of the narrative. The shifting view imparts the impression of a tangible, pseudo-three-dimensional world, which unfolds like a picture scroll, or even a cartoon. Throughout the meticulously illustrated environments, minor visual details provide clues as to how to read atmosphere, anticipate revelations, or judge characters. Together, Tanehiko and Kunisada form a super-team of *gōkan* storytelling, pushing the verbal-visual language of *kusazōshi* to the apex of complexity.⁴⁸

Despite, or perhaps because of, their narrative density and visual sophistication, *gōkan* were largely ignored as literature by modern critics until long after their demise. Suzuki Jūzō wrote in 1979 that *gōkan* were dismissed by researchers who saw them as ephemeral works not worthy of serious inquiry—a state that largely continues today as they remain a vastly understudied genre.⁴⁹ Far from simply defending *gōkan*, however, Suzuki makes the argument that they should be reevaluated as the very core of late Edo period literature, as well as a bridge between early modern and modern fiction. Suzuki's claim makes sense for a number of reasons, including some practical ones. For one, *gōkan* had been among the most widely published and consumed works of fiction of the late Edo period, and even the early Meiji period. Titles such as Bakin's *Beauties of the Water Margin* and Tanehiko's *Country Genji* dominated the reading market in the early 19th century, while long-running series such as Mantei Ōga's (1819-1890) *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha, a Japanese Library* (*Shaka hassō Yamato bunko*, 1845-1871)⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Emmerich, *The Tale of Genji*, 111.

⁴⁸ The leading force in the world of illustration was previously the Torii school, who figured prominently in the illustration of *kibyōshi*, but their place was usurped by the Utagawa school in the mid-1770's. The Utagawa school went on to dominate in the production of woodblock printed art, including in the genres of *bijinga* (pictures of beautiful women), *meisho-e* (pictures of famous places), *nigao-e* (actor portraits), *shibai-e* (theatrical images), and *ehon*, from the late 18th century onward. Their influence continued into the latter half of the 20th century, in the work of Kaburaki Kiyokata (1878-1972), who won the prestigious Order of Culture in 1954, after having begun his work as an illustrator of popular fiction in the late 1800's. Kaburaki, in turn, was the teacher of *shin hanga* (new woodblock print) artists such as Itō Shinsui (1898-1972) and Kawase Hasui (1883-1957), who renovated the art form in the mid 20th century, for which they gained international recognition. Among the most famous members of the school were Hiroshige, Kunisada, and Kuniyoshi (1797-1861). For more on the rise of the Utagawa school, see Mizutani Futō, "Kusazōshi ni okeru Utagawa-ha no e," *Waseda bungaku*, 261 (1927): 180.

⁴⁹ Suzuki Jūzō, *Ehon to ukiyoe*, 13.

⁵⁰ Illustrated by Utagawa Kunisada, Kunisada II (1823-1880), and Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831-1889).

and Ryūkatei Tanekazu's (1807-1858) *The Tale of Shiranui* (*Shiranui monogatari*, 1849-1885)⁵¹ continued to be issued well into the latter part of the 19th century. Such works were popular with a diverse cross-section of society, including housewives, middle school students, university students, merchants, geisha, samurai, and bureaucrats. Naturally, they were also popular with the aspiring writers who would become the founding figures of modern Japanese literature and formed the basis of the verbal-visual culture against which they formulated their own work.

The Legacy of Verbal-Visual Culture in the Modern Era

As with all aspects of society, the Meiji Restoration of 1868 heralded major changes in the configuration of literary and visual culture in Japan. With the emperor reinstalled as acting head of state, the country began to look outwards for new technologies that might help it transition from its position as an isolated nation to a new role as a competitive global leader. In the years immediately following the restoration, it appeared as though fiction would have no role in the new political order. The Meiji government officially discouraged “frivolous” writing and promoted the creation of didactic texts as a means to elevate the general public's level of literacy. In April of 1872, the Ministry of Education issued the *Three Directives on Teaching* (*Sanjō no kyōken*), which enjoined writers and leaders of education to spread patriotic ideals to the general populace.⁵² In practice, the government financially supported *gesaku* writers who turned away from writing fiction and towards more obviously useful pursuits, such as the production of textbooks and works of history. *Gesaku* writers enthusiastically took up new positions as journalists and officially-sponsored educators. Kanagaki Robun, for one, wrote a geography textbook, *Roads to the World's Capitals: With Headnotes and Illustrations* (*Sekai miyakoji: shusho eiri*, 1872), and a cookbook, *Guide to Western Cuisine* (*Seiyō ryōri tsū*, 1872), in the same year the edict was issued.⁵³ Jōno Denpei (1832-1902), formerly a *gesaku* writer known as Sansantei Arindo, cofounded Tokyo's first daily newspaper, the *Tōkyō Nichi Nichi Shinbun*, along with *ukiyo-e* artist Ochiai Yoshiiku (1833-1904) and book-lending clerk Nishida Densuke (1838-1910). It was only the first of many papers to be founded by figures previously involved in the production of *kusazōshi*. While such periodicals were initially devoid of illustration, they soon began to include images in the early modern style, as the visual culture of the Edo period experienced a resurgence in the modern era.

Illustrated fiction reappeared in the mid-1870's, after the tumult of the Meiji Restoration began to give way to a normalized social situation. Yoshiiku, having cofounded Tokyo's first daily periodical, also helped to establish its first illustrated newspaper, the *Hiragana eiri shinbun*, along with *gesaku* writer Takabatake Ransen (1838-1885) in 1875. The *Hiragana* helped to popularize the new literary form of the *tsuzukimono*, or “serial story,” which began as extended news articles that were broken up over consecutive issues of the daily paper.⁵⁴ *Tsuzukimono* often focused on sensational accounts of murder, adultery, and suicide, which were enthusiastically received by the reading public. As authors recognized the popularity of such

⁵¹ *The Tale of Shiranui* was begun by Ryūkatei Tanekazu and Ryūtei Senka (1806-1868, aka Ryūtei Tanehiko II), both students of the first Ryūtei Tanehiko, and was continued by Ryūsutei Tanekiyo (1821-1907), a student of Tanekazu's.

⁵² Okitsu Kaname, *Meiji shinbun kotohajime: “bunmei kaika” no jōnarizumu* (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1997), 44-45.

⁵³ Okitsu Kaname, “Bakumatsu kaikaki bungaku kenkyū,” *Meiji kaikaki bungakushū*, edited by Okitsu Kaname (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1966), 1:423-424.

⁵⁴ For a full history of the *tsuzukimono*, with details on specific stories, see Okitsu, *Meiji shinbun kotohajime*, 79-93.

stories, they began to incorporate more illustration into their work, until the *tsuzukimono* began to resemble premodern fiction more than modern news. *Tsuzukimono* in turn paved the way for a revival of *kusazōshi*, as popular news stories were expanded in length and converted into fully illustrated *gōkan*. The most popular topic of the day became that of *dokufu*, poison women, or women accused of murder, who captured the attention of the news-reading public. “Torioi Omatsu no Den,” a tale of a seafaring assassin, was serialized in 1875 in the *Kanayomi shinbun*, a paper run by Robun and illustrator Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831-1889). In 1878, her story was made into a *gōkan* by Kubota Hikosaku (1846-1898). His version, *The New Tale of Seafaring Street Minstrel Omatsu* (*Torioi Omatsu kaijō shinwa*, 1878), led to a full revival of the form, which quickly took off as other authors, including Robun and Ransen, turned aside from their educational and journalistic duties to pen their own illustrated tales of poison women.⁵⁵



Figure 4 - *The New Tale of Seafaring Minstrel Omatsu* (1878), written by Kubota Hikosaku, illustrated by Toyohara Chikanobu

In the 1880's, Japanese fiction looked ready to return to an earlier era. Satiated with practical texts and didactic writings, the market was primed for a resurgence of the “frivolous” literature of the Edo period. *Gesaku* writers who had become newspaper journalists began to write *gesaku* once again, transforming true accounts of peasant rebellions and political upheavals into romantic tales of samurai vengeance and double suicide, delivered in a visual form redolent of Edo period *kusazōshi* and kabuki. Some started looking to the distant past for their materials, while others turned to worlds of fantasy and magic, which had long been absent from the practically-oriented writings of early Meiji Japan. As a clear sign that the fiction of the Edo period was alive and well (and, conversely, that modern fiction was ailing), the most frequently printed titles were not, in fact, new works at all, but rather reprints of *gesaku* standards. As Peter Kornicki points out, most new works by Meiji period authors were printed only once, whereas popular standouts from the Edo period might go through multiple printings in a single year.⁵⁶ By

⁵⁵ See Christine L. Marran, *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 1-8. Also Emmerich, *The Tale of Genji*, 176.

⁵⁶ Peter Kornicki, “The Survival of Tokugawa Fiction in the Meiji Period,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 41.2 (1981): 471.

1885, the year that Shōyō wrote his essay, it looked as though new fiction would have no place in modern Japan, as readers gravitated increasingly towards the familiar illustrated narratives of the past.

When Shōyō began formulating his ideas on modern literature, he found himself in the midst of a full-fledged *gesaku* revival. Much of popular writing at the time consisted of adaptations, sequels, or reprints of earlier works, leaving little room for new ideas to flourish. In response, Shōyō constructed *Essence of the Novel* as a polemic against *gesaku*, which he targeted as an impediment to the development of a modern literary culture. Far from being a hardened critic of *gesaku*, however, Shōyō was in fact one of the foremost researchers, writers, and enthusiasts of *gesaku* fiction in the modern period. As a lifelong devotee of *gesaku* literature, Shōyō was intimately familiar with the verbal-visual culture of the Edo period and wrote extensively on the intersection of theater, *ukiyo-e*, and literature in his scholarship. Although he might have seemed eager to do away with illustration in his essay, in his fiction, he participated enthusiastically in the illustration of his own work, to which he even lent his talents as an amateur illustrator.

Most other authors who debuted during the Meiji period were comparably well-versed in the illustrated fiction of the Edo period, including Mori Ōgai (1862-1922), Izumi Kyōka, Natsume Sōseki, and Nagai Kafū (1879-1959), among others. Artist Kaburaki Kiyokata (1878-1972), in his 1961 memoir *Records of Times Now Past (Koshikata no ki)*, suggests that most writers of the Meiji period began their experience of literature not with words, but with the illustrations found in *kusazōshi*.⁵⁷ He describes a typical literary education in the Meiji period as beginning with images: long before learning to read, young children would listen to older family members narrate illustrations in a process known as *etoki*, or “explaining the pictures.” Emi Suiin (1869-1934), a popular writer of the Meiji period, similarly recalls that, as a child, he often listened to his grandmother narrate *gōkan* by explaining the illustrations.⁵⁸ His household was apparently *gōkan*-mad, like many throughout the Edo and Meiji periods, and owned volumes of series such as *The Eight Dog Chronicles in Kana (Kaneyomi hakkenden, 1848-1868)*,⁵⁹ *Brave Hero Jiraiya (Jiraiya gōketsu monogatari, 1839-1868)*,⁶⁰ and *A Children’s Song: The Miraculous Wheel of Wonders (Warabeuta myōmyō guruma, 1849-1868)*,⁶¹ among numerous others. Suiin claims to have rarely read any of the texts in his family’s library of *kusazōshi*, as he preferred to look at their illustrations instead. Taoka Reiun (1870-1912), a prominent critic of the Meiji period, writes that in his youth his father would read him philosophical texts written in *kanbun* (Sino-Japanese script), of which he hardly understood a word, while his mother would

⁵⁷ Kaburaki Kiyokata, *Koshikata no ki* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1961), 7. Kaburaki was the son of Jōno Denpei, a.k.a. Sansantei Arindo, a late writer of *gesaku* and founder of the *Tōkyō nichi nichi shinbun*.

⁵⁸ As noted by Maeda Ai in *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu*, 118. Originally from Emi Suiin, *Jiko chūshin Meiji bundanshi* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1927).

⁵⁹ *Kaneyomi hakkenden* is an illustrated digest of Bakin’s *The Eight Dog Chronicles (Nansō Satomi hakkenden, 1814-1842)*. The erudite, Chinese-inflected language of the original was a major selling point for its target audience, which consisted of highly educated readers, but made the text prohibitively difficult for those with a lesser degree of training. The adaptation was written by Tamenaga Shunsui, Hoshōan Kindō, and Kanagaki Robun and illustrated by Kuniyoshi and Yoshiiku.

⁶⁰ A definitive example of the long-format, collaborative *gōkan*, the text was written by Mizugaki Egao (1789-1846), Ryūkatei Tanekazu, and Ryūsutei Tanekiyo. It was illustrated by Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, Ikeda Eisen (1807-1858), Kuniteru, Kunitori, Kunisada II, Utagawa Yoshifusa (1827-1860), Yoshiiku, and possibly others as well.

⁶¹ Written by Ryūkatei Tanekazu, Santei Shunba (d. 1851) and Ryūtei Senka. Illustrated by Kunisada II and Yoshitora.

narrate the illustrations found in *kusazōshi*.⁶² He recalls gravitating towards the latter, whose pictures he could easily follow, rather than his father's erudite texts, whose recitation struck him as an empty display of vanity.

Of all modern authors, the one most frequently associated with *kusazōshi* is Izumi Kyōka, who referenced their words and illustrations throughout his writings over a span of nearly fifty years. In his 1901 essay "Lover's Treatment" ("Iro atsukai"), he recalled leafing through the pages of his mother's picture-books as a child and pestering her to explain the images in works such as *Country Genji* and *The Tale of Shiranui*. He provides a specific account of the practice of *etoki* by writing that, rather than read the text to him as it was written on the page, his mother would narrate the images to him in her own words. As he grew older, he began to hide *kusazōshi* in his textbooks at school and pore over their pages endlessly in the dark corners of his home, allegedly sacrificing his eyesight in the process.⁶³ His obsession with *kusazōshi* continued well into adulthood, when he assembled a collection of his own. His personal library, as it stands preserved at Keiō University, includes over five hundred volumes of illustrated books from forty-eight different series, almost all of them *gōkan*.⁶⁴ The level of his zeal for *kusazōshi* can be deduced by the meticulous state of his collection, as it features complete runs of series that ran for decades, including all twenty-five volumes of Santō Kyōzan's (1769-1858) *Early Dawn of the New Year* (*Ōmisoka akebono no sōshi*, 1839-1857), all forty-four volumes of Shunsui's *Uplifting Tale of Northern Snows: Mirror of the Ages* (*Hokusetsu bidan jidai kagami*, 1855-1883), and nearly all fifty-eight volumes of Mantei Ōga's *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*.⁶⁵ Surprisingly, one of Kyōka's favorite illustrated series, *Country Genji*, makes only a slight showing in the collection (with only the first twelve of thirty-eight volumes present), but its illustrations are preserved elsewhere. As has frequently been recounted, Kyōka cut out dozens of frontispieces by Kunisada from *Country Genji* and pasted them all over a folding screen (*byōbu*) that surrounded his desk, thereby extracting their visual form from the world of *kusazōshi* and bringing it directly into the space of his work.⁶⁶

Nagai Kafū, like both Shōyō and Kyōka, was intimately familiar with the illustrated fiction of the Edo period and wrote extensively on *ukiyo-e*, *gesaku*, kabuki, and other early modern arts in his fiction and essays.⁶⁷ He was particularly fond of Shunsui's *ninjōbon* and wrote

⁶² See Maeda, *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu*, 118-119.

⁶³ Izumi Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973-1976), 28:653-661.

⁶⁴ The contents of the library can be found in "Izumi Kyōka zōsho mokuroku" by Hinotani Teruhiko, Suzuki Isamu, and Matsumura Tomomi in *Kyōka zenshū geppō*, 29:15-19.

⁶⁵ Kyōka's collection of *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha* contains fifty-four of fifty-eight volumes (1-38 and 41-56). As Hinotani, Suzuki, and Matsumura point out in "Izumi Kyōka zōsho mokuroku," most of Kyōka's library was lost in the firebombings of Tokyo during WWII. Fortunately, his collection of *kusazōshi* managed to escape destruction, as it was being housed separately from the rest of his library, along with his other personal belongings. Around five-hundred and thirty volumes were preserved in a specially made *kusazōshi* bookshelf with a painted cover. It is possible that the missing volumes became separated from the collection during Kyōka's lifetime, or during one of various relocations.

⁶⁶ This screen is preserved along with Kyōka's personal collection of *kusazōshi* at Keiō University.

⁶⁷ Despite his professed love for the illustrated fiction of the Edo period, Kafū endeavored to keep his fiction illustration-free for much of his career. In 1909, he wrote an essay on the use of frontispieces (*kuchi-e*) in modern Japanese literature, in which he denounced the tendency for modern artists to ignore the wishes of the author and to illustrate in whatever manner they chose. He derided the prominence of illustration in modern fiction as a reality driven purely by financial interests and vowed to discontinue the inclusion of frontispieces in his work, at least until he was able to find an artist who understood his vision for the illustration of his texts. Kafū finally found a suitable match in artist Kimura Sōhachi (1893-1958), an illustrator who crafted detailed sketches for Kafū's most critically

one of his earliest works, *The New Plum Calendar* (*Shin umegoyomi*, 1901), as a sequel to Shunsui's *The Plum Calendar*.⁶⁸ In one of Kafū's early stories, *Sumidagawa* (1909), a student is reminded of Shunsui's fiction when he wanders into a backstreet near the east banks of the Sumida River in Tokyo. The decaying urban landscape leads him to recall the setting of Shunsui's *The Plum Calendar*, while a certain fence even reminds him particularly of the illustrations.⁶⁹ In an essay on ukiyo-e, Kafū notes that Kuninao, the illustrator of most of Shunsui's works, was also his favorite artist of the Utagawa school. He writes fondly of Kuninao's pictures—of geisha houses tucked into the narrow backstreets of Fukagawa—and recalls lively details of pillows, folding screens, ladders, stoves, and furnaces that brought the setting of Shunsui's writing to life.⁷⁰

Even authors who might appear far removed from the world of Edo period illustrated fiction were still affected by their experiences of reading *gesaku* as youth. Mori Ōgai, for example, mentions reading both *ninjōbon* and *yomihon* in his bildungsroman *Vita sexualis* (*Wita sekisuarisu*, 1909), as well as in *Saiki Kōi* (1917)—a short essay on an Edo period merchant and literati poet of the same name.⁷¹ In the latter, he recalls voraciously reading every last book by Bakin, Kyōden, Shunsui, and Shōtei Kinsui (1795-1862), all of which were stocked by his local book lender (*kashihon'ya*).⁷² Natsume Sōseki, one of the most important figures in modern Japanese letters, is better known for his command of English literature than his familiarity with Edo period fiction, but he, too, was raised on *gesaku*. In a *haiku* written in 1895, he betrayed his lingering attachment to *kusazōshi* in poetic terms: “Holed up for winter, it's either yellowbooks, or else redbooks.”⁷³ In his late Meiji-period novel *Nowaki* (1907), the protagonist continues to see the world through the lens of *kusazōshi* imagery, imagining women as illustrations by Kunisada in *Country Genji* and men as Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's (1839-1892) ukiyo-e prints of the forty-seven ronin from *Chūshingura*.⁷⁴

Beyond sharing common experiences of reading illustrated literature, the new generation of writers also shared in the fact that most of their work continued to be illustrated in one form or another. As newspapers proliferated in the 1880's and 90's, they became the central venue for the publication of new works of fiction, which were almost always printed together with woodblock illustrations, following longstanding norms. Almost anyone who wrote fiction in the Meiji period published their works in such newspapers, where their stories were illustrated by staff artists trained in traditional *ukiyo-e* styles. Early periodicals were illustrated by veteran artists of the Utagawa school, such as Yoshiiku and Yoshitoshi, who brought with them the traditions of an earlier visual culture, as they transitioned from illustrating *gōkan* to illustrating newspaper novels. Yoshitoshi distinguished himself as the illustrator of Japan's so-called “first

lauded novel, *A Strange Tale from East of the River* (*Bokutō kidan*, 1937), in which he depicted the story's setting in the backstreets of east Tokyo. Nagai Kafū, *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 6:390-391.

⁶⁸ Published April 19 to May 24, 1901 in the *Yamato Shinbun*. Kafū, *Kafū zenshū*, 1:275-356.

⁶⁹ Kafū, *Kafū zenshū*, 8:256.

⁷⁰ Kafū, *Kafū zenshū*, 10:239-240.

⁷¹ See Maeda Ai, *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu*, 112. Original reference from *Vita Sexualis* found in Mori Ōgai, *Ōgai zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971-1975), 5:113; 121.

⁷² Ōgai, *Ōgai zenshū*, 18:67. Unlike *kusazōshi*, the *gesaku* favored by Ōgai featured only occasional illustrations—a preference that might be traced to his own writings, which tended to feature less images than those of other Meiji period authors.

⁷³ As translated by Kern, *Manga of the Floating World*, 248. Originally from Natsume Sōseki, *Sōseki zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002-2004), 17:83. Poem 421, 1895.

⁷⁴ *Sōseki zenshū*, 3:324.

modern novel,” Futabatei Shimei’s (1864-1909) *Floating Clouds* (1887-1889),⁷⁵ as well as the major literary debut by Ozaki Kōyō, *Two Nuns’ Confession of Love* (*Ninin bikuni irozange*, 1889), which heralded a new age of popular fiction in the 1890’s. Newspapers were soon joined on the literary market by journals, which also featured illustrated images, including woodblock prints, lithographs, and, eventually, photographs. Books, too, continued to include illustrations in the form of lavish *kuchi-e*, without which almost no work of fiction in the late 19th century was published.

The Chapters

Each chapter of my dissertation explores a different configuration of the text-image relationship in modern Japanese literature by focusing on the practical and metaphorical aspects of illustration in the work of three authors: Tsubouchi Shōyō, Ozaki Kōyō, and Izumi Kyōka. All three writers are frequently spoken of as intermediary figures in Japanese literary history, or as authors who bridged the literature of the Edo period with the fiction of the modern era. Their work is often said by scholars to reflect classical traditions of writing and has been referred to variously as neoclassical, anti-modernist, anti-realist, and romanticist in literary criticism. Although all three figures contributed in some fundamental way to the foundation of modern literature in Japan, especially via formal experimentations with the verbal and visual parameters of the novel, their contributions to a distinctly modern mode of writing have often been overlooked, or otherwise characterized as fundamentally anti-modern in nature. Rather than focusing on the dichotomy of modern and anti-modern as oppositional categories, my dissertation explores how all three authors responded to an enduring legacy of verbal-visual culture from the Edo period, while navigating a shifting landscape of visual-literary forms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Throughout my dissertation, I examine how these authors employed a combination of words and pictures in ways that either reaffirmed, renegotiated, or transformed the verbal-visual nature of literature in Japan, in works that often included extensive illustration and references to visual culture from both the Edo period and the modern age.

In chapter one, I focus on the writings of Tsubouchi Shōyō, including his essays, translations, and prose fiction, as I explore how he transitioned from holding the opinion that illustration was a deterrent to the formation of the modern novel, to the understanding that *gesaku* was a separate order of art entirely. Early on in his career, Shōyō argued that the “true” novel would only appear when text-based fiction was entirely divorced from the visually-oriented culture of the stage. Setting up a hierarchy of forms, he conceived of the novel as the endpoint in an evolutionary chain that led naturally from theater to prose fiction, regardless of cultural context. In his landmark essay, *Essence of the Novel*, he warned against the influence of theater and *kusazōshi* as hindrances to the development of modern literary form in Japan, and yet, in his own fiction, he continued to rely just as heavily on images and theatrical devices as the average *gesaku* author of the late Edo period. While his stories of the 1880’s have often been treated as a series of failed attempts to produce a genuinely modern novel, I argue that Shōyō set out to write *gesaku* all along, as evidenced by his adoption of a *gesaku*-style literary persona and

⁷⁵ The first volume of the novel was illustrated by Yoshitoshi and published as a standalone book by Kinkōdō. The second volume was published in the same format and illustrated by Ogata Gekkō (1859-1920), another prominent illustrator of the Meiji period. The third volume was again illustrated by Yoshitoshi, but this time was published in *Miyako no hana*, one of Japan’s earliest literary magazines. See Ishiro Keiko on *Ukigumo* in *Meisaku sashie zenshū*, 1:42.

his recourse to illustration and dialogue as the main vehicles of his narratives. I present readings of his most popular works, *The Characters of Modern Students* and *A Mirror of Marriage* (*Imo to sekagami*, 1885-1886), as *gesaku*, which I argue can only be fully appreciated by reading text and image together. As Shōyō's career progressed, he eventually came to see the visually-oriented culture of the Edo period as a unique heritage of world literature, and one whose multi-sensory expression was in fact its strongest suit. Rather than an early stage to be overcome, *gesaku* and kabuki had become for him unique forms of art, worthy of preservation in their own right.

In my second chapter, I explore the tension between text and image in the work of Ozaki Kōyō, who wrote passionately against the use of illustration in modern fiction, even as he continued to experiment with the use of images in his own work. As head of the Ken'yūsha literary coterie, Kōyō secured a partnership with Hakubunkan, a publisher of illustrated books and magazines, as well as the *Yomiuri shinbun*, the leading newspaper of the time. While such partnerships originally proved to be a boon for his literary career, Kōyō eventually expressed dismay at his inability to control the visual expression of his own writings, whose illustrations were shaped by the demands of publishers and readers rather than by his own wishes. He famously published the *sashi-e muyōron* (argument against the use of illustration) in the pages of the *Yomiuri shinbun*, before quitting the paper in protest over their insistence that he include illustrations in his work. Even as he battled with publishers over the use of pictures in his fiction, however, Kōyō continued to design his own draft images and to collaborate closely with artists in the production of illustrations for his texts. His involvement in illustration ultimately influenced the direction of his writing, as he explored the limits of verbal and visual perception as a core theme of his fiction.

In his prose narratives, Kōyō explored the divergent strengths of text and image in replicating various aspects of reality, as he envisioned a form of fiction that would appear vividly before his readers' eyes. In early works such as *Namu Amida Butsu* (1889) and *Nenge mishō* (1890), Kōyō confronted the potential for images to overwhelm the senses of the viewer, in stories of characters whose emotional investment in pictures leads to their physical ruin. His most critically acclaimed work of fiction, *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* (*Tajō takon*, 1896), takes the form of a visual novel, which details a man's desperate attempt to recuperate the missing form of his wife through proximal images, including paintings, photographs, and living resemblances. When *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* was converted into a book (it was originally serialized in the *Yomiuri shinbun*), Kōyō worked with several artists to pair the text with over two dozen illustrations, which, together, demonstrate that "seeing" is not an objective act, but rather a subjective experience. In his final and most famous work, *The Gold Demon* (*Konjiki yasha*, 1897-1903), Kōyō explored the visual technology of photography as a metaphor for descriptive language, but his writing was ultimately overshadowed by a single woodblock print, included as a frontispiece in the first volume of the novel, whose garish vision of violence would come to define Kōyō's contribution to the literary world.

My third chapter begins part two of my dissertation, in which I focus on the work of Izumi Kyōka, a writer who explored the legacy of images from the Edo period as a central theme of his writing, in fiction that was illustrated with hundreds of images, by dozens of artists, over a span of nearly five decades. I begin by examining Kyōka's relationship to the visual culture of the early 19th century, and particularly his overlapping interests in the art forms of *kusazōshi*, *ukiyo-e*, kabuki, and Buddhist iconography, which he united in his fiction into a cultural complex of popular sentiment and religious veneration. As I point out in my chapter, Kyōka's relationship

to *kusazōshi* has often been described as a fundamental element of his fiction, by scholars who have referred to picture-books variously as the bedrock, the fount, and the womb of his literary imagination. In his fiction and essays, Kyōka repeatedly revisits a particular set of verbal-visual texts from the Edo period for inspiration, including the picture-books of Ryūtei Tanehiko, the woodblock prints of Utagawa Kunisada, and a spectacular image of violence by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi known as “The Lonely House of Adachigahara,” which he pairs with literary explorations of votive icons and religious imagery. Such images form a visual constellation that spans his entire body of fiction, while pointing perpetually to a missing image—that of the face of the author’s mother, whose absence is frequently evoked through the proximal images of Māyādevi, the mother of the Buddha, and Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion. In his references to the visual culture of the Edo period, Kyōka champions the vivid expressions of popular art as powerful tools for exploring the conceptual space between visual perception and invisible realms of being. Through his stories, he elevates the humble forms of *kusazōshi* and *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints to the status of religious iconography, thereby treating popular images as conduits to a sacred world of ghosts, spirits, and deities.

My fourth chapter investigates the role of illustration as a visual guide in three newspaper novels by Izumi Kyōka: *Kanmuri Yazaemon* (1893), *Of the Mountains and the Sea* (*Sankai hyōbanki*, 1929), and *Pale Plum Blossoms* (*Usukōbai*, 1937). All three works share certain basic elements of form, including a serial format, extensive illustration, and tangled narrative structures. On a linguistic level, they are exceedingly difficult to follow, but when considered together with their illustrations, they coalesce into dynamic verbal-visual texts. *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, Kyōka’s literary debut, emerged directly from the tradition of *gesaku*; like the picture-books that preceded it, it relied heavily on its illustrations to guide readers through abrupt changes in setting and scene. At the same time, the images included in the original publication highlighted the author’s concern with themes of violence, self-sacrifice, and redemption, all of which would continue to play a central part in his literary universe over the rest of his career. *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, Kyōka’s most extensively illustrated novel, featured some three hundred images by artist Komura Settai (1887-1940), but instead of providing a stable visual ground for the narrative, Settai’s images highlighted the presence of dark lacunae in the text, as expressed in illustrations of dead ends, hidden corners, and empty rooms. Settai’s images demonstrate how the visual apparatus of illustration can be used to point towards the existence of voids and obscure spaces in the viewer’s perception of reality, in particular by hinting at blank spots in the visual field, which remain permanently inaccessible to sight. Kyōka’s final novel, *Pale Plum Blossoms*, featured illustrations by famed artist Kaburaki Kiyokata, a longtime friend and artistic collaborator, who adorned the pages of Kyōka’s story with fragile images that echoed the evanescent qualities of the author’s text. Featuring thin, wispy lines and delicate details, Kiyokata’s illustrations evoked the distant world of Meiji letters, whose verbal-visual culture was already in the process of fading, just as the popular culture of the Edo period had done before it.

In chapter five, I explore the role of illustration in Kyōka’s urban fiction as a method of overlaying the author’s literary depictions of Tokyo with the visual culture of kabuki theater, thereby transforming the space of the modern city into a virtual kabuki stage. I begin by examining the historical bifurcation of Kyōka’s writing into two distinct categories: *kaiki mono* (ghost stories) and *fūzoku mono* (tales of the pleasure quarters), while contrasting the positive reception typically accorded to his rural ghost stories with the more mixed reactions given to his urban dramas. As I demonstrate, Kyōka’s *fūzoku mono* were distinguished from his fantastic

stories by their primary setting in Tokyo, their focus on the lives of geisha, and their preference for topics of a social nature, such as class struggle and oppression, rather than supernatural affairs. Kyōka's geisha stories were also distinguished by their extensive use of illustration, which they incorporated to a much greater extent than his other work. As such, Kyōka's geisha stories might be read as essentially verbal-visual texts, which took as their subject the popular culture of the Edo period, and particularly the fiction and imagery of the pleasure quarters. Rather than simply borrowing such themes, however, Kyōka adapted the visual culture of the past to express a nightmarish vision of life in the modern city, where social inequality was shown to lead to explosions of passion and fury, often ending in spectacular acts of violence. In stories such as *The Night Patrol* (*Yakō junsu*, 1895), *Rumors from the Southeast Quarters* (*Tatsumi kōdan*, 1898), and *Tale of the Vigil* (*Tsuya monogatari*, 1899), Kyōka developed a meta-theatrical method of narration, which was both familiar and experimental in its treatment of the illustrated page as a dynamic form of verbal-visual art. By echoing motifs from the stage, Kyōka expressed an uncanny vision of the city, in which the drama of modern life was calcified into an endless repetition of violent struggle.

In my sixth chapter, I continue to explore the use of illustration in Kyōka's urban fiction, but focus especially on the contributions of Komura Settai, an artist who designed the boxes, covers, and endpapers of Kyōka's books with woodblock prints of faceless geisha and dark alleyways. As I point out in this chapter, scholars have frequently commented on the aesthetic resonance between Kyōka's words and Settai's pictures as a nearly perfect example of the symbiosis between verbal and visual art. I argue that this sense of symbiosis arises from both figures' distinctive approach to constructing imaginary spaces, which they shape into literary topoi that cross the borders between verbal and visual spheres. Building on my discussion of Kyōka's *fūzoku mono*, I transition from a focus on the space of the stage to that of the alleyway, which becomes the locus of both figures' artistic-literary universe. In his urban fiction, Kyōka transforms the ordinary space of the alleyway into a haunted dimension of dreams, whose dense shadows allow the spirits of previous eras to thrive beyond the reach of a rapidly modernizing world. In stories such as *Worship at Yushima* (*Yushima mōde*, 1901) and *Nihonbashi* (1914), the narrator highlights the hidden corners of the city, which harbor ghosts and geisha in a realm of perpetual twilight. In his illustrations of such stories, Settai carefully visualizes every detail of Kyōka's verbal descriptions of urban space, while utilizing the specific properties of his art form to accentuate elements of depth and obscurity in the visual field. In prints that focus on the space of the alleyway, Settai utilizes an exaggerated form of linear perspective to distort the narrow back streets of Tokyo, thereby transforming them into dreamlike visions of cyclopean architecture and claustrophobic geometry. These narrow spaces function as prisons for their hapless inhabitants, while also serving as embryonic cocoons that nurture their dreams of escape.

My examination of illustrative practice in Japan ends with the advent of mass media in the 1920's and 30's, which permanently altered the role of image in popular fiction. After going into a long decline for much of the Taishō period, illustration reemerged and proliferated in the late 1920's, as it became an essential feature of general interest magazines and niche literary publications. With the development of mass media in Japan, the quantity of print material skyrocketed to unprecedented levels. Whereas a successful periodical from the early 20th century might sell 10,000 copies per issue, popular publications of the early Shōwa period topped out at over 1,000,000 copies. The number of journal and newspaper titles multiplied exponentially, as did the number of authors and artists writing and illustrating fiction. Illustration shifted from its position as a standard component of all literary production to a feature largely associated with

popular fiction. The most notable illustrated texts of the era were produced by writers such as Kamitsukasa Shōken (1874-1947), Nakazato Kaizan (1885-1944), Shirai Kyōji (1889-1980), and Yoshiya Nobuko (1896-1973), all names likely to be unfamiliar with anyone but the specialist in Shōwa period print culture. The accelerated production of images led artist Kimura Sōhachi (1893-1958) to call illustration an art of “scraps” (*hogo*), as they were mass-produced, circulated to millions of readers, and discarded within the span of a single day. In the same essay, however, Kimura celebrated the freedom of illustration from its servitude to text. Due to the demands of increased production, artists were able to ignore the author’s wishes and draw images in whatever style they desired.

Chapter 1

(Re)Discovering the Joys of Illustrated Fiction: Tsubouchi Shōyō and the Visual Heritage of Japanese Literature

Tsubouchi Shōyō's Theory of Sensory Perception and the Arts

In *Essence of the Novel*, Tsubouchi Shōyō describes the novel as a play in which words bypass the visual and auditory senses in order to communicate directly with the heart. In the late 19th century, when Shōyō began formulating his theory of the novel, most popular fiction in Japan consisted largely of dialogue and illustration, which worked together to approximate the experience of viewing a kabuki play. Having developed side-by-side over the course of centuries (from the mid-1700's onward), *gesaku* fiction and kabuki theater shared much of the same content and form. Early on in his career, Shōyō criticized the overly cozy relationship that had existed between text, image, and theater in Japan since the Edo period and argued that the modern novel could only take shape as a purely textual form of art. In his brief career as a novelist, however, Shōyō continued to write stories that resembled plays far more than novels, particularly in their frequent use of dialogue and *gesaku*-style illustration. In 1889, he wrote his final short story, *Wife (Saikun)*, a work largely divested of theatrical convention and related entirely in text, before he abandoned the form of the novel entirely and embarked on a second career as a playwright and scholar of traditional Japanese theater. Having lost interest in the project of modern literature, Shōyō reevaluated the multimedia nature of Edo period fiction as its strongest quality. As a form of storytelling that impacted the eyes and the heart at the same time, *gesaku* provided a sensory experience that was impossible to reproduce in the text-only novel. Rather than an early stage in the development of modern literature, *gesaku* had become for him a national cultural heritage, whose unique verbal-visual expression was worthy of preservation for future generations.

In literary history, Shōyō is often portrayed as a Western-styled reformist who disparaged the artistic traditions of his native country, based largely on partial readings of *Essence of the Novel*, his landmark essay. Such views tend to focus on the most polemic sections of the essay, in which Shōyō denounces specific varieties of *gesaku* as shallow and didactic, while ignoring the decades that he devoted to promoting the traditional arts of Japan, through both his scholarship and original fiction, beginning almost immediately after the essay's publication. As Peter Kornicki has demonstrated, Shōyō formulated his ideas on the novel against a backdrop of popular calls for reform of traditional Japanese culture, including its "drama, music, literature, arts and crafts, customs of dress and personal adornment, and social interaction between the sexes."¹ Among the arts, one of the first to be targeted for reform was the theater, in part because it was deemed too vulgar and outdated for polite society by modern intellectuals, but also because it promised to be a suitable medium for instructing the masses in the ideology of "civilization and enlightenment" (*bunmei kaika*).² The *shōsetsu*, on the other hand, had no such assured existence, as its purpose in society had yet to be clearly defined. In the 1870's, the Meiji government realized the potential of fiction to instruct the populace in the ways of modern civilization and officially sponsored the production of educational *gesaku*, thereby affording a measure of respectability for popular fiction that it had never possessed before. Under heavy

¹ Peter Kornicki, *The Reform of Fiction in Meiji Japan* (London: Published by Ithaca Press London for the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University, 1982), 3.

² Kornicki, *The Reform of Fiction in Meiji Japan*, 6-8.

government supervision, however, fiction became overwhelmingly didactic and moralistic, with popular works almost universally upholding the tenets of *kanzen chōaku* (encouraging good and chastising evil). Soon, writers of *gesaku* returned to themes of vendettas, illicit love affairs, and samurai showdowns, all popular themes from the Edo period, as Japanese literature entered into a protracted period of stagnation. In *Essence of the Novel*, Shōyō attempted to rescue the *shōsetsu* from endless cycles of repetition, in which predictable narratives with familiar themes were rehashed year after year. He did this, in part, by structuring his essay in polemic terms, or by setting the *shōsetsu* in direct opposition to *gesaku* and kabuki, as a practical means of charting a new path forward.

While Shōyō emerged on the literary scene as an outspoken proponent of the modern novel—a stance for which he has been remembered ever since—for most of his life, he expressed an even greater enthusiasm for *gesaku* and kabuki than for modern fiction. Having come of age during the 1860's and 70's, Shōyō was raised during an era in which most fiction published in Japan fell under the category of *gesaku*, whether in the form of *yomihon*, *kokkeibon*, *gōkan*, or any other variety of woodblock-printed book. Far from being immune to the allure of popular literature, Shōyō immersed himself wholeheartedly into the illustrated pages of Edo period fiction from an early age. As a voracious reader of Bakin, Shunsui, and Kyōden in his youth, Shōyō's passion for *gesaku* did not end with adulthood, but rather continued throughout his lifetime. In his preface to *Essence of the Novel*, he writes, "I've had a fondness for popular fiction [*haishi*] since my younger days. Whenever I have spare time, I squander my precious daylight hours perusing old books, for over a decade now."³ By his own account, Shōyō began reading *kusazōshi* (picture-books) around the age of six, having been introduced to the genre by his mother, and started to read other genres of *gesaku* around the age of eleven, when he became a loyal patron of a local book lender in Nagoya.⁴ After being exposed to kabuki, around the age of eleven or twelve, Shōyō became an even bigger fan of theater than he was of *gesaku*—he even claims to have been more interested in theater than in eating, drinking, or playing with friends.⁵ Later, as a scholar, he would research the kabuki plays of Kawatake Mokuami (1816-1893) and Tsuruya Nanboku IV (1755-1829), as well as the *bunraku* (puppet theater) plays of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, eventually becoming one of the most knowledgeable experts on traditional Japanese theater in all of Japan.

In between his early passion for *gesaku* and his later scholarly appreciation of traditional Japanese art, Shōyō began studies of the English language—a choice that would permanently alter the trajectory of his career, as he established himself as a leading expert on British literature and a prolific translator of English texts. In 1876, he was selected to enroll in the Kaisei Gakkō (The Kaisei School), a forerunner of Tokyo University, where he delved into studies of British fiction and commenced his work in translation and literary criticism.⁶ As a student, Shōyō read numerous British romances, such as those by Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) and Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873), as well as the French novels of Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870) and Victor Hugo (1802-1885), most likely in English translation. He also began his groundbreaking studies of the plays of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), an author to whom he would go on to devote

³ When discussing the traditional fiction of Japan, Shōyō often uses the term *haishi*, literally "popular history," which he uses interchangeably with *shōsetsu* and *gesaku* to mean popular fiction in general. The term highlights the tendency for early modern fiction to deal with historical themes. Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:5.

⁴ See Mitani Norio, "Shōsetsu to gesaku, *Shōsetsu shinzui* ni tsuite," *Gengo bunka ronshū*, 8.1 (1986): 1.

⁵ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, 10:444.

⁶ Leith Morton, *The Alien Within: Representations of the Exotic in Twentieth-century Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 14.

much of his life, as he proceeded to translate the complete works of Shakespeare over the following forty-four years.⁷ Naturally, Shōyō's protracted immersion in the world of English literature permanently altered his understanding of literary form. By adding a foreign perspective to his already prodigious knowledge of the Japanese tradition, he developed a theory of the novel that combined both Eastern and Western concepts of fiction.

In *Essence of the Novel*, Shōyō aimed to reform Japanese fiction by drawing it closer to its European counterpart, but rather than arguing for the complete replacement of one form by the other (as he is often understood to have advocated), he instead proposed the creation of a hybrid form, which united the strengths of both traditions. The ambivalent nature of Shōyō's proposal can be seen most clearly in his choice of the word *shōsetsu* as a translation for novel, rather than *noberu*, which he occasionally adopts as a gloss. As a word with deep Sino-Japanese roots (originally from the Chinese *xiaoshuo*) *shōsetsu* had already been in use in East Asia for millennia and carried with it a complex web of meanings.⁸ Originating as far back as the Han Dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE), *xiaoshuo* was once employed to designate popular histories, as opposed to official ones, but by the early Meiji period in Japan, the equivalent term *shōsetsu* had come to refer to a disparate group of genres, including fables, romances, biographies, popular histories, political novels, translations of European literature, and adaptations of Ming vernacular fiction.⁹ In *Essence of the Novel*, Shōyō employs the term haphazardly, using it to refer interchangeably to European novels, Chinese-inspired historical romances, and other forms of *gesaku* fiction. At times, the word appears to be synonymous with *ninjōbon* and *yomihon*, two of the more text-heavy genres of the Edo period, while at other times it is used to refer to European historical romances, such as those written by Scott and Bulwer-Lytton. When attempting to understand Shōyō's use of the term *shōsetsu*, then, it is important to keep in mind that the word can refer equally to *gesaku*, the novel, and the hybrid form of the *shōsetsu*, envisioned by Shōyō as the art form of the future.

Among the many ambiguities expressed in *Essence of the Novel*, one of the most revealing of Shōyō's entangled ideology is his proposed lineage of the *shōsetsu*, which he first describes as the latest development in a long history of text-based fiction, before proposing an alternate lineage with roots in oral storytelling and performance. The first lineage appears at the outset of his essay, in the opening paragraph, in which Shōyō describes a direct line of descent from Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* (ca. 1001) to the *gesaku* writing of the mid-19th century, thereby establishing a history of Japanese literature based primarily on traditions of

⁷ Shōyō's first translation of Shakespeare into Japanese was of *Julius Caesar*, which was translated as *Jiyū no tachinagori no kireaji* (*The Sharp Edge of Freedom's Sword*) in 1884. As Leith Morton notes, late in Shōyō's career, "Shakespeare came to occupy center stage." According to Morton, "From 1909 onwards, Shōyō published translations of roughly one or two Shakespeare plays a year... In January 1926 Shōyō published an article announcing his decision to abandon all his other literary activities in order to finish the first complete translation into Japanese of Shakespeare's works. Between 1926 and 1928 Shōyō translated seventeen Shakespeare plays into Japanese. Thus, in 1928, at the age of seventy, Shōyō had finally completed the monumental task of translating the entire works of Shakespeare into Japanese." *The Alien Within*, 15-16.

⁸ On the history of the term, Atsuko Ueda writes, "*Shōsetsu* initially referred to writings by the low-ranking officials of the Chinese government who compiled information they gathered from the commoners. A dictionary entry usually quotes from *Hanshu*, one of the *kangaku* classics: '*Shōsetsu* writers and officials collected gossip from the local area by listening to rumors on the streets.' *Shōsetsu* was thus a collection of the 'small talk' that derived from events occurring in the local community." Ueda goes on to note, however, that the definition of *shōsetsu* began to change in the Edo period, when it was used to refer to *hakuwa shōsetsu* (*baihua xiaoshuo*), or the Ming vernacular novel as it was received in Japan. *Concealment of Politics*, 9.

⁹ Ueda, *Concealment of Politics*, 10.

text.¹⁰ In one of the most famous statements of his essay, he describes the aim of the novel as being the skillful depiction of *ninjō* (human emotion) and *setai* (the condition of the times)—a purpose that he suggests has been maintained since the beginning of Japanese literary history, from the time of the *monogatari* onward, even if it was occasionally forgotten, especially during the Edo period. In order to emphasize the particular strengths of the text-based tradition, Shōyō contrasts *shōsetsu* with theater, which he initially derides as an inferior art form. Unlike the stage, Shōyō argues, the novel accomplishes its goals exclusively by means of language. In other words, while drama relies partly on visual stimulus for its artistic expression, the novel appeals directly to the imagination via the “invisible” medium of text. Describing the expansive possibilities of the novel, Shōyō proclaims: “The flawless perfection of the novel lies in its ability to describe that which is difficult to show in pictures, difficult to express fully in poetry, and difficult to enact with subtlety on stage.”¹¹ Because it is an invisible form itself, communicated not via the eyes or the ears, but rather through ideas, the novel is able to “show” the reader that which is otherwise impossible to see or hear.

After establishing a lineage of Japanese literature based primarily on written materials, Shōyō introduces an alternative genealogy of the *shōsetsu* that traces its origins not to textual sources, but rather to prehistoric traditions of performance.¹² His stage-centered history of fiction opens in ancient times, when preliterate peoples composed songs and epic poems as a means of preserving the histories of their tribes. These songs eventually developed into performances celebrating the heroic deeds of tribal ancestors, before morphing into secular forms of entertainment centering on the stage. In premodern times, theater became the central platform for literary expression, which led to an increased emphasis on spectacle and visuality in premodern fiction. The visually-oriented narratives of the stage were then translated into text; in Japan, this form of writing became known as the *shōsetsu* or *haishi*, whereas in England it was called the romance (*romansu*). Characterized by fantasy and exaggeration, the *haishi*/romance was the final stage in literary development before the appearance of the *shōsetsu*/novel. In Japan, this final transition had yet to be made, in part because Japanese fiction was still overly dependent on theater, from which it derived most of its content, as well as its emphasis on exteriority and spectacle.

At the conclusion of his history, Shōyō suggests that the future of the novel will only be secured when the *shōsetsu* is separated from the stage:

In what age, then, does the true novel [*makoto no shōsetsu haishi (noberu)*] emerge? When do *shōsetsu* become more than tales of the miraculous and the bizarre? I tell you, the novel [*noberu*], by which I mean the true novel [*shinsei no shōsetsu*], shall emerge only when the theater declines.¹³

In an attempt to clarify exactly what he means by *shōsetsu* in the first place, Shōyō coins the phrase *makoto no shōsetsu haishi (noberu)*—a convoluted neologism that includes both native and foreign elements in order to express the hybrid nature of the form that it describes. Just in case his terminology is not yet perfectly clear, however, he further highlights the parameters of the novel by setting it in opposition to theater. That is, the true novel is whatever the theater is

¹⁰ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:3.

¹¹ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3: 17.

¹² Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3: 21-32.

¹³ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:32.

not; as a form of fiction, it supersedes theater by extending beyond its capabilities, eventually replacing it entirely. This line of thinking, however, leads to a central problem, for if the novel originated in theater, then how is it that the *true* novel only emerges when theater is removed from the equation entirely? Furthermore, upon being removed, what is left?

After declaring the eventual decline of theater, Shōyō explains the strengths of the novel as lying in its ability to bypass the physical senses. He writes:

In order to express a certain character type or personality on stage, it is necessary for the actor to engage the audience via their eyes and ears—a reality that limits the range of possibilities for creative expression. Conversely, in the novel, the writer directly engages the reader’s heart by eliciting the imaginative faculties, thereby allowing for an extraordinary range of creative possibilities. On stage, backgrounds are depicted with props and paintings, which determine the position of mountains, rivers, plants, trees, buildings, and household objects. Effects such as thunder, lightning, wind, and rain are all created by means of mechanical contraptions, which stimulate the visual and auditory senses. In the novel, however, all of these things are expressed by means of beautiful and elegant language, which stimulates the eyes of the heart. Therefore, the limits of the novel are equal only to the powers of the imagination.¹⁴

The difference between theater and the novel is thus expressed as a matter of sensory perception, with the novel posited as a form that transcends the limitations of the senses by communicating directly with the heart. It is especially due to its versatility, Shōyō argues, that the novel will become the primary art form of the future. Despite the clarity of his proposed hierarchy of forms, however, certain elements of Shōyō’s analogy conflate theater with the novel to a degree that reveals the continued centrality of drama to his literary theory. For example, he urges authors to use language to recreate the appearance of props, backdrops, and special effects, rather than to describe nature or society. Even more poignantly, he suggests that all of these things will be perceived by the “eyes of the heart” (*kokoro no manako*), an expression that equates the literary imagination with visual perception. Although Shōyō’s comparison of the novel to the stage is clearly meant as an analogy, it works particularly well in the context of his own literary project, in which he utilized text and illustration to replicate theatrical experience, in the manner of his literary predecessors.

Although, throughout much of *Essence of the Novel*, Shōyō discusses the traditional arts of Japan in a critical light, at the outset of his essay, he suggests just the opposite, positioning the novel as an inadequate art form, which he hopes to elevate to the status of more established traditions like “painting, sculpture, pottery, and lacquering... poetry, music, and dance.”¹⁵ On one hand, Shōyō’s comment might be understood as an appeal to public opinion, which, at the time, had yet to accord the novel with the same level of respectability as theater or poetry. On the other hand, his statement also suggests a personal respect for traditional art, which is expressed more clearly elsewhere in the essay. Occasionally, Shōyō champions the stage as a superior medium to the novel, particularly because of its ability to move the audience to feel strongly and experience the world of the story in vivid terms. Theater’s greatest advantage, he suggests, lies in its composite nature, for by expressing narrative simultaneously through skillful acting, visual

¹⁴ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:38.

¹⁵ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:12.

design, and music, plays are able to impress the viewer in a way that the novel cannot. He writes, “Every movement and gesture, every smile and scowl serves to draw spectators [*mirumono*] closer to *truth* [*shinri*], until they forget entirely that they are watching theater as they begin to laugh and cry like crazy people [*kyōjin*].”¹⁶ The second half of his description might read like a criticism, as it characterizes the viewing of drama as leading to a complete loss of self-restraint, but in the context of Shōyō’s critical framework, it might be read as an endorsement. It is none other than *truth*, after all, which is the natural cause of crazy tears and laughter. Shōyō later defends the emotive value of theater in more explicit terms, writing: “While I have already elaborated on the various ways in which the novel surpasses drama as an art form, there is one way in which theater prevails, and that is in its power to move the human heart.”¹⁷ Having eloquently argued that the novel was superior in its ability to affect the human emotions, Shōyō suddenly pivots to the opposite side of the argument, as he centers theater as the more expressive form of art.

Over the course of *Essence of the Novel*, Shōyō gradually reveals an underlying admiration for *gesaku* and kabuki, which has often been missed in scholarship on his landmark essay. He does this in part by demonstrating a command of premodern literary history that rivals that of most contemporary scholars. Although he begins his essay with a largely negative characterization of *gesaku*, he later highlights the strengths of the form, such as its versatile mix of linguistic registers, which he argues should be adapted to the modern *shōsetsu*. His admiration for *gesaku* can be seen especially in the latter part of the essay, when he shifts from an abstract discussion of art in world history to a concrete analysis of literary form in Japan. In his examination of Edo period literature, Shōyō discusses matters of linguistic register, social context, literary convention, and aesthetic interest with a deft command of his subject. He recommends that modern authors study the literary style known as *gazoku-setchū* (the mixed elegant and vernacular form), commonly used by writers of *kusazōshi*, which he suggests is the most versatile form of written Japanese, and the one most appropriate to depicting both high and low elements of society.¹⁸ In connection to this point, he repeatedly reminds the reader that literary realism (*genjitsu-ha*) is not exclusive to European fiction, but had long existed in Japan, where literature was often attuned to the subtleties of social life and distinctions in dress, language, and manners. It is for this reason that Shōyō claims that elements of realism are present in Murasaki Shikibu’s 11th century *Tale of Genji* and Tamenaga Shunsui’s 19th century *The Plum Calendar*, as both works convincingly model the societies of their day.¹⁹

After alternating between criticism and praise for *gesaku* over much of his essay, Shōyō ends *Essence of the Novel* by suggesting one element of Edo period fiction that has no place in the modern novel: illustration. He characterizes the practice as nothing more than a hindrance on the path to literary modernity, which has long been stunted due to the predilection for images seen in Japanese fiction. Describing the adverse effects of illustration on the development of literary form, he writes:

When describing the look of things, it is important to be specific. In our country, writers of fiction have often relied on meticulous illustration as a supplement for insufficient verbal description. Becoming accustomed to this easy state of affairs,

¹⁶ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:34.

¹⁷ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:40.

¹⁸ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:111-112.

¹⁹ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:150-151.

they have grown slack in their literary practice. They are often lazy when describing the appearance of scenery; a grave error indeed! The wonder of the novel does not stop with the movement of its characters, but rather extends to the myriad phenomena that take place on the page. The writer's skill lies in his ability to make thunder roar, to make waves crash and explode, as though hurtled from the skies, to make warblers sing, and to make plum blossoms give scent, all as expressed through language. To depict only characters and their actions, without describing the environment around them, is like drawing a dragon rising into the sky but leaving out the clouds.²⁰

The import of Shōyō's comment becomes clearer when one recognizes that Edo period fiction often used illustration not as a supplement for descriptive language, but rather in place of description itself. Works of *gesaku* often operated in the manner of illustrated play scripts, using images to depict elements of the story such as setting, scenery, character, and costume, while utilizing language to communicate dialogue and stage directions. Unless this status quo was shaken, Shōyō argued, the Japanese novel would never emerge. One might imagine, then, that at least in his own fiction, Shōyō would have done away with illustration in order to concentrate on developing the descriptive prose style of the novel, but a review of his fiction quickly demonstrates that his own stories continued to be extensively illustrated, oftentimes with kabuki-esque images that recall the visual style of *gesaku*. Through his own experience of writing fiction and plays, in combination with his lifelong study of Edo period literature and drama, Shōyō developed a new appreciation for the visually-oriented literature of Japan. Rather than anachronistic genres that needed to be changed, art forms like *gesaku* and kabuki appeared to him as spectacular developments in the history of world literature, without parallel in any other time or place.

The Bride of Lammermoor, or A Love Story on Spring Winds

The first work by Shōyō to feature illustration was his literary debut, a partial translation of Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819). Rendered as *A Love Story on Spring Winds* (*Shunpū jōwa*, 1880), the Japanese title of the work evokes the atmosphere of *ninjōbon* (books of sentiment), whose own titles often included references to spring. Shōyō's adaptation goes beyond simply referencing *ninjōbon*, however, as it adopts the visual format of the genre wholesale, including its use of woodblock-style illustrations, which suggest the space of a kabuki stage.²¹ As such, his adaptation might be understood as a "bibliographic translation," a term used by Michael Emmerich to designate "the re-creation of a work from a certain genre into another bibliographic form with its own conventions," which, he explains, "affects both the work's narrative structure and the particular material manner in which it *means*."²²

After a brief forward, Shōyō's translation of *The Bride of Lammermoor* opens not with a passage of text, but with four panels of woodblock frontispieces (*kuchi-e*), which introduce the main characters of the story in the theatrical manner of *gesaku* fiction. The characters are all

²⁰ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:154-155.

²¹ An annotated version of Shōyō's translation, including reproductions of the original illustrations, can be found in *Tsubouchi Shōyō, Futabatei Shimei shū*, edited and annotated by Aoki Toshihiro and Togawa Shinsuke (Tokyo: Iwanami x, 2002).

²² Emmerich, *The Tale of Genji*, 192.

dressed in kabuki-style costume and set in striking poses against plain white backgrounds. Their fierce stances and glaring facial expressions suggest the *mie* acting technique of the kabuki stage, in which the actor freezes at the climax of a scene in a display of power, which is communicated to the audience through codified gestures.²³ The illustrations are executed firmly in the style of the Utagawa school, which had dominated the illustration of books since the late 1700's, and were provided by Kobayashi Toshimitsu, a pupil of veteran Utagawa illustrator Yoshitoshi. The first page of the translation introduces the protagonist, Edgar Ravenswood, whose name, rendered in *kanji* characters (威童莉烏林), is glossed with the exotic reading of Edoaru Rebensūdo. Countering the foreignness of the character's name, however, is his image, which pictures the Scottish lord in kimono. He wields samurai-style weaponry, including a sword and bow-and-arrows, as he poses defiantly in the manner of an *aragoto* performer, or a kabuki actor specializing in the portrayal of valiant, male characters.

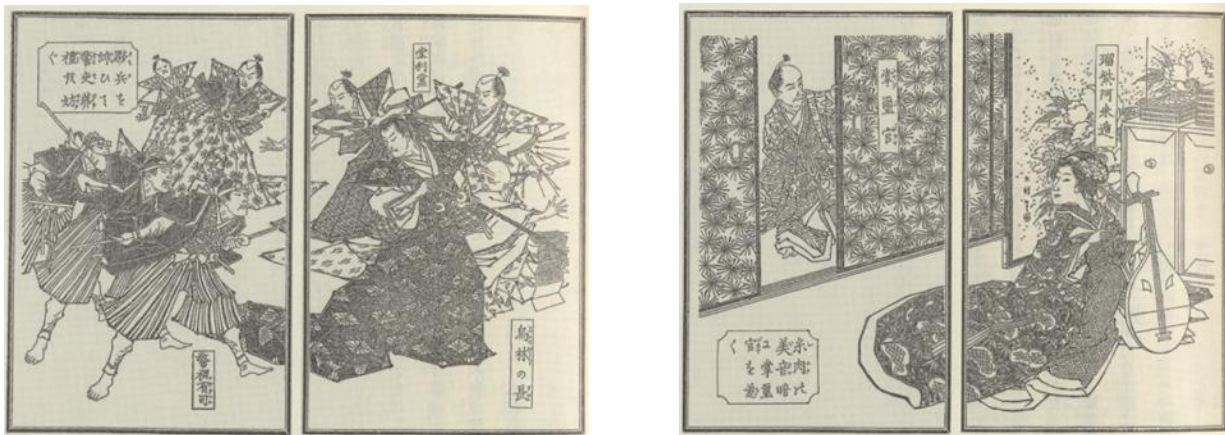


Figures 5, 6, and 7 – Frontispieces, Tsubouchi Shōyō's *A Love Story on Spring Winds* (1880), translation of Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), illustrated by Kobayashi Toshimitsu

Turning the page (moving left), the reader encounters a two-page illustration of four more characters (Sir William Ashton, Raymond, a naiad, and Alice), whose exotic names are once again balanced by images rendered in the familiar *gesaku* style. In the illustration, the characters glare at each other from across the central divide of a two-page spread, as bees swarm out from the space in between them. The setup suggests a relationship of tension, while inciting the reader's interest by hinting at a brewing confrontation. The final *kuchi-e*, of Lady Ashton, appears as a single-page illustration. The British Lady is decked out in the finest Edo-period kimono and wears a classical Japanese bun skewered with elegant hairpins of every shape and size. Facing right, her stare reaches out towards her lover's distant gaze (that of Master Ravenswood, who looks leftward from two pages earlier), but they are separated by the family tensions that lie in between them, visually represented in the middle-spread by the swarm of bees. To borrow another phrase from Emmerich, the turning of the page produces an effect of "pseudo-three-dimensionality," in which text, image, and bibliographic material are combined to form a multi-dimensional reading experience.²⁴

²³ See A.C. Scott, *The Kabuki Theatre of Japan* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955), 104.

²⁴ Emmerich, *The Tale of Genji*, 119.



Figures 8 and 9 - *A Love Story on Spring Winds* (1880), illustrations by Kobayashi Toshimitsu

The inner part of Shōyō's translation is similarly decorated with images of samurai battles, geisha-like beauties, Chinese lutes, and Japanese gardens, all of which provide a stable visual ground for the exotic foreign tale by drawing on the visual culture of *gesaku* and kabuki. The potential tensions between text and image, however, are not lost on the author, who comments on their usage in his opening remarks. After acknowledging the difficulty of the source material, Shōyō informs the reader that he has modified elements of the narrative and adopted simplified language in order to make the text easier to understand. In regard to illustration, he adds:

I have even included pictures to help the reader grasp the heart [*kokoro*] of the text. I continue to have my doubts, however, if the inclusion of such images was a prudent decision, as there are places in the text that differ tremendously from what is shown in the illustrations. If there be those who impugn my decision, please take into consideration the difficulty of translating a work such as this without resorting to such means.²⁵

One might gather that Shōyō's apology is directed at the tiny segment of his audience able to recognize the incongruity of mixing images of geisha into a historical Scottish epic, a topic that would have been utterly foreign to most readers at the time; but for a large segment of Shōyō's audience, the images likely played an important role in their consumption of the text. Translated into the bibliographic format of a *ninjōbon*, Shōyō's adaptation of Scott's novel utilized a familiar visual-verbal framework to bridge a cultural gap between literary traditions. This understanding of the work as a *ninjōbon* is reinforced elsewhere in the introduction, where Shōyō informs his audience that the central themes of Scott's romance are *ninjō* and *inga ōhō* (karmic retribution), which it apparently shares in common with the fiction of 19th century Japan.²⁶

²⁵ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 2:9.

²⁶ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 2:7.

As for the text itself, Shōyō's version of Scott's novel combines summary and adaptation with literal translation, resulting in a hybrid idiom that departs considerably from the standard language of *ninjōbon*. Of particular significance are his translations of lengthy passages of Scott's descriptive prose, which he translates almost word-for-word. In the average work of *gesaku*, much of the plot was delivered through dialogue, which alternated with narrative passages rich in rhetorical language, but an explicit focus on description was less common. Therefore, when translating from English, Shōyō was faced with the need to invent a new literary language, through which he gained new insights into the possibilities of writing descriptive prose in Japanese. In passages such as the following, given here in Scott's English, Shōyō translates the original text precisely, through a painstaking process of replication:

The cottage was situated immediately under a tall rock, which in some measure beetled over it, as if threatening to drop some detached fragment from its brow on the frail tenement beneath. The hut itself was constructed of turf and stones, and rudely roofed over with thatch, much of which was in a dilapidated condition. The thin blue smoke rose from it in a light column, and curled upward along the white face of the incumbent rock, giving to the scene a tint of exquisite softness.²⁷

When, in *Essence of the Novel*, Shōyō urges writers to develop a more descriptive style of prose, one might imagine that he has something like the above passage in mind. In his own writing, however, similar passages of description are almost nowhere to be found. As he transitioned from translating texts to crafting his own literary works, Shōyō looked increasingly to the dialogue-driven narratives of *gesaku* and *kabuki* for inspiration, and less towards the novel.

One final point must be made of Shōyō's translation of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, in regard to a passage that is not featured in his translation, but which he certainly must have read, considering as it appears in the middle of the opening chapter. The passage is noteworthy in that it describes the relationship of theater to text, as well as the role of description in the novel, in a manner markedly similar to Shōyō's writing on similar themes in *Essence of the Novel*. In Scott's narrative, the observation of one of the characters is given as follows:

Description, he said, was to the author of a romance exactly what drawing and tinting were to a painter; words were his colours, and, if properly employed, they could not fail to place the scene, which he wished to conjure up, as effectually before the mind's eye, as the tablet or canvas presents it to the bodily organ. The same rules, he contended, applied to both, and an exuberance of dialogue, in the former case, was a verbose and laborious mode of composition, which went to confound the proper art of fictitious narrative, with that of the drama, a widely different species of composition, of which dialogue was the very essence; because all, excepting the language to be made use of, was presented to the eye by the dresses, and persons, and action of the performers upon the stage.²⁸

Although he never references it explicitly, the above passage appears to have influenced Shōyō's own thinking on the matter of literary versus theatrical art. By confronting the issue of how to

²⁷ The original is from Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor* (New York; London: Penguin, 2000), 31-32. Shōyō's translation can be found in Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 2:40.

²⁸ Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, 11.

describe the invisible world of the story in a foreign language, Shōyō gained unique insight into the role of description in text-based fiction. Together with his experience of translating Scott's prose, Shōyō's encounter with *The Bride of Lammermoor* suggested to him new possibilities for the future direction of Japanese literature, and particularly the development of new methods of descriptive writing. Whereas, during the previous centuries, Japanese writers had placed an increasing emphasis on dialogue and illustration, Shōyō's experience as a translator enabled him to envision the *shōsetsu* as a form closer to the European novel, which generally featured fewer images and longer descriptive passages than the average work of *gesaku*. It is of some irony, then, that as soon as he began to write fiction of his own, Shōyō shifted back immediately to the narrative mode of *gesaku*. Even as he laid out his plans for the future *shōsetsu*, in which descriptive prose would ideally replace dialogue and illustration, Shōyō began to reorient himself towards the traditions of the Edo period. It was a path that would eventually lead him all the way back to the stage, as he abandoned the project of the modern novel and rediscovered his passion for *gesaku* and kabuki.

The Characters of Modern Students as gesaku

Shōyō's first original work of fiction, *The Characters of Modern Students* (*Tōsei shosei katagi* 1885-1886), is often understood as an attempt by the author to actualize the proposals set forth in his essay, *Essence of the Novel*, in large part because he characterizes it as such in his introduction to the story. When measured against the standards set forth in his essay, it is almost inevitably judged to fall short of success. Marleigh Grayer Ryan, in a review that typifies critical opinion of the work, writes, "The plot is rambling and undeveloped, and the characters fail to come to life. The story contains several instances of painfully contrived coincidences, and the life history of one of the leading characters... is so complicated as to be singularly unsuitable to a realistic novel."²⁹ Resisting this narrative of failure, however, is the reality of his book's immediate success. As Ryan also points out, "There was a tremendous public reaction to *Tōsei shosei katagi* when it first appeared. It was commented upon in virtually all contemporary publications, and everyone in the intellectual and artistic world seems to have read it."³⁰ Although some reviewers reacted critically, particularly in response to episodes that were deemed excessively vulgar, the most famous review, by close associate Takata Sanae (1860-1938), weighed powerfully in Shōyō's favor.³¹ Comparing *The Characters of Modern Students* to the writings of Dickens or Thackeray, Takata called it "the *only* novel since the Meiji Restoration."³² Aside from receiving a degree of critical acclamation, *The Characters of Modern Students* was also a popular success. In fact, as Kornicki notes, it was one of the most frequently reprinted works of fiction in the late 19th century.³³ The only way that *The Characters of Modern*

²⁹ Marleigh Grayer Ryan, *Japan's First Modern Novel: "Ukigumo" of Futabatei Shimei* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 72. Elsewhere she writes, "there is no question that [*The Characters of Modern Students*] fails to conform to any twentieth-century Western concept of a well-structured novel." Ryan, *The Development of Realism in the Fiction of Tsubouchi Shōyō* (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 1975), 31.

³⁰ Ryan, *The Development of Realism in the Fiction of Tsubouchi Shōyō*, 51.

³¹ Takata's essay was included in later editions of the work, which was reprinted on an almost yearly basis from 1885 to 1892, and periodically thereafter.

³² Quoted in Maeda Ai, "Gesaku bungaku to *Tōsei shosei katagi*," *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1989), 379.

³³ On the publication history of *The Characters of Modern Students*, Kornicki writes, "A second impression of the first fascicle appeared in September 1885, and a third the following month, which suggests that demand for the work

Students can be thought of as a failure, then, is if it is conceived of strictly in terms of the novel. As *gesaku* fiction, it was actually one of the most successful works of literature of the entire Meiji period.

From the outset of its narrative, *The Characters of Modern Students* suggests a literary mode far closer to the genres of *ninjōbon* or *kokkeibon* than that of the modern European novel. Like many stories from the Edo period, the text revolves around a central mystery that is gradually unraveled over the course of the work, but only after wandering through a vast array of digressions, subplots, and convoluted character histories. At the center of the story lies the matter of the hidden lineage of Tanoji, a geisha, who was switched with another girl during the chaos of the Battle at Ueno in the Boshin War (1868-1869), which was fought between loyalists of the ousted Tokugawa shogunate and forces advocating the restoration of imperial rule. At the outset of the text, a student named Komachida Sanji runs into Tanoji while at a flower viewing festival in Asukayama, Tokyo. Sanji's friends, who witness the encounter from a distance, wonder who the mysterious geisha might be. Rather than getting straight to the mystery at the heart of the plot, however, the encounter between Sanji and Tanoji is followed by a lengthy interlude of comic episodes, all involving other students, geisha, and copious consumption of alcohol, before the main narrative returns dozens of pages later. The sudden deviation in tone, though seemingly without warning, might be taken as the evidence of the author's oscillation between genres, or that of the comic *kokkeibon* and the sentimental *ninjōbon*, both of which were among the most popular forms of fiction in 19th century Japan. In any event, Shōyō's frequent digressions appear to have bothered later critics far more than the text's original audience, who, if anything, enthusiastically received the mash-up of familiar narrative styles.

Following chapters of comic hijinks, Shōyō returns to the mode of the *ninjōbon*, as he furthers the mystery of Tanoji's secret identity. In a boarding room in Tokyo, a student named Kurase Rensaku asks to borrow a *haori* (a formal short coat) from Moriyama Tomoyoshi, a recent law school graduate from a prestigious samurai background. Moriyama lends Kurase a coat with an unusual family crest, a *daki uroko* (overlapping dragon scales), or a variation on the more common *mittsu uroko* (three dragon scales), in which three equilateral triangles are stacked into the shape of a pyramid.³⁴ Kurase remarks that the coat looks like something out of a Bakin *shōsetsu*. Although his remark seems like little more than a playful aside at the time, it eventually proves to be a significant observation, as the crest will later help settle the matter of Tanoji's true identity. The crest thus resembles something out of a Bakin *shōsetsu* in multiple senses—that is, on the surface, it looks like the kind of costume worn by characters in Bakin's fiction, but, on a narrative level, it also functions as a central visual clue, which ties the fates of all of the story's characters together.

After Kurase leaves Moriyama's wearing the *haori*, Komachida arrives for a visit. Moriyama chides Komachida for neglecting his studies and accuses him of spending too much time in the pleasure quarters. Referencing Joseph Addison (1672-1719), Moriyama acknowledges that, in general, it is foolish to be overly open with one's private thoughts in the presence of another, but he adds that the closest of friends have no choice but to be honest with each other. As a gesture of good faith, he begins by making his own confession, admitting that he was recently in the red-light district, where he felt his heart stirred by the country accent of a

was greater than had originally been anticipated. Book editions of the complete work appeared in April 1886 (with a second impression that December), June 1887 (with a subsequent impression in 1888), April 1889, and January 1892." *The Reform of Fiction in Meiji Japan*, 44.

³⁴ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:36.

beautiful prostitute (*shōgi*, glossed *purosuchichūto*).³⁵ He wonders if this girl might not be his long-lost sister, for whom he had been searching for many years. The day after meeting the courtesan, he encountered an exhibition of dolls set up in the manner of the kabuki play *A Tale of White Stones: The Chronicle of Great Peace on a Go Board* (*Go taiheiki shiroishi banashi*, 1780)³⁶—a play about two sisters, Miyagino and Shinobu, who are separated while young, but meet again at a tea house and recognize each other due to their shared country accent. Moriyama remarks that, though the fortuitous meeting of long-lost siblings (*kyōdai saikai*) is a well-known trope in *gesaku* fiction, it could never happen in real life. Once again, this seemingly innocent aside is actually a tongue-in-cheek intimation of the novel’s own design, which is centered on the trope of “fortuitous meetings between siblings.” Continuing his ironic aside, Moriyama charges that *gesaku* are a product of obsession with idealism (*kakūguse*, or “a predisposition to fiction,” glossed *aideyarizumu*)³⁷ and claims that fortuitous meetings are the main identifying mark of *shōsetsu* and *kusazōshi*. Unlike in *kusazōshi*, however, in his own meeting with a mysterious woman, he was unable to identify any birthmarks or special items to reveal her secret identity. Realizing that he has been misled by all of the romantic *shōsetsu* and *haishi* that he read as a youth, he laments that he still sees the world through the lens of early modern fiction.

Following his confession, Moriyama charges Komachida to reveal his own transgressions. Komachida responds with a convoluted family history, typical of *gesaku* narratives. Relating his own family background, he begins with the story of his father, Komachida Kōji, a mid-level government employee who once lived a prosperous life with his wife and mistress in Hakusan, Tokyo. One day, when Komachida Sanji was a boy, he went on a walk with his father and his father’s mistress, Otsune, in Asukayama park, where they encountered a pitiful young girl named Oyoshi. The girl was an orphan who had been taken in by an old woman as a baby, but the old woman had recently died. Before passing away, the woman had urged Oyoshi to search for an old man named Gensaku, the woman’s brother, who might be able to adopt her. Otsune helped Oyoshi to find Gensaku, only to learn that he had been imprisoned for robbery. The Komachida family thus resolved to adopt Oyoshi themselves and proceeded to care for her as though she were their daughter. When Komachida Kōji fell on bad times, however, the family was forced to send Oyoshi to work as a geisha in Sukiyamachi. At the end of his background story, Komachida Sanji explains that Oyoshi was said to look exactly like the *onnagata* (female impersonator) kabuki actor Sawamura Tanosuke III (1845-1878) and thus had acquired the nickname *Ta-no-ji* (literally “the character *ta*”). This Tanoji was the same woman whom Komachida had recently encountered at Asukayama park. His frequent trips to the pleasure quarters, then, were made with the specific purpose of visiting her. Finally, arriving at the conclusion of his confession, Komachida admits that he has fallen in love. Moriyama suddenly puts a halt to his story, however, and warns that such complications invariably lead to trouble in the latter volumes (*kōhen*) of fictional narratives. Confused, Komachida asks, “What latter volume?” to which Moriyama responds by calling Komachida a novel (*shōsetsu*) in the flesh. Another student, Ninna Tōichi, bursts in and calls him Tanjirō instead, in reference to the famous playboy protagonist of Tamenaga Shunsui’s *ninjōbon*, *The Plum Calendar*.

After another extended interlude of comic episodes, a side story introduces a new cast of characters: the young geisha Kaodori, her professional older sister Ohide, and a rich lawyer named Yoshizumi. Kaodori tells the other two characters that she recently met a student wearing

³⁵ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:42.

³⁶ Written by Kinojō Tarō, Utei Enba, and Yōyōtai.

³⁷ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:46.

a *haori* coat with an unusual family crest. She explains that she noticed the crest because it matched one on the scabbard of a short sword (*wakizashi*) that she had kept in her possession since childhood. The narrative then shifts to the scene of a graduation party offered in honor of Komachida and Ninna, attended by their mutual friend, Moriyama Tomoyoshi. The party is soon joined by Tomoyoshi's father, Moriyama Tomosada, and a wealthy banker named Miyoshi Shōemon. Tomosada reveals to the group that he recently had a dream about his daughter, who disappeared in the Battle of Ueno. He dreamed that his wife was shot and that his daughter fell by the wayside, and though she was rescued by a stranger, he turned out to be a dubious character who raised the girl only to sell her to a brothel when she grew up. Komachida remarks that the dream sounds like a dramatic play, whereas Ninna claims that prophetic dreams are impossible and that dreams in general are nothing other than the residual effect of waking thoughts that continue to impress the mind in one's sleep. The characters' divergent impressions of Tomosada's dream, it goes almost without saying, encapsulate the opposing literary modes of *gesaku*, in which dreams foretell the future and reveal the mysteries of fate, and that of the modern novel, in which dreams are simply a product of the brain's neural activity at night.

At the outset of the second volume, Komachida has separated from Tanoji after rumors of their relationship nearly prevented him from finishing his studies. The narrative then alternates between the increasingly convoluted tale of Tanoji's secret identity and further unrelated episodes involving students, geisha, alcohol, bathhouses, and a running joke about *nanshoku* (male-male love).³⁸ Tanoji's identity is gradually revealed through a series of intermittent episodes of eavesdropping and overhearing, but the details of the plot become so thick that the central thread is easily lost. Towards the end of the work, the narrator repeatedly backtracks or suddenly "remembers" unstated connections that clarify earlier gaps in the narrative, but, as a consequence, the pieces of the story become almost impossible to put together. To state it as simply as possible, the central secret driving the narrative is that Tanoji is actually the long-lost daughter of Moriyama, who was exchanged with Kaodori during the chaos of the Battle of Ueno. The truth of the exchange, however, is not revealed until the final chapter of the work, over four hundred pages after Komachida first encounters Tanoji in the park.

The tale of Tanoji's background, whose entire history is crammed into the closing chapter, exemplifies the convoluted narrative style of *ninjōbon*. The details, which push the limits of comprehensibility, are given as follows: Ohide, the mistress of Miyoshi, secretly had a child by Zenjirō, an employee of her husband, and attempted to flee with their daughter, Oshin, during the Battle of Ueno. On the battlefield, Zenjirō was killed by a stray bullet and Ohide ran into another woman, the wife of Moriyama, who was carrying her own child, Oyoshi. During the chaos of the battle, the babies were exchanged, Moriyama's wife was also killed by a stray bullet, and Ohide's daughter, Oshin, was found by a certain Mizuno Teishichi, while her own daughter, Oyoshi, was accidentally taken by Ohide. Ohide later realized that she was unable to care for Oyoshi and so she left her by a doorstep. This girl grew up to be Tanoji, who was adopted by the Komachida family. Komachida Sanji later fell in love with Tanoji but was unable to marry her because she was of uncertain parentage. Meanwhile, Oshin, Ohide's daughter, was sold by her adoptive father, Teishichi, to a brothel in Yoshiwara, where she became Kaodori, and where she was eventually reunited with her mother Ohide. She was mistaken for Moriyama's

³⁸ Jim Reichert argues that *The Characters of Modern Students* establishes heterosexual love (*ninjō*) as the main concern of the modern novel while demonizing homosexuality as a premodern practice with no place in the world of modern fiction. *In the Company of Men: Representations of Male-Male Sexuality in Meiji Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

long-lost daughter by Moriyama's son, Tomoyoshi, because she had been given Tanoji's keepsake *wakizashi* (short sword) by Ohide. Ohide later plotted to present Kaodori as Moriyama's long-lost daughter in order to share in his wealth. They had, as proof, the *wakizashi* and *mamoribukuro* (a pouch containing a protective talisman) of Oyoshi, complete with the crest of the Moriyama family. Just in case these two pieces of evidence were not enough to prove her identity, they were even prepared to present her umbilical cord, which had been kept in the pouch with the talisman. Their plot, however, was undone when Gensaku, Tanoji's adoptive uncle, got out of prison, found a job at the Kadoebi in Yoshiwara, and overheard two separate conversations that revealed the details of their scheme to him. At the end of the story, Ohide and Kaodori are given severance money by Miyoshi while Komachida and Tanoji are freed to marry.

The plot of *The Characters of Modern Students*, it hardly need be said, is extremely complicated. It is so complicated, in fact, that the author himself takes notice on multiple occasions and apologizes to the reader for getting so carried away. In his preface, he expresses regret for failing to fulfill even half of the goals that he had set for himself in *Essence of the Novel*, which was planned, written, and published concurrently with *The Characters of Modern Students*. Throughout his book, he frequently breaks rules established in the essay, including proscriptions against the use of fantasy, vulgarity, excessively long stories, complicated side-plots, lengthy character histories, and pedantic writing.³⁹ He apologizes again in the work's final chapter, this time for having strayed so far from his original intention, which was to write a realistic work of fiction that depicted modern students exactly as they were. Instead, he admits, he embarked on a long and unlikely tale of fortuitous reunions and bizarre twists of fate. His apology, however, cannot be taken at face value, for he has hinted at the true intentions of his story all along. Throughout the narrative, characters intermittently remark on plot points that smack of Bakin, Shunsui, and kabuki and identify elements of *gesaku* embedded in their own story.

If, as he claims, Shōyō set out to write a work that described the characteristics of modern students in a realistic manner, how is it, then, that he became so entangled in a plot of fortuitous reunions and scandalous love affairs instead? One possible answer is that *The Characters of Modern Students* was meant to be a work of *gesaku* from the very beginning. As evidence, it was initially advertised not as a *shōsetsu*, but rather as a *kusazōshi*, or a picture-book.⁴⁰ Also, rather than being attributed to Shōyō, it was promoted as a work by Harunoya Oboro Sensei (loosely “Professor Hazy Night of the House of Spring”) using Shōyō's *gesaku*-style nom-de-plume, since his personal name, Tsuibuchi Yūzō, was reserved for his scholarship.⁴¹ In the advertisement, his name is followed by the unusual term *gicho*, literally meaning “playfully authored,” in place of the standard *cho*, or “written by.” Using the same character for “play” (*gi* or *ge* 戯) as in *gesaku*, the term implies that the author considers his work to be a piece of frivolous writing. Furthermore, his penname, Harunoya, is a pun that uses the “no-ya” suffix to combine the poetic phrase “A Spring Night” (*haru no ya*) with the *yagō* naming convention, commonly used by kabuki actors to designate a lineage or acting house (such as Otowaya,

³⁹ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 3:128-136.

⁴⁰ Seki Ryōichi, *Shōyō, Ōgai: kōshō to shiron* (Tokyo: Yūseidō Shuppan, 1971), 262.

⁴¹ The importance of this distinction is emphasized by Inagaki Tatsurō in his notes to *Tsubouchi Shōyō shū*, (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969), *Meiji bungaku zenshū* vol. 16: 394. Quoted in Nakajima Kunihiro, *Ichidoku tōsei shosei katagi no fūkei: sono sashie, shisen, hōhō o megutte*, *Kokubungaku kenkyū*, 78 (October, 1982): 14.

Naritaya, etc.).⁴² Harunoya, when understood as a form of *yagō*, thus implies that the author considers himself as a member of the “spring guild.” The designation of “spring,” in turn, evokes the world of *gesaku* writing, as *gesaku* were traditionally published in spring and featured an abundance of vernal themes. *Ninjōbon*, in particular, even tended to feature the word “spring” in their titles, where it frequently appeared in the compound *shunshoku* (“Spring Colors”).⁴³ As Harunoya Oboro Sensei, therefore, Shōyō tapped into a rich semiotic background in order to style himself in the manner of a writer of *gesaku*.⁴⁴

Offering further evidence of *The Characters of Modern Students*’ *gesaku* roots is its title. Although it is frequently abbreviated in Japanese as *Shosei katagi*, the work’s full name, as featured in the advertisement and on the title page of the original publication, is actually *Ichidoku santan tōsei shosei katagi*, or *One Reading, Three Sighs of Admiration: The Characters of Modern Students*. It is the kind of dense, convoluted title favored by writers of *gesaku* and kabuki, comparable, for example, to Kawatake Mokuami’s *The Mesh-Patterned Stone Lantern: Chrysanthemum and Paulownia* (*Ami mōyō tōrō no kiku kiri*, 1897) or Ryūcatei Tanekazu’s *A Children’s Song: The Miraculous Wheel of Wonders*.⁴⁵ Later writers preferred much simpler titles, such as Mori Ōgai, with works such as *Youth* (*Seinen*, 1910) and *Geese* (*Gan*, 1911-1913), or Natsume Sōseki, with *Mon* (1910) and *Kokoro* (1914).⁴⁶ This is not to suggest, of course, that simple titles should be equated with modern form, or, conversely, that complex titles belong only to the past, but rather to suggest that Shōyō’s novel is clearly marked as a work of *gesaku* by the combination of its playful title and the anachronistic penname of its author. Imagine, for instance, that the work under discussion is not *The Characters of Modern Students* by Tsubouchi Shōyō, as it is most often referred to in English, but rather *One Reading, Three Sighs of Admiration: The Characters of Modern Students*, playfully authored by Professor Hazy Night of the House of Spring. The difference between this and, for example, *Geese* by Mori Ōgai, is clear.

Considering the mounting evidence in favor of categorizing *The Characters of Modern Students* as *gesaku*, it seems reasonable at this point to speak of it as such. If the work is a *shōsetsu*, then it is a *shōsetsu* only in the broadest sense, uniting both premodern and modern connotations of the word. It is almost certainly not a novel, unless the word “novel” is used loosely, to mean something akin to “prose fiction,” with little concern for the actual format of the work. Looking towards the material object itself, it becomes immediately clear that *The Characters of Modern Students* is hardly a novel by any modern definition. Consisting largely of dialogue, coupled with the occasional, sumptuously-executed woodblock illustration, it looks

⁴² Mori Ōgai notes in “Hasegawa Tatsunosuke” (1909), a memorial essay on the work of Futabatei Shimei (the penname of Hasegawa), that aliases such as Harunoya Oboro were still widely in use in the 1880’s. He calls such pennames “conventional” (*tsukitachi*) and insinuates that the authors who continued to use them tended to produce fiction that was similarly old-fashioned in nature. He holds up Futabatei Shimei, however, as a rare exception. Quoted in Dennis C. Washburn, *The Dilemma of the Modern in Japanese Fiction* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1995), 95; original found in *Ōgai zenshū*, 26:344.

⁴³ *Shoku*, or *iro*, literally means color, but carries erotic overtones.

⁴⁴ Seki, who was one of the first scholars to note the significance of Shōyō’s moniker, remarks that it is mannered in the style of a *kokugakusha*, or a native studies scholar. See *Shōyō, Ōgai*, 219.

⁴⁵ Speaking on the work of Ejima Kiseki in particular, but Edo period titles in general, Howard Hibbett writes, “Of course flippant titles of this sort were intended merely to catch the reader’s eye, and to suggest in a very general way what kind of book he might expect. Tokugawa fiction is notorious among bibliographers for its odd, whimsical titles, often made up (as race-horses are named) by using old ones in combined or slightly altered form to make a play on words or to indicate a lineage.” Hibbett, *The Floating World in Japanese Fiction*, 56.

⁴⁶ Sōseki’s titles tend to be transliterated, rather than translated, into English, a practice that suggests the elegant simplicity of their wording. *Mon* means “gate” and *kokoro* means “heart” or “mind.”

more like a cross between a picture-book and a play script than a paperback novel or a hardcover romance. Comparing Shōyō's work of fiction to both *gesaku* and the novel, especially the 19th century British or French variety, its affiliation with *gesaku*, and almost total lack of commonality with the European tradition, could hardly be more evident. The difference is revealed, as Ochi Haruo suggests, with a single glance at the book.⁴⁷

The Characters of Modern Students as Illustrated Fiction

The Characters of Modern Students was originally published in seventeen volumes by Banseidō, from June, 1885 to January, 1886. Unlike hardbound, European-style books, whose form would catch on in later decades, each volume was a thin, small-to-mid-sized, relatively flimsy construction, bound in the traditional Japanese style, with lengths of string used to hold folded leaves of paper together at the spine. Each volume included a single black-and-white woodblock illustration (*sashi-e*), with individual images by Utagawa Kunimine (1861-1944), Nagahara Shisui (1864-1930), Takeuchi Keishū (1861-1942), and a certain Katsushika, who only designed a single image. Volumes one and nine contained additional brocade-image frontispieces (*nishiki-e kuchi-e*) by Kunimine, which were crafted in the traditional style of the Utagawa school. In April, 1886, all seventeen volumes were collected in a two-volume edition, again bound in the traditional Japanese style and featuring all of the same illustrations as the old. In August of the same year, they were published in an alternate version (*ihon* or *besseibon*), again by Banseidō, but this time in the format of a Western-style book. At odds with the updated packaging, however, was a new set of illustrations by Inano Toshitsune (1858-1907), who redesigned all of the original images in an even more conservative *ukiyo-e* style.⁴⁸

Turning our attention to the original publication of *The Characters of Modern Students*, we find a work firmly entrenched in the verbal-visual vernacular of *gesaku*. Before the story even begins, the reader encounters a two-page, full-color frontispiece depicting three of the work's main characters—Ohide, Kaodori, and Tanoji—in a dramatic composition. The image is by Kunimine, who uses the *kuchi-e* as a platform for introducing the story's dramatis personae, as was common practice with artists of the Utagawa school.⁴⁹ In the frontispiece, Ohide and Kaodori are both depicted on the right-hand page, from which they glare across the spine of the book at Tanoji on the left. The characters are all clearly labeled by name and title and include Ohide, a courtesan's attendant (*shinzō*), Kaodori, a prostitute (*shōgi*) from the Yoshiwara district, and Tanoji, a dancing girl (*geigi*) from Suki Yamachi. (Clearly, none of these characters are among the "modern students" featured in the title). The faces of the three courtesans are all rendered in the traditional style of *nigao-e* actor portraits—with prominent pupils, long noses, and tense facial expressions—thus giving them the appearance of *onnagata* actors in female garb. Various details in the illustration hint at future developments in the narrative, such as a copy of the *Yomiuri shinbun* held by Kaodori, in which Moriyama announces his search for his long-lost sister, and the crested dagger sheath, which eventually leads to the revelation of Tanoji's true identity.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Seki, *Shōyō, Ōgai*, 230-231.

⁴⁸ Anzai Shinji, "Ichidoku santan tōsei shosei katagi no sashie: shohanbon to besseibon to o megutte," *Tsurumi Nihon bungaku*, 7 (March, 2003): 31.

⁴⁹ Taking note of this fact, Seki Ryōichi calls the image a *shibai-e*, or theatrical print. *Shōyō, Ōgai*, 244.



Figure 10 - *The Characters of Modern Students* (1885-1886), frontispiece, vol. 1, illustration by Utagawa Kunimine

Rather than explication of the narrative, the visual emphasis of Kunimine's frontispiece is on costume, composition, and color, in common with *nigao-e* and *bijinga* woodblock prints of the Edo period. The characters' kimono are richly colored, their coiffures are realistically modeled, and their poses convey the quiet confidence of kabuki actors. Kaodori, the most decorated of the courtesans, wears a costume overflowing with lavish details. Her dress includes a red under-kimono, or *nagajūban*, tie-dyed in a flowery *asanoha* pattern, and a light-purple outer kimono, with a decorative pattern of alternating green and blue ducks set against wispy red waves. In the original publication, her costume is colored with bright aniline dyes, whose vivid glare immediately grabs the viewer's attention. Imported from Europe during the early Meiji period, aniline dyes were cheaply made and widely used, particularly in late works of *gesaku* and *ukiyo-e*.⁵⁰ Although they appeared harsh to later generations of artists, who generally opted for softer colors, in their heyday, they were a defining feature of a popular culture that prized visual extravagance. In a market crowded with illustrated fiction, a particularly eye-catching frontispiece could be the deciding factor in a work's success.

In addition to its two-page, multi-color frontispiece, the first volume of *The Characters of Modern Students* includes another illustration in black-and-white, again by Kunimine. Although it lacks the visual impact of the opening illustration, whose gaudy red and purple dyes nearly scream off of the page, it is, in many ways, an even more sumptuously crafted image than the first. When comparing the image to the opening chapter of Shōyō's story, one finds that the illustration contains a far greater amount of background detail than Shōyō's text, which consists primarily of dialogue and rhetorically-heavy narrative, but minimal descriptive prose. The

⁵⁰ Helen Merritt and Nanako Yamada, *Woodblock Kuchi-e Prints: Reflections of Meiji Culture* (University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, 2000), 29.

illustration depicts the moment that Komachida runs into Tanoji at the *hanami* festival, as narrated in the opening chapter of the book. In the background of the image, Yoshizumi chases Kotoshi in a game of *oni gokkko* (tag, or “playing demon”), while distant figures dance and frolic around the park. The characters are clothed in finely detailed kimono, whose miniscule accents of pin stripes, decorative patterns, and fabric folds push the printing ability of woodblock to its limit. Similar details abound wherever the viewer may look, whether in strands of hair, blades of grass, kimono, hairpins, or headgear. All of this stands in stark contrast to the level of detail found in the text, which does almost nothing to describe the setting of the opening scene, other than to name the location as Asukayama.



Figure 11 - *The Characters of Modern Students*, vol. 1, illustration by Utagawa Kunimine

The second volume of *The Characters of Modern Students*, released the same month as the first, contains no frontispiece, but sports a black-and-white illustration as masterfully crafted as either of the images included in the opening volume. The relationship of text and image seen in the second volume closely replicates the literary style of *gesaku*, in which the linguistic portion of the narrative is related largely through dialogue, while the illustration fills in the descriptive details lacking in the text. The scene depicted in the illustration is taken from one of the story’s comic interludes, in which two students, Miyaga and Sugawa, are cornered by a group of geisha while passing through the red light district of Awajichō on the way home to their dorm rooms. The narrator takes only a moment to describe the setting, which is evoked through a combination of place names and innuendos: “They entered a back alley in Awajichō with the intention of passing through to Ogawa street, but this particular side street was what one might call an ‘archery range alleyway’ [i.e., a brothel]; composed of three parts human and seven parts ghost, it was a den of white-necked companions.”⁵¹ As they pass through the alleyway, the students are summoned by a group of geisha, who are determined to detain them and procure their business. Miyaga manages to fend off the aggressive geisha with a textbook, but Sugawa is subdued with a sumo tackle by Osada, a plump young courtesan, who wrests a pocket watch

⁵¹ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:28.

from his kimono as he attempts to escape. Holding the watch at ransom, she insists that he come in for a visit if he wants it returned. The text, related entirely in dialogue, reads like a play script, which, when paired with the image, takes on the humorous tone of *kokkeibon*:

Young geisha: Well, come on then, come on in, will you!

Sugawa: Hey, what're you doing? You can't take that! Give it back! Hey, hey, I've got someone waiting on me, I've really gotta go! Come on, hand it over!

Young geisha: Oh honey, don't be such a drag, just get on in here.

Other geisha: It looks like your companion has already made himself a friend next door.

Sugawa: What? Where?

Young geisha: Let him play over there, you get in here, right away!⁵²



Figure 12 - *The Characters of Modern Students*, vol. 2, illustration by Utagawa Kunimine

The illustration captures the frenetic energy of the text, depicting the two students struggling valiantly against the geisha. Again, as in the opening illustration, the level of detail is imposing, including painstakingly thorough representations of kimono patterns, hanging lanterns, and various architectural features of the pleasure quarters. The symbiosis of text and image is tight, with both elements working together to fill in details and flesh out the space of the scene.

The illustration of Shōyō's work continues strong into the next chapter, but hits a snag in the fourth, in which an otherwise unknown artist named Katsushika makes his debut. His image, of Tanoji's first encounter with the Komachida family, is competent, but considerably less detailed and dynamic than Kunimine's earlier illustrations. It is also Katsushika's only illustration in the entire *shōsetsu*, suggesting that either the author, publisher, or readers were not entirely satisfied with his depiction of the story. The illustration in the next installment, the first by Nagahara Shisui, also departs from earlier images, this time by adopting the sketchbook style of illustration seen in contemporary satirical magazines, such as *The Japan Punch* and *Tôbaé*,

⁵² Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:29-30.

both founded by foreign artists living in Japan.⁵³ Abandoning the theatrical point-of-view seen in the work's opening illustrations, Shisui's image adopts a new perspective, which he uses to depict a casual encounter between students on the street. Unlike in earlier images, Shisui's scene is no longer frontally oriented, in the manner of a stage, but is rather depicted with a recessed, semi-perspectival view, with buildings and people represented by broken outlines.⁵⁴ The characters are not labeled (even though Shōyō personally wrote Shisui with the request that they be named)⁵⁵ and their relationship to the space around them is less clear than in other images, due largely to the unusual perspective. The sudden visual transformation of the work was apparently so disruptive to readers that they demanded a different illustrator. Although Shisui designed one more image for a future volume, he was soon replaced by Takeuchi Keishū, a novice artist with a more traditional style of illustration. As a sign that Keishū had satisfied readers' demands for a familiar visual style, he was retained as illustrator for the remainder of the work's serialization.



Figure 13 - *The Characters of Modern Students*, vol. 5, illustration by Nagahara Shisui

Perhaps due to his lack of experience, Keishū's images are not quite as balanced or finely detailed as Kunimine's, but what they lack in finesse, they make up for in their complex, literary quality. Of all of the illustrations in *The Characters of Modern Students*, Keishū's are the most faithful to the language of *gesaku*. As an illustrator, Keishū was primarily self-trained, having spent brief periods of time working under a number of different artists, including Yoshitoshi and Kanō Eitoku (1815-1891), the ninth head of the Kanō school of traditional Japanese painting.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Japan Punch* was founded by English cartoonist Charles Wirgman (1832-1891) in 1862, while *Tōbaé* was founded by French illustrator Georges Ferdinand Bigot (1860-1927) in 1887. Shisui was acquainted with the latter figure and later founded a magazine with the same title, though rendered in *hiragana* instead of *romaji*. See Nakajima, "Ichidoku santan tōsei shosei katagi no fūkei," 14.

⁵⁴ On the perspectival qualities of Shisui's illustration, see Nakajima, "Ichidoku santan tōsei shosei katagi no fūkei," 15-18.

⁵⁵ Nakajima, "Ichidoku santan tōsei shosei katagi no fūkei," 17.

⁵⁶ There is also another, better-known Kanō Eitoku (1543-1590), who was active in the sixteenth century. For the details of Keishū's artistic training, see Yamada Nanako, *Takeuchi Keishū kuchieshū* (Tokyo: Bunsei Shoin, 2013), 8-10.

Considering his limited training, it is reasonable to expect that Keishū would not be as fully inculcated in the traditional methods of *ukiyo-e* as Kunimine, an Utagawa illustrator by profession, and yet his familiarity with the complex framing devices of *gesaku* narratives is immediately apparent. Using a traditional method of illustration known as *iji dōzu* (different times, same image), Keishū combines events that occur across space and time into a single image in order to suggest connections between moments in the narrative.⁵⁷ For example, in the illustration for volume sixteen, an inset image with a lantern-shaped frame depicts a scene from the beginning of the chapter, in which Gensaku informs Tanoji of her true parentage, while the background illustration depicts a later moment, in which Moriyama Tomoyoshi stops Ohide and Kaodori from defrauding Tanoji of her inheritance. In the scene depicted by Keishū, five characters turn with looks of awe towards an unidentified figure, whose face is obscured by the paper lantern. The figure is Moriyama Tomoyoshi, but his identity is not revealed until later in the chapter. In order to unravel the visual puzzle posed by the illustration, the reader must flip back and forth through the book, comparing text to image in the process of *etoki*.



Figure 14 - *The Characters of Modern Students*, vol. 16, illustration by Takeuchi Keishū

Another one of Keishū's illustrations works with Shōyō's text to turn the page of the *shōsetsu* into a virtual kabuki stage. The image is of a scene of *tachigiki*, or eavesdropping, in which a former geisha, Otsune, overhears Komachida and Tanoji whispering behind a screen as they discuss the social scandal that forced them apart. As a common narrative device of *gesaku* and kabuki, *tachigiki* was often employed in plays and illustrated texts of the Edo period to reveal pivotal plot points and build suspense. On stage and in illustrations, both parties involved in the act of *tachigiki* are normally depicted, thus leaving the "secret" act of eavesdropping visible to the audience. In the text, Shōyō follows the tradition of *ninjōbon* by playfully obfuscating the identities of his conspirators and labeling them only as *otoko* and *onna* (man and woman), even though their true identities are immediately made clear by the content of their

⁵⁷ For more on the *iji dōzu* technique, see Okudaira Hideo, *Narrative Picture Scrolls*, translated and adapted by Elizabeth Ten Grotenhuis (New York: Weatherhill, 1973), 144.

conversation. Prior to the incident of *tachigiki*, Shōyō sets up the scene with a rare descriptive passage—one of only a handful to appear throughout the novel:

A new crescent moon resembling the eyebrow of a beautiful woman reclines in the Western sky. All around, the world descends into darkness. A cold autumn wind blows by, chilling to the bone. Even though this place is in the middle of the city, it is not a major thoroughfare; few are the sounds of people coming and going at this late hour and rarely heard is the rumble of rickshaw wheels. What manner of people live behind such exquisite lattice doors? Over here, the face of a black wooden fence is obscured by a pine tree. Over there, a single stone lantern is wrapped in vines, cutting an elegant figure. From the grass comes the sound of gathered insects, their cries unbearably pitiful. A small room stands separate from the main house, surrounded by a small garden.... Through the faint and hazy lantern light, two shadows appear dimly on a sliding paper screen, and though their identities are unclear, they appear to be a young man and woman.⁵⁸

Using an abundance of visual details, the narrator creates a fictional environment that evokes the romantic urban settings of kabuki and *bunraku* theater, where props of black wooden fences, stone lanterns, and lattice doors indicate a pleasure quarter setting.

After establishing the space of the scene, the narrator proceeds to briefly describe the appearance of the two shadows—the female shadow holds her hand to her forehead, where loose strands of hair betray her anxious state, while a thin-set man with a modern haircut sits by and listens. Thereafter, the chapter is related almost entirely in dialogue, as the man tearfully attempts to sever his relationship with the woman even as she pleads with him to reconsider. Punctuating the dialogue are descriptions of the shadows' movements, occasionally written in the form of *togaki*, or stage directions, in which the *katakana* character *to* (ト) is placed before a sentence in order to indicate that it provides directions for the story's characters.⁵⁹ For example, after Tanoji finishes a line of speech with the words "Oh how unbearably awful!" the narrator adds, in *togaki*, "Thus speaking, she grimaces bitterly and turns her gaze downward."⁶⁰ At the end of the chapter, Komachida and Tanoji's dialogue is suddenly interrupted by another character—it is the maid, who has come to warn them that the owner of the estate is fast approaching. Her announcement is followed by a cacophony of voices, labeled only as "man," "woman," "maid," "owner," and "Tsune." Although the action is difficult to unravel, the gist of the scene is that Komachida and Tanoji are forced to escape under darkness as Otsune stalls for time by claiming that a lamp casing has broken.

⁵⁸ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:163.

⁵⁹ Originating in the literary form of the play script, *togaki* was also a common feature of *ninjōbon* and other forms of *gesaku*, which modeled their own action on that of the kabuki stage. In reference to the use of *togaki* in *gesaku*, Hirata Yumi writes the following: "Passages of narrative description in *kokkeibon* and *ninjōbon* typically follow passages of spoken dialogue and consist of simple stage directions that describe the actions and circumstances of the speaker, transcribed in smaller font in the so-called *togaki* style." Hirata describes the narrative style of *ninjōbon* at length, including the genre's preponderance of dialogue and tendency for convoluted character backgrounds, in "The Narrative Apparatus of Modern Literature: The Shifting 'Standpoint' of Early Meiji Authors," translated by Tess M. Orth, *The Linguistic Turn in Contemporary Japanese Literary Studies: Politics, Language, Textuality*, edited by Michael K. Bourdaghs (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Japanese Studies, 2010), 76.

⁶⁰ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:168.



Figure 15 - *The Characters of Modern Students*, vol. 13, illustration by Takeuchi Keishū

Demonstrating the critical role of images in *The Characters of Modern Students*, in Keishū's illustration for the episode of *tachigiki*, the artist reveals an element of Shōyō's scene that is entirely missing from the text. In the left-hand side of his black-and-white illustration, Keishū closely follows the details of the story by depicting the shadows of Tanoji and Komachida as they appear projected onto the outside of a sliding paper door. On the right-hand side of the image, however, appears a new detail: there is a woman crouched in the shadows listening from the other side of the screen. In the original publication, the image appears towards the beginning of the chapter, thus visually informing the reader that the entire dialogue is being overheard by an unknown figure. As Anzai Shinji argues, the figure of Otsune is posed like an actor demonstrating the act of eavesdropping to an audience, rather than someone actually trying to conceal a nefarious act. The image is frontally oriented, in the manner of a scene on stage, and is perfectly rotated to display the *shōji* paper doors, on whose surface the shadows of the characters are projected, together with the outside garden, where the incident of *tachigiki* takes place. By point of comparison, Anzai discusses a redesigned illustration of the same scene by Toshitsune included in the variant edition of the text. In Toshitsune's version of the scene, the shadows of Komachida and Tanoji appear as distorted blobs, rather than the shapes of clearly posed dramatic actors. Otsune is literally hidden in the image, with her pin-striped kimono barely distinguishable from behind a branch of pine needles. Lacking in the dramatic dynamic of Keishū's earlier illustration, the scene suggests a realistic incident of eavesdropping, rather than a theatrical performance.⁶¹

In 1926, *The Characters of Modern Students* was reprinted by a new publisher, Tōkyōdō, with all of the original artwork intact. The latest edition also included, however, two new images that revealed the depth of Shōyō's involvement in illustration as never before: draft images designed by the author himself. Created in 1885, they were originally given to Nagahara Shisui as outlines for his illustrations. Rather than discard the drafts, however, Shisui preserved them in his private collection for over four decades, until 1926, when they were suddenly unearthed. In response to the unlikely discovery of such ephemeral documents, Shōyō exclaimed, "Alas, the

⁶¹ Anzai, "Ichidoku santan tōsei shōsei katagi no sashie, 41-42.

sins of my past have been fully exposed!”⁶² Although it is difficult to deduce exactly what he meant by the “sins of his past” (*kyūaku*), his expression might be interpreted as a sign of embarrassment over the flippant nature of his artwork, or otherwise its amateur execution. His images, which draw on minor, almost insignificant incidents from the text, include one of a student in a floppy hat greeting a friend on the street and another of a student karate-chopping a watermelon. The depth of Shōyō’s shame, however, might be measured against the decision that he made almost immediately following the discovery of said images, which was to reprint them as frontispieces in the latest edition of his debut *shōsetsu*, thus exposing them to the world.



Figure 16 - *The Characters of Modern Students*, frontispiece, vol. 9, illustration by Utagawa Kunimine

Having been reminded of the illustration of his work, Shōyō recalled one other image that he claimed caused him “absolute mortification” to revisit.⁶³ The image, by Kunimine, depicts a gory scene of a woman stabbing a samurai soldier on a battlefield. In the illustration, a woman in loose white-and-blue, checkered *yukata* (summer *kimono*) braces herself against the ground as she drives a blade into the stomach of a screaming soldier. From his wound oozes a fountain of blood, which soaks his entire midsection and spills over onto his white and purple *hakama* pants. Cut off from these two characters by a dark tree trunk is a bald-headed baby, arms extended and in mid-fall, who appears to have been tossed by the woman as she struggles against her attacker. In the background, another woman clings tightly to a different baby as a samurai gains upon her with a blade in mid-swing. The tension and proximity of their encounter suggests that she is in imminent danger of being cut down. Included in a cartouche in the bottom left-hand side of the image is a deviously cryptic caption: “A warbler’s cry mistaken for the call of a squid vendor. This image expresses the main idea of the entire book. All will be explained in detail later.” The caption is an invitation to a game of *etoki*, which urges the reader to search for clues that might unlock the meaning of the image. The first clue is to be found in the illustration itself, in a sheath

⁶² From “Sakusha yodan” (1926). Quoted in Yamamoto Yoshiaki, “Kindai bungaku to sashie: Shōyō o chūshin ni,” *Nihon kindai bungaku*, 29 (October, 1982): 3.

⁶³ Shōyō, “Shinkyū kadoki no kaisō,” *Shōyō senshū*, 12:335. Quoted in Yamamoto, “Kindai bungaku to sashie,” 4.

decorated with the *daki uroko* insignia. The “main idea” of the story, then, is that Tanoji and Kaodori were actually switched shortly after birth on the battlefield. The scene of the stabbing in the illustration, however, never actually appears in the text, while the incident of the Battle of Ueno is only related in the work’s final chapter, thus leaving the reader in the dark until the very end of the book.

Having been invited to a game of *etoki*, the reader is never provided with an answer to the puzzle. Shōyō’s “sin,” then, might be taken as a lack of care for the harmony of words and pictures featured in his work. Although, in traditional *gesaku*, text and image might differ to some extent, complete misdirection would have signaled a rift in the verbal-visual relationship that drove the story. So serious was Shōyō’s visual faux pas that he ended his four-hundred-page novel with an apology for a misguided illustration published several months earlier. By means of a conclusion, he stages a conversation between Harunoya Oboro Sensei and a supposed reader of his text:

Having reached the end of the story, I was putting the finishing touches on my manuscript when a young clerk from the bookstore, who had patiently awaited every page of the work from some time back, cracked a smile and asked, “Sensei, what ever happened with the incident of the frontispiece in volume nine?”

Oboro: Eh, whadya mean the frontispiece?

Clerk: *Ahem*, it says right here, “This image expresses the main idea of the entire work. All will be explained in detail later,” whereas, in fact, the details of that grisly murder haven’t been explained in the slightest.

Oboro: What? Oh boy... That’s, ehh... that’s, let’s see... Ah, yes, you see, that was just for fun, just something to surprise the reader a little bit. In Western books of humor and whatnot, they like to do that kinda thing from time to time...⁶⁴

Oboro Sensei ends his explanation by imagining his fans’ reactions: “For readers who were looking seriously, that odd little trick must’ve come as quite a shock!” Annoyed, the book clerk walks off and complains, “Hah, that old coot, can’t even admit when he’s wrong...” and thus ends Shōyō’s debut “novel,” with a half-baked joke and a reference to an illustration. As modern literature, the work barely even begins to approach the form of fiction described in Shōyō’s *Essence of the Novel*, in which descriptive prose was to replace dialogue and illustration as the driving force of the narrative. As a work of *gesaku*, however, it hits all of the right notes: humor, sumptuous illustration, and a sprawling tale of fate and hidden identities. Tsubouchi Shōyō may not have been much of a novelist, but Harunoya Oboro Sensei was a competent writer of *gesaku*. Skillfully judging his audience, he wrote one of the most popular illustrated texts of the late 19th century.

Getting Deeper into Pictures, Shōyō Leaves the Novel Behind

Shoyō’s second major *shōsetsu*, *A Mirror of Marriage (Imo to sekagami)*, follows a similar format as his debut. Published by Kaishin Shoya in thirteen volumes, from December, 1885 to June, 1886, each volume features a single black-and-white woodblock illustration by Adachi Ginkō (active c. 1870-1897), an *ukiyo-e* artist who specialized in *gesaku* illustration, war

⁶⁴ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:264.

prints, and satirical cartoons.⁶⁵ The opening volume features an additional full-color frontispiece by the same artist, done in the familiar *ukiyo-e* style of the Utagawa school. In common with Shōyō's earlier fiction, the work is attributed to Harunoya Oboro Sensei and includes a complicated two-part title, *Shinmigaki: Imo to sekagami*, that is so packed with puns that it is difficult to exhaust its meanings in translation. Meaning something like *Imo and Se: Younger Sister's Newly Polished Height-Measuring Mirror of Man and Wife*, the title plays off of the classic work of *bunraku*, *Mt. Imo and Mt. Se: An Exemplary Tale of Womanly Virtue* (*Imoseyama onna teikin*), with which it shares the themes of tragic love and womanly suffering.⁶⁶ The term *kagami* (mirror), on its own, was traditionally used in works of historical fiction, where it indicated a true-to-life representation of a time period or historical event worthy of study.⁶⁷ The title, author, illustrated format, and material expression of *A Mirror of Marriage*, then, all lead the reader to expect a work of *gesaku*, which is exactly what is to be found in the book within.

The story of *A Mirror of Marriage*, like that of *The Characters of Modern Students*, involves a complicated knot of plots and subplots that develops via a series of unlikely twists of fate, in the manner *ninjōbon* or kabuki. In its delivery, the work combines a heavy dose of scholarly commentary on the topics of love, marriage, and human rights with lengthy stretches of dramatic dialogue. The story tells of an up-and-coming bureaucrat, Misawa Tatsuzō, who marries a woman from a lower social class, Otsuji, but later comes to regret his decision when he becomes embroiled in a public scandal. Before Misawa settles on Otsuji, he considers marrying a different woman, Oyuki, who's social background is closer to his own, but he passes her over when he overhears her badmouthing him at a party, in a scene of *tachigiki*, unaware that she is only speaking ill of him out of embarrassment. Shortly after marrying Otsuji, Misawa becomes involved with a geisha, Oshimo, whose family was owed money by his father. He begins to make frequent visits to the pleasure quarters, with the strict intention of paying back his father's debt, but his unexplained behavior arouses Otsuji's jealousy. Otsuji then complains to her sister, Oharu, who confronts Oshimo in person. Their confrontation is overheard by a newspaper journalist, in another scene of *tachigiki*, who incorrectly reports that the wife of Mizawa Tatsuzō, a public servant, was involved in a fight with her husband's secret lover in the pleasure quarters. Misawa is then forced to divorce Otsuji, who, in mortal shame, commits suicide by a riverbank.

In its style, *A Mirror of Marriage* is perhaps even more indebted to the vernacular of Edo period fiction than Shōyō's earlier writing. Consisting largely of dialogue and scholarly exposition, the work is almost entirely lacking in descriptive language, especially in regard to setting or scene. The text, for the most part, is delivered in one of two modes of presentation—the lecture and the dialogue—both modeled on traditional forms of oral literature. When the narrator speaks, he presents his story in the manner of a professional orator, such as a *rakugo* storyteller or a *kōdan* lecturer, who instructs his readers in the ways of modern love.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ See Merritt and Yamada, *Woodblock Kuchi-e Prints*, 194.

⁶⁶ Like many works of kabuki, the play is most often referred to by its Japanese title. This particular English translation is offered by Samuel L. Leiter, *Rising from the Flames: The Rebirth of Theater in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 17.

⁶⁷ Ryan writes, "*Kagami* (mirror) was originally employed in historical works to indicate an accurate account, and came to be used in titles of plays and stories with a similar implication." *The Development of Realism in the Fiction of Tsubouchi Shōyō*, 57.

⁶⁸ Sumie Jones and Charles Shirō Inouye describe *kōdan* as "long series of religious sermons, moralizing lectures, and recitations of history and classics" and *rakugo* as "short humorous narratives." On the history of popular oral narratives in Japan, they write, "During the Edo period, such performances began as entertainment in private houses

Referencing Shakespeare, Bulwer-Lytton, Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), and Thomas Otway (1652-1685), the learned narrator describes traditions of marriage as they exist in England, France, and Japan.⁶⁹ Sandwiched in-between his lectures are extended sequences of dramatic dialogue, in which the central action of the story plays out through a series of scenes of *tachigiki* and *nozoki* (peeping). The modern narrator of the *shōsetsu*, who is supposedly tasked with observing and describing the invisible world of the narrative, is nowhere to be found.

Although *A Mirror of Marriage* failed to make quite the same impact as *The Characters of Modern Students* upon its release, there is evidence that it was well-received, including the fact that it was reprinted in collected editions by two different publishers in the following years—Jiyūkaku in 1889 and Eishōdō in 1893. Izumi Kyōka, for one, recalls reading *A Mirror of Marriage* as an adolescent, in distant Kanazawa, claiming that it was the first work of modern fiction (*atarashii mono*) that he ever read.⁷⁰ Describing the fate of Oyuki as having caused him endless worry, he highlights the dramatic aspect of the work as its main appeal. At the same time, however, he remarks that the novel “required some concentration” in order to fully understand, perhaps in reference to the dense, didactic passages that make up much of the text. Sasagawa Rinpū (1870-1949), a literary critic and art historian, similarly recalls “hardly being able to wait for the subsequent installments” of Shōyō’s work, while later critics claim that college students, in particular, were so passionate about the story that they wrote Shōyō with demands for a sequel.⁷¹ By balancing scholarship with entertainment, Shōyō was able to appeal to both the intelligentsia and the common reader. While students and intellectuals might have appreciated his work for its erudite discussions of European culture, fans of popular fiction were able to enjoy it as a familiar tale of adultery, prostitution, and suicide.

In reference to the numerous scenes of *tachigiki* and *nozoki* that permeate *A Mirror of Marriage*, Maeda Ai refers to the work as a proto-realistic novel, which uses the trope of peeping as a metaphor for the modern reader, whose relationship to the work is one of a clandestine observer peering into a secret inner world.⁷² Nishimura Kiyokazu, however, counters that, rather than bringing the reader closer to some simulated interiority, the scenes of *tachigiki* in *A Mirror*

and pleasure districts, but came to occupy small theaters (*yose*) that emerged to house them, along with magic acts, songs, and other brief forms of entertainment. After the Meiji Restoration, *kōdan* expanded to include the narration of news stories... As the audience came to demand longer stories, a new genre called ‘human-interest stories’ (*ninjōbanashi*) emerged, often reflecting the audience’s taste for the criminal and the monstrous.” *A Tokyo Anthology: Literature from Japan’s Modern Metropolis, 1850-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2017), 36. Haruo Shirane describes *rakugo* as follows: “*Rakugo* is the modern word for the art of comic storytelling, a performance genre that can be traced back to the late medieval period when *otogishū*, or storytellers, were retained by samurai for entertainment and sometimes advice. The term *rakugo* (literally, words with a twist) was first used around 1887... Typically, the *rakugo* performer sits on a cushion, simultaneously employs mime and speech, uses a different voice for each character, and presents one or more humorous or frightening stories, each of which has an unexpected twist at the end.” *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 961.

⁶⁹ Although he often criticizes the Confucian values of the East, while arguing for greater autonomy and education for women as practiced in the West, he also warns against the excessive passions of Europeans, whose own societies, he claims, are plagued by more frequent cases of rape and adultery than in Japan. Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:338.

⁷⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:658.

⁷¹ Kawatake Shigetoshi and Yanagida Izumi, *Tsubouchi Shōyō* (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1939), 152-153. Referenced in Ryan, *The Development of Realism in the Fiction of Tsubouchi Shōyō*, 56.

⁷² Highlighting the topicality of *A Mirror of Marriage*, Maeda points specifically to a section that he calls Shōyō’s *tachigiki-ron* (theory of eavesdropping), in which the author argues that privacy is an essential component of human rights and that *tachigiki* is a crime against society. Maeda, *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu*, 389.

of *Marriage* remind the reader of similar incidents in *gesaku* and kabuki, thus establishing common ground with the visual art of the Edo period.⁷³ Yamamoto Yoshiaki, in reference to the illustration of *A Mirror of Marriage*, also argues that the work is clearly set in the visually-oriented mode of *gesaku*. As evidence, he points to a cartouche in the illustration for volume two, which declares: “This scene has not yet appeared in the text. An explanation of the image shall be provided in a future volume.”⁷⁴ Using the word *etoki* explicitly, the caption urges the reader to probe the image and compare it to the text in order to establish a complete understanding of the episode. In a later illustration, which depicts a scene of *tachigiki*, Otsuji and Oharu are shown engaging in conversation as an intruder listens from behind a sliding door, his identity obscured by a top hat and a black overcoat. The meaning of the image is unclear, however, as the scene does not occur until the following volume. The reader is thus held in suspense, prompted by the illustration to guess at the identity of the intruder and the content of the stolen conversation.⁷⁵ The following volume is illustrated with an additional scene of *tachigiki*, in which Misawa overhears two maids discussing Oyuki’s marriage problems, thus revealing, for the first time, that she is unhappy with her current husband. Together, these numerous episodes of *tachigiki* turn the text into a visual puzzle, which requires the reader to use *etoki* in order to decipher its meaning. At the same time, such episodes suggest the theatrical space of the stage, in which pivotal secrets are naturally overheard by actors and audience alike. Betraying the theatricality of the text, Oharu exclaims, in a later chapter, “Well, this is all getting to be a little bit too much like a play, isn’t it?”⁷⁶



Figure 17 - *A Mirror of Marriage* (1885-1886), vol. 1, frontispiece, illustration by Adachi Ginkō

From its very outset, *A Mirror of Marriage* suggests the space of the stage. The work opens with a full-color, woodblock illustration of seven characters grappling at each other while blindfolded. The scene resembles a *danmari*, or a kabuki pantomime, in which actors struggle in the dark to recover some hidden object. Traditionally, *danmari* introduced new members of a theater troupe to the audience by presenting them in a visual display.⁷⁷ In a similar manner, Ginkō’s frontispiece introduces the characters of Shōyō’s story by arranging them into a

⁷³ Nishimura, *Imēji no shūjigaku*, 389.

⁷⁴ Yamamoto, “Kindai bungaku to sashie,” 8-10.

⁷⁵ This fact is pointed out by Yamamoto in *Kindai bungaku to sashie*, 10.

⁷⁶ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:460.

⁷⁷ Samuel L. Leiter, *Historical Dictionary of Japanese Traditional Theatre* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 80.

dramatic tableau vivant. Unlike in traditional *kuchi-e*, however, the characters lack nametags. Thus, in order to unpack the meaning of the image, the reader must use *etoki*, comparing the details of the illustration with those found in the text. Turning the page, the reader is met with a line of dialogue related in the manner of a play script, with the identity of the speaker (in this case “a woman’s voice”) listed before her exclamation: “Misawa-san, oh how fortunate, you’re all alone!”⁷⁸ The line of dialogue is in turn followed by virtual stage directions, written in *togaki*: “So saying, she climbs the stairs, *ton ton ton* as she ascends to the top.” The woman is Otsuji, who is described briefly by the narrator as a young and pale beauty with a modern hairstyle. At the top of the stairs, Otsuji encounters Misawa, with whom she engages in conversation. The text then switches into dialogue mode, where it remains until the end of the chapter:

Misawa: Well look at this, I was wondering who it might be. Otsuji, when did you get here?

The girl flashes a big smile,

Otsuji: Just now, I had something to do at my grandmother’s.

Misawa: Oh yeah, you’ve got *gekkin* [moon lute] practice today, haven’t you?

Otsuji: No! I really don’t feel like playing *gekkin* anymore.⁷⁹

As their conversation continues, Misawa tells Otsuji of how he first spotted her at the Shintomi-za kabuki theater. He reminds her that she accidentally left a photograph of herself in her seat, which he took home with him and admired endlessly before catching sight of her again outside his window. Suddenly, in the middle of their conversation, a ghost appears—it is Misawa’s deceased mother, who chides him for flirting with a woman from a lower social class. One shock is followed by another as Otsuji’s father, Kyūhachi the fishmonger, rushes into the room and chases Misawa’s grandfather with a butcher’s blade. He has already stabbed the old man once and appears intent on killing him, but, just before he is able to land his final blow, Misawa wakes



Figure 18 - *A Mirror of Marriage*, vol. 1, illustration by Adachi Ginkō

⁷⁸ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:277.

⁷⁹ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:278.

up. It was all a dream, it seems, concocted in Misawa's brain by lingering thoughts of Otsuji's photograph, jumbled together with memories of a letter sent by his grandfather and a will left by his mother.

In his illustration of Misawa's dream, Ginkō uses the *iji dōzu* technique to depict the entire temporal development of the first chapter in a single image.⁸⁰ From right-to-left, the image depicts Tatsuzō holding a *gekkin*, Otsuji reclining in his lap, Tatsuzō's mother on her feet, and Kyūhachi stabbing Tatsuzō's grandfather with a butcher's blade. As the leading illustration of the narrative (following the frontispiece), it visually introduces the dramatis personae of the story in *mie*-style poses. The scene of the stabbing, in particular, recalls the same kind of violent images seen in *gesaku* throughout the 19th century, including in *The Characters of Modern Students*. In his other images, Ginkō skillfully utilizes the verbal-visual language of *gesaku* to suggest developments in the narrative before they appear in the text. In his illustration for volume two, for example, a bisecting border of wild grass and plovers separates a scene of Misawa and his mother in Ōmi Province (present-day Shiga Prefecture) and Misawa's absent father in a wealthy home in Tokyo. The text suggests that Misawa's father is a no-good villain who wastes his money with geisha as his family wallows in poverty. The illustration, however, adds a further nuance to the situation, as it hints that Misawa's father is in fact sick, while his concubine and a resident student have conspired against him and led him to financial ruin. Mediating between the main text and the image is a caption that prompts the viewer to read on in order to discover the full meaning of the scene. At the conclusion of *A Mirror of Marriage*, image overtakes the work entirely, as the ending of the story is depicted only via illustration. The final illustration sets Misawa within a flower-shaped frame, where he stares despondently at a photograph as he sits next to a mortuary tablet and an altar. Outside of the inset, Oyuki and a maid walk by a riverbank, which, as clarified in the text, is the spot where Otsuji committed suicide. A cartouche explains that Misawa mourns the ghost of Otsuji while staring at his mother's photograph, then asks the reader to mentally picture the closing scene of the story, which has been omitted from the text. The image even suggests that Misawa is ultimately the wrongful party in Otsuji's death—a reading that is never quite supported anywhere outside of the illustration.



Figure 19 - *A Mirror of Marriage*, vol. 13, illustration by Adachi Ginkō

⁸⁰ As pointed out also by Yamamoto, in "Kindai bungaku to sashie," 8-11.

Another crucial function of Ginkō's illustrations in *A Mirror of Marriage* is to create a sense of space for the story, whose settings are described in even less detail than those in *The Characters of Modern Students*. The first descriptive passage of scenery appears only in the eleventh chapter, over a hundred pages into the work, and sticks close to the poetic language of *ninjōbon*: "As fall approaches, all appears bleak, a torn banana leaf rattles on the window, a gentle pattering of rain, the sun sinks into darkness."⁸¹ The only other time that the narrator uses descriptive language is when introducing new characters into the story, but even then, the manner of his description never ventures far from the idiom of *gesaku*, in which costumes are often described with exacting precision. When the narrator introduces the character of Oyuki, for example, he enumerates her every article of clothing, one-by-one, as though dressing a kabuki actor in preparation for the stage, or visually analyzing an *ukiyo-e* illustration, especially one of a *geisha* or head courtesan:

As for her dress, Oyuki wore a modern *shimada* bun, piled high on her head, with ample locks at the side in the shape of cicada wings. Her bun was held together by a beaded tie, made of three-inch beads, a pear-shaped comb, made of black tortoiseshell with gold lacquering, rear-facing hairpins in the "flowing-pine" style, and forward-facing hairpins of solid gold, with tiny *miyako* birds carved into the side. Showing the taste of her mother, her ornamental collar was woven with threads of red, purple, and gold. Her undergarment was a pale gray kimono of *yūzen* silk with scarlet highlights and sleeves of crimson crepe. Her overcoat was a collarless crepe kimono with stripes in the *Kantō* style. Underneath, she wore two layers of large-patterned kimono made of printed cotton. Her *obi* sash was of satin with large raised figures, supported by an under-sash dyed in the dappled "Capital" style, with highlights of scarlet silk. Her sash pin featured a yellow background with a single red stripe and a chrysanthemum-shaped ornament made of gold.⁸²

Although the level of detail in the narrator's description might appear excessive, it makes sense when considered against the backdrop of the visual culture of the 19th century. For readers accustomed to looking at woodblock prints of *geisha* and kabuki actors, or reading books about the fashion of the pleasure quarters, careful depictions of costume were one of the chief pleasures of literature.

In his illustrations, Ginkō similarly highlights matters of fashion and costume, but he also focuses on creating a sense of space that is largely absent from the text. His images are full of minor visual details, none of them described by the author, which contribute to the production of the story's setting. In his illustration for volume two, for example, a lowly hovel is depicted with sheets of calligraphy homework pasted over cracks in the wall, which indicate the impoverished state of the room's inhabitants, while in volume three, a room is shown with a sliding *fusuma* door complete with a Chinese-style landscape, ornamental borders, and a realistically-modeled decorative handle, thus indicating the wealth of the room's owners. In the latter image, numerous visual details invite the viewer to look closely, including a minutely-illustrated stack of playing cards, books bound in the traditional style, an alcove, a drawer, a trellis, a stone lantern, and various other props. Most impressive, however, is an image from chapter eleven, which depicts

⁸¹ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1: 396.

⁸² Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:313.

Oyuki and a maid reclining under the cover of a mosquito net. Nearly the entire surface of the image is covered by hundreds of tiny squares, representing the woven fabric of the net, which is placed over a busy heap of minutely-detailed kimono, bedsheets, and pillows. As a woodblock print, the image would have required a major investment of time and labor to create, including the work of an expert team of draft artists, block cutters, and printers. The amount of visual detail packed into this single image outweighs the descriptive language of the entire text. For readers who normally paid close attention to illustration, such images would have increased the value and attractiveness of the book.

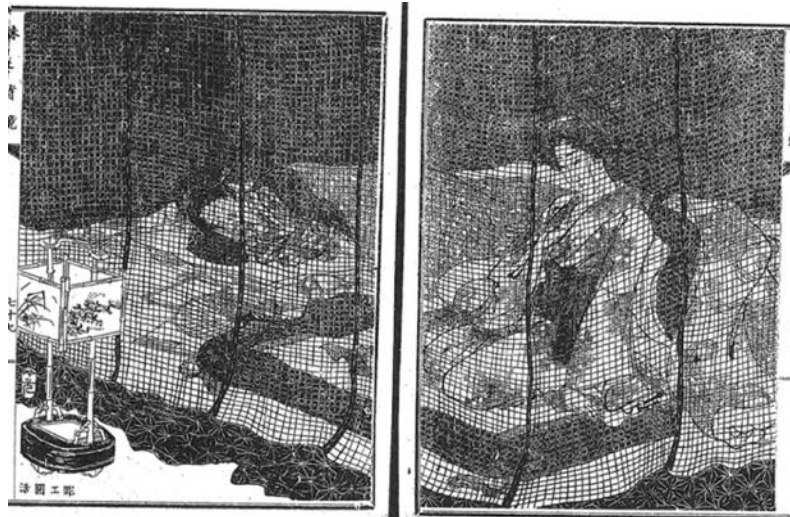


Figure 20 - *A Mirror of Marriage*, vol. 11, illustration by Adachi Ginkō

Following *A Mirror of Marriage*, Shōyō penned a handful of other stories before ending his brief career as a novelist with *Wife*, a short story published in the supplementary column of *Kokumin no tomo* in January, 1889. This final work, much slighter than his earlier ones, is almost universally held up as his most mature and artistically successful piece of writing. Characterizing the story as a “hidden gem” of the Meiji period, scholars often point to the serious tone of the narrative as a major departure from Shōyō’s earlier work.⁸³ Kamei Hideo even calls the work “Japan’s first novel,”⁸⁴ sidelining Futabatei’s *Floating Clouds*, which is most commonly accorded the title. Turning to the work itself, the reader is immediately confronted with something entirely unlike Shōyō’s earlier writings. Leaving the playful idiom of *gesaku* behind, the story sports a streamlined title (*Saikun*) and is attributed to Tsubouchi Yūzō himself, using the author’s personal name in the magazine’s table of contents.⁸⁵ Gone are the illustrations, as

⁸³ Donald Keene writes, “having finally abandoned the *gesaku* style, Shōyō was about to develop into a modern novelist.” *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 108. Ryan, expressing a similar sentiment, exclaims, “A new quality of seriousness pervades *Saikun*. Even when [Shōyō] speaks, he does not use the flippant, sarcastic tone he had employed earlier.” Ryan, *The Development of Realism in the Fiction of Tsubouchi Shōyō*, 111.

⁸⁴ Kamei Hideo, “Fuzai no saikun: *Saikun* (Tsubouchi Shōyō),” *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū*, 42.12 (October, 1997): 6.

⁸⁵ In the table of contents, the story is first attributed to Harunoya Shujin (Sir Harunoya), using a simplified version of Shōyō’s penname, but includes his personal name, Tsubouchi Yūzō, immediately afterwards. Other stories are similarly attributed to their authors by using a combination of their personal names and pennames. *Kokumin no tomo*, 4.37 (January, 1889).

well as the script-like designations preceding every line of speech. The dialogue has been subsumed into the narrative, separated only by *kagikakko* (brackets that function as quotation marks in Japanese), in a manner similar to European fiction. The narrator, too, takes on an entirely different function, existing as a submerged observer of the story's action, rather than a distant lecturer with a detached view of the narrative.

In some ways, the narrative of Shōyō's final novella is familiar from his earlier work. Relating a tale of scandal and broken marriage, the story tells of Osono, a maid, who acquires an enviable position at a large manor, only to discover that the man and wife of the house, Otane and Sadao, are not as happy as they appear to be. Otane wishes to divorce her husband, a famous author who pays her little attention, as he spends his nights drinking and entertaining guests. She turns to her stepmother, Okumi, to whom she explains her dissatisfaction, but is urged to tolerate her husband's bad behavior and suffer in silence. Desperate to escape her unhappy marriage, Otane gives a bundle of kimono to the maid, Osono, to pawn, but Osono is robbed of the money received in exchange on her way home. When questioned by the police, she is forced to reveal the origin of the pawned kimono, and thus inadvertently discloses the scandal of her mistress's unhappy marriage to the public. Having shamed her employers, Osono atones for her sins by throwing her body into the family well and committing suicide.

As familiar as Shōyō's narrative might appear in summary, in execution, it is far subtler—and more *novelistic*—than anything else he ever wrote. Opening the work with the description of the interior of a home, the narrator evokes the space of the story with delicate restraint:

Shutting the windows, darkness falls on the four corners of the room. A reflection from a lamp casts a moon-shaped ball of light onto the ceiling. As the autumn deepens, the sound of a grandfather clock echoes faintly in the dark. Once again, the head of the household is out late, yet to return from his job at the government office. The man's mother, who normally stays in the mother-in-law suite, is out to the yose theater with a young girl, apparently a relative, 17 or 18-years of age, while the maid with red cheeks is out shopping. The inner chambers and kitchen are silent. As a new hire, Osono has nothing to do, and thus sits quietly in the maid's room, deeply absorbed in thought.⁸⁶

Thus begins *Wife* not with a scandal, a dream, or a fortuitous reunion, but with a quiet moment of introspection in a dark room. The characters are not introduced in the manner of actors, dressed in layers upon layers of gaudy kimono, but are rather outlined with a few evocative strokes. When introducing Otane, for example, the narrator completely omits any description of her clothing, instead focusing on minor details of her appearance, which add up to an overall impression of her character. According to the narrator, she is of medium height with a slender build, hollowed eyes, a thin hairline, and tight lips.⁸⁷ Rather than a stunning courtesan, she is a gloomy housewife, whose personality is evoked by the subtleties of her facial expression.

The reaction to *Wife* was slight. Unlike Shōyō's earlier works of *gesaku*, the novella was not frequently reprinted. A couple of contemporary reviews were fairly positive, although they also expressed frustration with deciphering the characters' motives. Two prominent literary

⁸⁶ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:817.

⁸⁷ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, suppl. vol. 1:819.

critics, Fukuchi Gen'ichirō (1841-1906)⁸⁸ and Yoda Gakkai (1834-1909), both complained that the wife in the story was too insensitive, interpreting her lack of compassion as a flaw in the narrative rather than an artistic choice.⁸⁹ Perhaps most damaging to *Wife's* chances of success, however, was its manner of publication—it was first printed in a highbrow literary magazine, *Kokumin no tomo*, in the same issue as Yamada Bimyō's "Butterfly" ("Kochō"), a work whose illustration of a naked woman, by Watanabe Seitei (also known as Watanabe Shōtei, 1851-1918), led to a major public debate on the place of nudity in art.⁹⁰ Appearing in the supplementary column (*furoku*) of the magazine, a few pages after Seitei's scandalous frontispiece, Shōyō's picture-less narrative stood little chance of garnering the same level of attention as Bimyō's story. Thus, ironically, Shōyō's most novel-like work of fiction was derailed by an image, this time not even his own, as he attempted to leave illustration behind for good. Following the story's release, Shōyō expressed frustration with his attempts to write a modern novel and vowed to never write one again—a promise that he kept, as he turned his attention towards literary criticism, the stage, Shakespeare, and the visual arts of the Edo period.

In 1894, Shōyō began writing plays—an activity that would occupy his attention over the next few decades. Drawing on the legacy of *gesaku* and kabuki, Shōyō penned a series of historical epics, including *A Leaf of Paulownia* (*Kiri hitoha*, 1894-1895) and *Maki no kata* (1896-1897), which became standard pieces of the "new kabuki" theater from the early 1900's onward.⁹¹ Parallel to his work as a playwright, Shōyō began writing extensively on the history of Japanese drama, including on specialized topics such as stage design, dance, costume, illustrated play scripts, and female impersonators (*onnagata*). Looking at his selected works (*senshū*), one finds that his writings related to theater, including essays, original plays, and translations, represent the greater part of his literary output.⁹² Aside from their position as the cornerstone of his scholarship, Shōyō's essays on drama were also crucial in shaping the reception and appreciation of traditional theater in modern Japan.⁹³ His writings on the puppet plays of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, for example, were instrumental in reviving the reputation of the Edo period playwright, whom Shōyō famously compared to Shakespeare,⁹⁴ while his work on kabuki authors Mokuami and Nanboku IV demonstrated a continued zeal for the popular theater of the

⁸⁸ Also commonly known by his penname, Fukuchi Ōchi, which he used for his works of *gesaku* and kabuki.

⁸⁹ Ryan, *The Development of Realism in the Fiction of Tsubouchi Shōyō*, 113.

⁹⁰ Bimyō was compelled to defend against the artistic value of the nude frontispiece in the following issue of *Kokumin no tomo*, vol. 4, issue 38 (January, 1889), 33-34. The image ignited the so-called "debate over nude painting" (*rataiga ronsō*), which continued into the next decade and attracted interest from throughout the literary sphere. Authors who contributed to the debate on the value of nudity in art included Ōgai and Kōyō. See Ryan, *The Development of Realism in the Fiction of Tsubouchi Shōyō*, 113.

⁹¹ "New kabuki," or *shin kabuki*, refers to a largely conservative form of kabuki theater featuring plays written in the modern period, which stands in contrast to *shinpa*, or "new wave theater," which adapted aspects of kabuki to modern forms of drama.

⁹² Shōyō's writings on theater might be found in his selected works (*senshū*), where they comprise over half of the 15-volume set. The collection includes volumes on "Dance and Dance Theory" (vol. 3, *buyō oyobi buyōron*), "Theatrical Prints, Historical Plays, and Historical Paintings" (vol. 7, *shibaie, rekishigeki, rekishiga*), "The Plays of Chikamatsu, etc." (vol. 8, *Harunoya manpitsu, Chikamatsu kenkyū sono ta*), and "Scholarship on Theater" (vol. 10, *geki ni kansuru ronsetsu*). This is in addition to two volumes of his original play scripts (vols. 1-2, *kyakuhon*), which open the collection, and two volumes of his translated plays (vols. 4-5).

⁹³ In recognition of his central role in researching and preserving traditional Japanese theater, together with his work in translating the complete plays of Shakespeare, the foremost museum of theatrical arts in Japan, the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum at Waseda University in Tokyo, is named in his honor.

⁹⁴ See "Chikamatsu vs. Shakespeare vs. Ibsen" ("Chikamatsu tai Shēkusupiya tai Ibsen," 1909) and "Chikamatsu and Shakespeare" ("Chikamatsu to Shēkusupiya," 1910) in *Shōyō senshū*, 10:769-814; 8:769-778.

mid-19th century.⁹⁵ His research on the development of stage architecture, in particular, provides some of the most thorough information on the topic to this day. Covering niche subjects like the development of stage lighting, historical variations on theater enclosures, and audience participation in the space of the stage, such work demonstrates the extent of Shōyō's knowledge—as well as the depth of his passion—for theatrical art.⁹⁶ His research on drama would eventually lead him back to the subjects of *gesaku* and *ukiyo-e*, which he explored particularly for their historical relationship to the stage.

Late in life, Shōyō embarked on a massive scholarly exploration of the woodblock prints of Toyokuni I (1769-1825), the figure who established the Utagawa lineage of *ukiyo-e* artists, in the richly-illustrated *Theatrical Prints, Toyokuni, and his Pupils (Shibaie to Toyokuni oyobi sono monka*, 1927). Examining prints by Toyokuni and his successors, his monograph includes reproductions of over one hundred woodblock images, including *ukiyo-e*, *e-banzuke* (illustrated playbills), *e-daichō* (illustrated play scripts), and *ehon* (picture-books), all culled from his personal collection.⁹⁷ With an almost obsessive attention to detail, Shōyō's extended essay outlines the formal development of the actor portrait, including its prominent use in *kusazōshi* and its historical relationship to the stage, while documenting variations in visual style among individual members of the Utagawa school. Aside from serving as an invaluable resource for historians of *ukiyo-e* and kabuki, the book acts as a visual monument to Shōyō's passion for pictures. In a photograph taken of Shōyō at the time of the work's compilation, he appears as an aged scholar, surrounded on all sides by his personal collection of theatrical prints. For Shōyō, the visual legacy of Japanese literature ultimately proved too precious to abandon. Having spent his life absorbed in illustrated fiction and kabuki, he no longer saw the visually-oriented art forms of the Edo period as developmental stages in the evolution of the modern novel, but rather treated them as unique modes of artistic expression, worthy of study and preservation in their own right.



Figure 21 - Shōyō surrounded by his personal collection of actor prints, preparing the manuscript for his book *Theatrical Prints, Toyokuni, and his Pupils* (1927)

⁹⁵ See, for example, “The Life of Tsuruya Nanboku IV,” (“Yonsei Tsuruya Nanboku no den,” 1921) and “Preface to *The Life of Kawatake Mokuami*,” (*Kawatake Mokuami den jō*,” 1914) in *Shōyō senshū*, 10:387-408; 10:409-414.

⁹⁶ Among numerous essays on the topic, some of the most relevant include “The Classification and Evolution of Stage Structure and Form” (“Butai kōzō yōshiki no bunrui oyobi shinka,” 1924) and “Dark Theater vs. Bright Theater” (“Kurai shibai tai akarui shibai,” 1925). See *Shōyō senshū*, 10:117-130; 10:325-335;

⁹⁷ Shōyō, *Shōyō senshū*, 7:12.

Chapter 2

As Though Before Your Very Eyes: Seeing Clearly in the Fiction of Ozaki Kōyō

In 1902, Ozaki Kōyō quit his position as writer and editor of the literature column in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, Japan's leading newspaper, in protest over their insistence that he include illustrations in his fiction.¹ Three years earlier, Kōyō had expressed his dissatisfaction with the ubiquity of illustration in contemporary literature in a debate that took place at Waseda University, in a statement that was later referred to as his *sashi-e muyōron*, or "argument against the use of illustration." In a summary of the debate, printed in the literary column of the *Yomiuri shinbun* on February 13, 1899, Kōyō's words were given as follows:

I just can't understand why anyone would stick illustrations throughout a novel. Instead of relying on the power of images, the novelist should draw exclusively on the strength of language in order to show the reader the story. These days, the public won't even buy a novel without a frontispiece, so there's not much one can do about it, but in the future, if I have my way, you won't find a single illustration in any of my works.²

Considering the defiant tone of his statement, one might imagine that Kōyō fought ardently to exclude images from his fiction; and yet, both before and after stating his opposition to illustration, he worked closely with various artists to produce some of the most elaborate images found in Meiji period literature, including illustrations that he designed himself.³ As a writer, Kōyō was known first and foremost for the elegance of his prose, which he used to craft vivid literary landscapes out of language. Polishing his manuscripts over several drafts, he agonized over the particularities of style, as he endeavored to create passages of text that would cause the imaginary worlds of his fiction to appear clearly before his readers' eyes. In his stories, words and pictures appear as competing methods of "showing," which diverge in their ability to convey the heart of the narrative to the reader. While opposing illustration in principle, in practice, Kōyō treated images as a powerful counterpoint to language, against which the effectiveness of words might be judged. At once mute and profoundly expressive, images figured as the metaphorical endpoint for the perfect passage of prose, even as they threatened to overrun the literary work with their visual form.

Kōyō's obsession with language was apparent from the time of his mainstream debut, *Two Nuns' Confession of Love* (*Ninin bikuni irozange*, 1889), a work whose vivid literary style awed critics and audiences alike, while inspiring a new generation of Japanese writers to take up

¹ Tsuchida Mitsufumi, "Sashi-e tenbō I: henyō kara shinsei e," in *Meisaku sashie zenshū*, edited by Shimonaka Kunihiro (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1979-1981), 1:120-121.

² Quoted in its entirety in Tsuchida Mitsufumi, "Konjiki yasha to sashi-e muyōron," in *Kokubungaku nenjibetsu ronbunshū "Kindai 1"* (Tokyo: Gakujutsu Bunken Fukyū Kai, 1980), 325.

³ According to artist Kajita Hanks, Ozaki Kōyō was particularly fussy about the illustration of his work and often made difficult demands of his illustrators. Not content with simply acting as art director, he frequently drew his own draft images, which he insisted that his illustrators utilize in the design of their final works. Kajita illustrated the latter part of Kōyō's most famous novel, *The Gold Demon* (*Konjiki yasha*, 1897-1903), in the pages of the *Yomiuri shinbun*, beginning in December of 1900, and ending in May of 1902. Kajita claims that he often refused Kōyō's demands, as he insisted that the artist should be granted full freedom of expression. Shortly afterwards, Kōyō quit the newspaper. See Kajita Hanks, "Sashie dan," *Bijitsu no Nihon*, 5.9 (September, 1913): 5-6.

the pen. Published as the first installment in the series *Shincho hyakushu* (*One Hundred Varieties of New Works*) by Yoshioka Shosekiten, which was created as a platform to showcase new works by Japan's most talented authors, *Two Nuns' Confession of Love* introduced Kōyō to a national audience.⁴ By 1889, Kōyō had already attained a modest level of notoriety as the head of Japan's first literary coterie, the Ken'yūsha (Friends of the Inkstone), which was founded as an informal group of amateur writers in 1885, before transforming into one of the most influential forces in the Japanese literary establishment by the 1890's. As leader of the Ken'yūsha, Kōyō had previously published his works of fiction and poetry in a number of minor literary magazines run by the coterie, including *Garakuta bunko* (*Rubbish Heap Library*), *Senshi bankō* (*Variegated Reds and Purples*), and *Murasaki* (*Purple*), and was still working as the editor of *Bunko* (*Library*) when he was approached with the opportunity to publish his first full-length novel. Faced with the prospect of speaking to a national audience, Kōyō agonized over the appropriate literary style for his text—a puzzle that would continue to occupy his attention over the rest of his career. The story itself was less problematic; Kōyō simply cobbled together plot points from a number of classical texts, combining familiar literary tropes into a time-honored narrative of fate and honor. In brief, his story tells of a nun, Yoshino, who happens upon a solitary woman, Wakaba, in a lonely hut in the wilderness, and learns that she lost her husband in war. Yoshino similarly lost a spouse to battle, and thus sympathizes deeply with the widowed woman. As they relate their stories, they realize that they loved the same man, Kōshirō, who was torn between duty to his feudal lord and his adoptive father, and who was driven to commit suicide after failing to protect his lord. Shocked by the fate that brought them together, Wakaba decides to take the tonsure, as both nuns vow to live out the rest of their lives in the isolated hut. If the plot sounds thin today, it was also panned upon its first release, as critics found fault with its numerous inconsistencies and clichés. At the same time, the literary style of the text was effusively praised by critics, readers, and fellow authors alike, as the work established Kōyō's reputation as a supremely gifted sculptor of literary prose.

In *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, Kōyō foregrounded the question of literary style directly in the preface of the work. Before launching into the opening lines of the narrative, he began the text by debating the relative value of two competing literary styles, known as *gazoku setchū*, or “the mixed elegant and vernacular style,” and *genbun itchi*, or “the unification of spoken and written language.” At stake in the decision of an appropriate literary style was the author's ability to create a lifelike depiction of the story, without sacrificing the formal elegance of the text. The mixed style, *gazoku setchū*, was the more conservative form of the two, having been the principle language of late Edo period fiction. In *gazoku setchū*, the narrator typically spoke in a classical register, using poetic diction and erudite rhetoric to convey a sense of authority over the narrative, while dialogue was modeled on contemporary speech patterns, often with a high degree of verisimilitude. The distance between registers had the effect of marking the narrator as a presence outside of the diegetic framework of the story, rather than an active participant in its imaginary world. This resulted in a form of narrative that was rich in figural expressions and pleasing to the ears, but whose opacity highlighted the mediated nature of the text. On the opposite side of *gazoku setchū* was *genbun itchi*, which represented an attempt to unite the spoken and written forms of Japanese into a single register. *Genbun itchi* was originally conceived of by educators who wished to create a simplified form of writing for the purposes of

⁴ Peter Kornicki finds that the novel sold 10,000 copies in five months, and that it was reprinted at least three times by 1890. *The Novels of Ozaki Kōyō: A Study of Selected Works with Special Reference to the Relationship Between the Fiction of the Tokugawa and Early Meiji Periods* (dissertation, Oxford University, 1978), 105.

increasing literacy and spreading education in Japan,⁵ but was eventually adopted by modern authors as a means of creating an impression of “reality” in their stories, specifically by decreasing the distance between narrator, characters, and reader. When attempting to devise a new literary language, Japanese authors aimed to create a form of neutral address—a task that was complicated by the social embeddedness of the Japanese language, which often necessitates an indication of the speaker’s social status relative to the addressee. If some forms of language sounded too rude or familiar, others seemed too removed or polite, thereby making it difficult to establish a neutral ground from which the narrator might speak. Although the *genbun itchi* debate is often characterized as a matter of adopting a new copular ending for narrative prose (*de aru* vs. *desu*, etc.),⁶ the effect of the language change was that the narrator came to occupy a new space in relation to both the reader and the story. Königsberg explains the predicament of the modern Japanese author as a search for the “transparent narrator,” or one who could deliver what felt like an unmediated experience of the narrative, “showing” the world of the story instead of telling it to the reader.

In debating the relative strengths of *genbun itchi* and *gazoku setchū*, Kōyō was faced with a creative dilemma. On one hand, he valued language that was lofty and well-crafted; he wrote for the pleasure of writing, savoring the sonorous qualities of words, which were beautiful on the surface, without necessarily leading to any reality beyond the text. On the other hand, he was interested in the possibility of using language to replicate real experiences, or using words to describe scenes that he observed with his physical sight, which, if done right, would appear clearly in the reader’s mind. For Kōyō, this struggle came down to a matter of linguistic form, as the author envisioned different literary styles as alternative methods of mediating (or not mediating) reality through text. He expressed his view on the differing strengths of these two styles most clearly in his essay “Ongyōjutsu,” or “The Art of Disappearing,” in which he compares *gazoku setchū* and *genbun itchi* to competing modes of visual representation:

If the literary style is a paintbrush, then *genbun itchi* is a camera [*shashin kikai*]. Merely placing a paintbrush before birds and flowers does not cause them to appear on the canvas, and yet turning a mirror towards a landscape causes mountains and rivers to reflect on its surface without effort. *Genbun itchi*? I used to think that anyone could do it, all you needed was to transcribe an oral performance of *kōdan* or *rakugo* in shorthand and you’d have a good book. When I used to hear “*genbun itchi*” I could barely hide my scorn, thinking that it should rightfully be called “the lousy author’s art of disappearing.” Afterwards, however, I was met with the unexpected necessity of learning the art of disappearing myself, and so I tried my hand at crafting the magic spell. It didn’t quite go as I had hoped, but it confirmed my conviction that *genbun itchi* is more like a camera [*shashinkyō*] than a paintbrush. Shortly afterward, I tried once more, but found that it was incredibly agonizing. It caused me almost as much struggle as my usual literary style. Thereafter, I tried three or four more times, which led me to

⁵ As Königsberg points out, *genbun itchi* initially began as a project of language reform for use in primary education, before spreading to the literary establishment. He references one of the first essays on the subject, “*Genbun itchi*,” written by Mozume Takami in 1886. See “The ‘Transparent Narrator’ Revisited: Ozaki Kōyō and *genbun itchi*,” *Japanese Language and Literature*, 42.1 (2008): 200.

⁶ Königsberg, “The ‘Transparent Narrator’ Revisited,” 198.

understand the strengths of *genbun itchi*, and to recognize the extreme difficulty of the form.⁷

Kōyō goes on to describe the challenge of writing in *genbun itchi* as a problem of mastering the art of disappearing, or making all traces of the author vanish from the text, so as to reflect reality as though without mediation. Throughout most of his career, he gravitated towards *gazoku setchū*, or the paintbrush, which left a heavy trace of the artist's hand on the metaphorical canvas of the manuscript, even to the point of obscuring the scene on display. *Genbun itchi*, the camera, appeared to him as a literary form without artistry, in which the author disappeared entirely from the frame of the text, thereby relinquishing responsibility for the work's creation to nature.

Faced with the challenge of deciding between *genbun itchi* and *gazoku setchū*, Kōyō chose neither, or at least so he claimed. In his preface to *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, he announced that he had invented an entirely new literary style, which had caused him no small amount of suffering to devise:

As for style, I found that *gazoku setchū* was not terribly interesting, nor was *genbun itchi* particularly pleasing. I came to this conclusion only after thoroughly agonizing over every aspect of the matter. The phoenix or the chicken? The tiger or the cat? In the end, I invented an eccentric and unconventional style of prose, whose effect even I am unable to evaluate. Although my achievements may be of no great merit, please take into account the great pains that I took to arrive at this style, and judge accordingly.⁸

When examining the literary style that Kōyō claims to have created, the innovative qualities of his writing are difficult to ascertain. Combining classical grammar with extended dramatic dialogue and a penchant for poetic phrasing, his text falls more easily into the category of *gazoku setchū* than anything else. Contemporary readers, however, took note of every minor stylistic innovation in Kōyō's prose, including his use of unusual punctuation, elliptical phrasing, and elaborate descriptions of people and places. Faced with choosing between elegant diction or plain description ("the phoenix or the chicken"), Kōyō sought to maintain a degree of poetic refinement, while crafting a literary landscape that appeared lifelike to the reader.

Two Nuns' Confession of Love opens with one of the most famous passages of Kōyō's fiction, in which the narrator describes the story's setting by combining elliptical poetic phrasing with concrete observations of the surrounding environment. At once lofty and immediate, the passage finds Kōyō searching for a middle ground between rhetoric and realism:

Even in the capital..... How desolate, an isolated mountain village, after the rain. From morning to evening, yesterday and today, a storm blew through. The leaves were blown clean off of the trees, leaving only the pines on the mountain top unscathed. The face of the mountain was thinned out, pitiful in appearance. Forests stood like bones, terrible.

If not even the steam of a teapot rises, nor do loggers visit. Who is it that lives there, in that hut in the shadow of the valley? A reed fence serves only to remind one of the floating world, so difficult to throw away. The enclosure is

⁷ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993-1995), 10:365.

⁸ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 1:4.

sparsely woven, the bamboo stakes eaten by worms, and the ropes rotted away, and yet the dried remains of vine tendrils cling steadfastly to a fence that somehow does not fall. The only sign that marks the entrance to the hut are two planks of black wood stuck into the ground. The thatched roof is black with age, a heartrending sight, as eaves are blown perpetually by the wind. The only elegant touch is the moon, which shines through broken walls. One must not step too hard on the bamboo veranda. A shoe rack made of a dug-up tree trunk, and three paces to the left, water flowing through a bamboo pipe. or rather not flowing, but dripping endlessly into a bucket offered to the Buddha, the sound of dripping water.⁹

At the opening of his narrative, Kōyō creates a vivid sense of place by combining poetic impressions of nature with close descriptions of the lonely hut. He moves quickly through the landscape, linking images in the manner of a *haikai* poet, with short, elliptical passages that display a careful economy of style. His grammar is largely archaic and far removed from the spoken language (take, for example, the highly literary phrase *cha no keburī dani agarazunba*, literally meaning “if not even the steam of a teapot rises”). His most dramatic break with literary orthodoxy, however, comes in the form of his unusual punctuation, as he makes frequent use of periods and ellipses to break longer phrases into short, fragmentary pieces, thereby imparting a staccato rhythm to the text. His sentence fragments often end in nouns, in a grammatical construction known as *taigen dome* (substantive stop), which he employs liberally throughout the text. As a reversal of the usual word order in Japanese, *taigen dome* is typically found in poetry, but is less common in prose, where it has the effect of highlighting the ending noun. At the same time, Kōyō’s prose displays an admixture of objective description (or what might be termed “literary realism”), as he melds familiar tropes (the moon over a lonely hut) with unusual descriptions of the physical world, which suggest real-time observation by the author (a shoe rack made out of a tree stump, separated by three paces from a dripping water pipe). Together, these literary devices create an impression of a place that lies in between poetic reverie and an objectively-observed reality. Following his meticulous introduction, much of Kōyō’s story is related through dramatic dialogue, as he shifts from description into a play-like narrative of love-torn nuns. It was the opening paragraph of the work, however, together with a handful of other descriptive passages, that most clearly captivated his reading audience.

As evidenced by numerous contemporary reviews, much of the admiration directed at Kōyō’s debut singled out the brilliance of his prose as the greatest strength of the work. Multiple critics agreed that the author had succeeded in inventing a new style of writing, such as one reviewer for the *Yomiuri shinbun*, who wrote, “His literary style is something new, neither pretentious nor vulgar,” and another reviewer writing for *The Asano shinbun*, who declared, “As claimed by the author himself, Kōyō’s literary style is truly eccentric and unconventional [*ippū iyō*]. one can easily confirm that he has opened an entirely new path of elegant form. Just when the dazzling war between *gazoku setchū* and *genbun itchi* appeared to reach new heights of confrontation, Kōyō raised the flag of a third path.”¹⁰ In imitation of the author, the reviewer even makes use of Kōyō’s unusual nine-point ellipses, including in his emphatic conclusion: “As

⁹ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 1:5.

¹⁰ Many of the comments quoted in this section are found in a 52-page compilation of literary reviews of *Two Nuns’ Confession of Love* that was featured as a supplement to Aeba Kōson’s (1855-1912) *Horidashimono* (*Lucky Find*, 1899), the second volume in the *Shincho hyakushu* series. The above quotes are found on pages 14-15 and 44.

for Kōyō's prose..... if he continues to pour his heart and soul into his writing, from now into the distant future, it will become a glorious and astounding style." Ishibashi Ningetsu (1865-1926), one of Kōyō's most vocal supporters, referred to *Two Nuns' Confession of Love* as a "towering masterpiece that demolished all other novels of the day," including Futabatei Shimei's *Floating Clouds*, Yamada Bimyō's *The Butterfly*, and Tsubouchi Shōyō's *Wife*.¹¹ Although his review focuses on the emotional impact of the narrative, he twice uses the unusual expression "one tear per written character" (*ichiji ichi namida*) to highlight the fact that it was Kōyō's magnificent prose, above all else, that made the work so affecting. Tayama Katai (1872-1930), later an ardent critic of Kōyō's highly-wrought style, conceded that the power of his language in *Two Nuns' Confession of Love* was so overwhelming that it influenced an entire generation of authors to try their hand at writing literature. He writes: "*Irozange* moved me tremendously. If nothing else, the literary style and manner of narration possessed the power to bewitch the youth of the day."¹² Not all critics, however, were so unequivocal in their praise, as multiple reviewers remarked that, for all of its beauty, Kōyō's text was simply too difficult or opaque for the average reader. After lauding the elegance and refinement of his style, one reviewer in *Shuppan geppyō* expressed concern over the general reader's ability to wade through such dense passages of prose. Another reviewer, writing for *Bunko* (a magazine edited by Kōyō himself) wrote, "If you allow me to make a small joke, I would evaluate Kōyō's writing as the ascetic immortal style [*sennin-chō*], or otherwise the famously demanding style [*meinan dokutai*]."¹³

As has long been acknowledged by critics, rather than inventing an entirely new form of prose, Kōyō's "innovative" style borrowed heavily from the work of Ihara Saikaku, a writer active in the late 17th century. This fact was pointed out early on in *Shuppan geppyō*, with the following adroit observation: "The elegance and suggestive quality of Kōyō's prose would appear to emerge from his use of the *haikai* style of writing [*haikai-bun*], while the intricate details of his literary universe and the profound mysteries of his human drama would appear to be the product of his digging into the heart of Saikaku."¹⁴ As one of the most popular authors of the Edo period, Saikaku captivated audiences with colorful tales of urban life at the turn of the 17th century, but his work was largely forgotten during the early 19th century, as new waves of popular authors captured the national imagination. He was rediscovered in the 1880's by scholars Awashima Kangetsu (1859-1926) and Aeba Kōson (1855-1912), who championed him as a forgotten hero of Japanese literature, whose native brand of "realism" rivaled anything produced in the West. The beginning of Kōyō's career coincided with the so-called "Genroku craze," named after the Genroku era (1688-1704), or the period in which Saikaku and his literary successor, Ejima Kiseki, were the leading authors in Japan.¹⁵ Among writers who voiced their admiration for Saikaku during this time were Shōyō, Kōyō, Rohan, Ōgai, and Ichiyō—in other

¹¹ Ningetsu's review first appeared in *Kokumin no tomo* in April, 1889. It is quoted by Ikari Akira in *Ken'yūsha no bungaku* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1961), 90.

¹² Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō no sanjūnen* (Tokyo: Iwanami bunko, 1917), 51.

¹³ Originally published in *Bunko*, reprinted in the supplemental review section of Kōson, *Horidashimono*, 47.

¹⁴ Originally published in *Shuppan geppyō*, reprinted in the supplemental review section of Kōson, *Horidashimono*, 47.

¹⁵ In the words of Indra Levy, "aside from its dashes and ellipses, almost every other stylistic aspect of the text was quite familiar to contemporary readers of Japanese fiction." *Sirens of the Western Shore: The Westernesque Femme Fatale, Translation, and Vernacular Style in Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 103-104.

words, almost every major author of the 1890's.¹⁶ Kōyō, in particular, was especially dedicated in his love for Saikaku, whose work he edited, annotated, and published throughout his career; as one of the most active proponents of Saikaku's fiction in the modern era, Kōyō was instrumental in popularizing the author's work among contemporary audiences. In his early writing, Kōyō borrowed heavily from Saikaku, whose *haikai* aesthetics and lively depictions of urban life served as a major influence on the development of his literary technique. Later on, Kōyō would increasingly distance himself from his early imitative style, but the importance of Saikaku to his literary formation would never be forgotten. During his own lifetime, Kōyō's fiction was already referred to as "Genroku literature in Western clothing" (*yōsō seru Genroku bungaku*) by Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908),¹⁷ a contemporary author whose naturalistic stories demonstrated a more thorough understanding of Western literary values.

Comparing Saikaku and Kōyō's fiction, one finds similarities in terms of their shared themes, as both writers endeavored to depict contemporary society in a realistic manner, with a focus on matters of business, sexual relations, and the pleasure quarters. Kōyō also borrowed some of Saikaku's more unorthodox syntax, including the use of elliptical phrasing, *taigen dome*, and fragmentary sentences. One of Kōyō's more unusual borrowings from Saikaku came in the form of his frequent use of ellipses, which he peppered throughout his prose, driving at least one contemporary reviewer mad. Writing in *Tōzai shinbun* in November, 1899, author Saitō Ryokuu (1867-1904) wrote that Kōyō had "raised himself an idol by the name of Saikaku," whom he honored by "chanting 'ellipsis, ellipsis' every now and again."¹⁸ Peter Kornicki lists a number of other similarities between Kōyō and Saikaku's fiction, including "frequent changes of subject in narrative passages, a certain amount of syntactical looseness, and a generally elliptical style."¹⁹ In many other ways, however, Kōyō's writing was completely different from Saikaku's, particularly in his focus on descriptive prose. As noted by Robert Lyons Danly, Saikaku was not one to linger on description and had little time for editing or polishing his texts. In Danly's estimation, Saikaku was "less interested in a neat beginning, middle, and end than he was in the cumulative effect that a progression of images, however tenuously related, could induce. A cluster of these images becomes a story (sometimes remaining an incoalescent array of subplots and digressions), and a cluster of stories becomes a book..."²⁰ Kōyō, on the other hand, was fanatically devoted to editing his texts, as well as to crafting lengthy, unified narratives full of minutely-detailed descriptions of people and places.

Returning to the opening passage of *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, a retrospective by Maruoka Kyūka (1865-1927), a close friend of Kōyō's and co-founder of the Ken'yūsha, reveals that the author had another source of inspiration for his style aside from Saikaku, which was the real scene of a lonely hut in a mountain valley. According to Kyūka, while writing *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, Kōyō traveled to a rural area west of Tokyo in order to observe a dilapidated hut in real-time, a scene which he then endeavored to recreate through text.²¹ Kōyō's attempt to objectively transcribe his experience of observing the hut suggests a method of writing known as "realism" (*shajitsu shugi*) or "naturalism" (*shizen shugi*), in which the author attempts to transcribe reality exactly as it is (or at least as it appears to the observer). Kōyō's interest in this

¹⁶ Kornicki, *The Novels of Ozaki Kōyō*, 92-93. Robert Lyons Danly, *In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life and Writings of Higuchi Ichiyō, a Woman of Letters in Meiji Japan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 109-110.

¹⁷ Kunikida Doppo, "Kōyō Sanjin," *Kunikida Doppo zenshū* (Tokyo: Gakushū kenkyūsha, 1965), 1:426-435.

¹⁸ Referenced by Kornicki in *The Novels of Ozaki Kōyō*, 99.

¹⁹ Kornicki, *The Novels of Ozaki Kōyō*, 105.

²⁰ Danly, *In the Shade of Spring Leaves*, 114.

²¹ See Oka Yasuo, *Meiji bundan no yū Ozaki Kōyō* (Tokyo: Shintensha, 1984), 131-132.

technique might be traced to his experience of reading European literature, and especially the writings of Charles Dickens and Émile Zola, both of whom impressed him with their careful attention to detail and lifelike descriptions of people and places.²² Although Kōyō is often portrayed as an archly conservative writer who had little use for modern literary trends, he was actually a voracious reader of European fiction (mostly through English and Japanese translations) and maintained a lifelong interest in adapting literary techniques from Western writing, especially from texts that exhibited a naturalist approach to descriptive prose.

Like many authors of the Meiji period, Kōyō first encountered European fiction through English, which he studied briefly at the Daigaku Yobimon in preparation for college entrance exams.²³ As early as the mid-1880's, he began reading authors like William Thackeray, Washington Irving, and Charles Dickens, and even mentioned Shakespeare as one of his two favorite authors, the other being Saikaku.²⁴ He was particularly fond of Dickens, whose depictions of contemporary English society he praised as vivid (*meiseki*, glossed *vivīddo*) and lifelike (*yakujo*), thus revealing his interest in the quality of vivacity as a positive literary value. Following his experiences with Anglophone literature, he developed an interest in French fiction, including the works of Émile Zola, Honoré de Balzac, Molière, Victor Hugo, Guy de Maupassant, and Alphonse Daudet. He was known by his students as an avid fan of Zola, whose works he would read three or four times in a row.²⁵ Later in life, he developed a fascination with Russian literature, and particularly the works of Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Chekhov, which he adapted to Japanese with the help of a professional translator.²⁶ Over the course of his career, Kōyō would pen roughly thirty translations or adaptations of European texts, including works that he translated largely by himself, and those that he based on translations by students, or otherwise adapted with the help of professionals specializing in various European languages.²⁷ The sources of his adaptations ranged from classical texts of world literature like *Arabian Nights* and the *Decameron*, to fairy tales by Hans Christian Anderson and the Brothers Grimm, to late-19th century realist novels by Zola and Dostoevsky.

By comparing Kōyō's fiction to the Western authors from whom he took inspiration, critics have often come to the conclusion that Kōyō failed to replicate the tenets of realism that he found in European texts. Regardless of the ambiguity of the term, "realism" appears time and again as a measure against which Kōyō's fiction is evaluated, and almost inevitably judged to fall short. Takada Mizuho, in "The Qualities of Realism [*Riarizumu*] in Kōyō's Fiction," arrives at the conclusion that Kōyō succeeded at producing "realistic description" (*shajitsu-teki byōsha*), while never quite arriving at "modern realism" (*kindai riarizumu*), a term that he never clearly defines.²⁸ Carl F. Taeusch, in "Realism in the Novels of Ozaki Kōyō," begins his essay by

²² Kōyō's relationship to European literature, including his extensive work in translation and adaptation of European texts, is explained by Oka Yasuo in *Ozaki Kōyō no shōgai to bungaku* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1953), 44-55.

²³ Kōyō briefly studied English at the Mita English School in 1882, before entering the Yobimon in 1883. See Oka, *Meiji bundan no yū*, 49. Also Peter Kornicki, *The Novels of Ozaki Kōyō*, 2.

²⁴ Oka Yasuo, *Meiji bundan no yū*, 90. He continued to read Shakespeare from his hospital bed during his final days of life. See Oka, *Ozaki Kōyō no shōgai to bungaku*, 52.

²⁵ Oka Yasuo, *Ozaki Kōyō no shōgai to bungaku*, 44-46.

²⁶ Kōyō translated numerous stories by Chekhov, Dostoevsky, and other Russian authors with the assistance of scholar and translator Senuma Kayō (1875-1915). See Katō Yuri, "Meiji shoki Robungaku hon'yaku ronkō (yon): Ozaki Kōyō to Roshia bungaku," *Tsukuba Kokusai Daigaku kenkyū kiyō*, 4 (March 25, 1998): 233-253.

²⁷ For Kōyō's habit of relying on his students for translations see Emi Suiin, *Kōyō to Ken'yūsha* (Tokyo: Kaizōsha, 1927), 135. Referenced by Levy in *Sirens of the Western Shore*, 121.

²⁸ Takada Mizuho, "Kōyō ni okeru riarizumu no genshitsu," *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū*, 19.3 (March, 1974): 38.

questioning the usefulness of the term “realism” as a literary measure, which he writes has been “diluted... by overly facile application,” while lacking a precise definition to begin with.²⁹ Nevertheless, he discusses Kōyō’s work in terms of realism, which he separates into different categories of realistic writing, including Saikaku-style realism, which portrays the “seamier side of life” without moralistic restraint, and psychological realism, in which the narrator probes the depth of his or her characters’ psyches, without censure of their less admirable traits.³⁰ Taeusch identifies Kōyō’s most successful works as those which draw closest to “psychological realism,” thus reinstating the centrality of the term as a measure of artistic worth. Matthew Königsberg, defending the literary value of Kōyō’s fiction, claims that he wrote “great realistic novels,” which “painted a picture of the society around him and thus would qualify as works of realistic literature...”³¹ He defines realism as a form of writing that is objective and all-inclusive, particularly in its depiction of the realities of social behavior.

Looking at Kōyō’s own writings on literary style, one might approach the question of realism not as a matter not of objectivity or verisimilitude, but rather “vivacity” (*meiseki*) or “lifelikeness” (*yakujo*). In “The Art of Disappearing,” Kōyō himself suggests the existence of two competing forms of realism, the painterly and the photographic, which both take as their subject some aspect of reality, but which communicate their findings to the reader in different ways. Throughout most of his career, Kōyō favored the painterly mode of writing, in which the hand of the artist was made abundantly apparent in the work. Seizing on this distinction, Miya Mizuta Lippit refers to Kōyō’s style of literature as “painterly,” “picturesque,” or “imaginative realism,” which she contrasts with the “photographic” or “imitative realism” of contemporary authors, especially those who subscribed to Eurocentric measures of literary value.³² Other scholars, such as Shioda Ryōhei, discuss Kōyō’s style as a form of realism born out of attention to minutiae, or as a kind of sculptural realism, in which the author attempts to bring the work of art to life by carefully carving out every minor detail of the text.³³ Takada Mizuho, taking a similar approach, describes Kōyō’s brand of realism as originating in the author’s subjective experience of reality, which he attempted to channel into literary form by carefully describing every minor detail of the world that he observed. “Rather than nature as seen through one’s eyes,” Takada writes, “[Kōyō] portrayed nature as seen through one’s dreams, as arising from the emotions.”³⁴ As I argue later on, Kōyō eventually became just as interested in the “photographic” style of realism as the painterly, but the distinction between forms remains useful for discussing the literary qualities of his work. Combining his experience of reading Saikaku, Shakespeare, and Zola, together with his experience of attempting to describe the world that he saw with his own eyes, Kōyō endeavored to create a literary style that would bring the imaginary world of his fiction vividly to life.

²⁹ Carl F. Taeusch, “Realism in the Novels of Ozaki Kōyō,” *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, 10.2/3 (Sep., 1975), 159.

³⁰ Taeusch writes “There can be no doubt that realism... was Kōyō’s goal in *Tajō takon*, a hypothesis which is reinforced by the fact that the novel is one of the few by Kōyō written in the colloquial language, as opposed to his more florid and detached hybrid-classical style.” “Realism in the Novels of Ozaki Kōyō,” 160; 170-174.

³¹ Matthew Königsberg, “The ‘Transparent Narrator’ Revisited,” 197.

³² This is as found in the manuscript for her upcoming monograph *Aesthetic Life: Beauty and Art in Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019) in the chapter “Short-Lived Beauty (*bijin hakumei*): Illustration and the *Bijin* Heroines of Literary Realism.”

³³ Shioda Ryōhei, “Kōyō sanmyaku,” *Kōda Rohan, Ozaki Kōyō*, edited by Fukuda Kiyoto (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1959), 328.

³⁴ Takada, “Kōyō ni okeru riarizumu no genshitsu,” 38.

Considering the depth of his belief in language as the basis of his art, it stands to reason that Kōyō sought to restrict the appearance of illustration in his texts. If the goal of his literary project was to develop a style of prose that could represent reality in vivid terms, then illustration might appear as a superfluous element in his fiction, if not a flat-out distraction. The truth of the matter, however, is that Kōyō's fiction was extensively illustrated, from the very beginning of his career to the very end, and included some of the most elaborately crafted images in all of Meiji period fiction.³⁵ Not only that, but Kōyō was often personally involved in the illustration of his own work, for which he even supplied draft images. When attempting to understand why Kōyō would include so many images in his work, despite vocal protestations on his part, one must take into account the literary environment of the time, including the demands of publishers and readers. As evidenced in statements made by writers such as Kōyō and Aeba Kōson,³⁶ the pressure to include illustrations in literary publications throughout the Meiji period was nearly insurmountable, as authors were often forced by publishers to add pictures to their texts regardless of their own desires. By taking an active interest in the illustrative process, writers could at least regain a measure of control over the visual expression of their work. The insistence with which publishers demanded that writers concede to the illustration of their fiction suggests that contemporary audiences were far more likely to purchase texts that included images than those that did not. Furthermore, reader response columns and literary reviews demonstrate that readers not only noticed the pictures that appeared in contemporary novels, but often followed illustrations with just as much enthusiasm and attention to detail as they did the texts in which they were included (or, one might even say, the texts that accompanied them). In Kōyō's case, this situation is observable beginning with his mainstream debut, *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, and only became more apparent later in his career.

While most reviewers for *Two Nuns' Confession of Love* focused on the literary style of the text, at least three commented directly on the illustration of the work directly, including one who carefully examined every image. As previously stated, Kōyō's debut was originally published as the first installment in the *Shincho hyakushu* series, which was meant to showcase works of fiction by the leading writers of the day. Floored by the positive response accorded to Kōyō's text, the work's publisher, Yoshioka Shosekiten, included 52 pages of excerpted reviews in volume two of the series, *Horidashimono (Lucky Find)* by Aeba Kōson. While Kōson's story included no illustrations (thus proving that it was, in fact, possible to insist that none be

³⁵ Kōyō's most extensively illustrated texts were his children's stories, such as *Oni Momotarō* (1891), which suggests that he considered illustration to be especially appropriate for juvenile fiction. While most of his book-form publications included minimal illustration, they often featured woodblock frontispieces known as *kuchi-e*, which were printed in full color and designed by many of the era's most renowned artists, including figures such as Tomioka Eisen, Mizuno Toshikata, and Suzuki Kason. These frontispieces were often printed on two or three consecutive pages, which could be folded out to form large, spectacular images. Such images were a major selling point for readers, who would occasionally clip them out of the books in which they were published in order to collect them. It is for this reason that Kōyō complained, in his *sashi-e muyōron*, that it was nearly impossible to publish a story that did not at least include a frontispiece. Kōyō's longest and most noteworthy collaborative relationship with an illustrator was with Takeuchi Keishū, an artist who created some of the most dynamic and intricately detailed frontispieces found in Kōyō's fiction. For more on Kōyō and Keishū, see Yamada Nanako, *Takeuchi Keishū kuchieshū*.

³⁶ Kōson superseded Kōyō in the vehemence of his opposition to illustration, as evidenced by the following statement: "I understand that not every author is able to move the reader by simply lining up words in a row, but at the very least, they shouldn't have to draw on illustrations for basic explanations. If this situation continues, I will quit the literary establishment today, and never write another word in my life." In contrast to Kōyō, Kōson almost entirely eliminated the use of illustration in his work. Nishimura Kiyokazu, *Imēji no shūjigaku*, 409.

included), Kōyō's debut featured three illustrations, each by a different illustrator. These included works by two of the most celebrated artists of the era, Tsukioka Yoshitoshi and Watanabe Seitei, and an illustrator who had been a member of the Ken'yūsha since the time of the group's formation, Matsuoka Ryokuga (ca. 1869-ca. 1901), having contributed illustrations to the first privately-circulated issue of *Garakuta bunko* in 1885.³⁷ Out of the three reviewers who mention illustrations, one refers only to the cover, which includes an image of the title and chapter headings in gold print against a blue background. The image imitates a form of decorated Buddhist scroll known as *konshi kondei* (gold paint on dark blue paper), thus evoking a holy aura around the work.

Taking note of the clever visual touch, the reviewer for *Bunko* writes, "Gold painted letters against a black background. Just by admiring the cover, the reader is able to glean the author's design, which immediately strikes one with its elegance. Weak reviewers such as myself need not even open the text, a single glance at the cover is enough to produce a flood of tears."³⁸ Another reviewer, writing for *Shuppan geppyō*, took issue with the illustrations, remarking that they cheapened the reading experience by turning the text into a toy for readers, who, he charged, expected all of their fiction to take the form of illustrated playbooks, rather than serious works of art.³⁹ For this reviewer, the illustrations were clearly superfluous, at the same time that they suggested a normative reading practice that took both text and image as fundamental elements of the work.

One final reviewer, influential literary critic Uchida Roan (1868-1929), took the time to comment on every visual element of the novel, in a review that appeared in *Jogaku zasshi* (*Schoolgirls' Magazine*), beginning with the cover:

Well then, let's proceed in order. The cover is quite elaborate. The classical styling of gold lettering on blue background is interesting—to let it be eaten by moths would be a shame. The calligraphy on the title page is written in the author's own hand, in the Mt. Zu style. Rendered tastefully in light purple, might this be the "light ink" form preferred by connoisseurs? The pictures inserted throughout the pages are also captivating, but the ink is a bit thick, occasionally making the text difficult to read in a dark room.⁴⁰

Roan then proceeds to evaluate the novel page by page, highlighting noteworthy passages along the way. As he moves through the text, he stops at every illustration, in order to compare the visual details of the images to descriptive passages found in Kōyō's text. He begins with Yoshitoshi's illustration, which depicts Yoshino, the nun, as she arrives at the dilapidated hut described in the opening passage of the novel. Although Yoshitoshi was one of the most esteemed artists of the 19th century, Roan panned his illustration for *Two Nuns' Confession of*

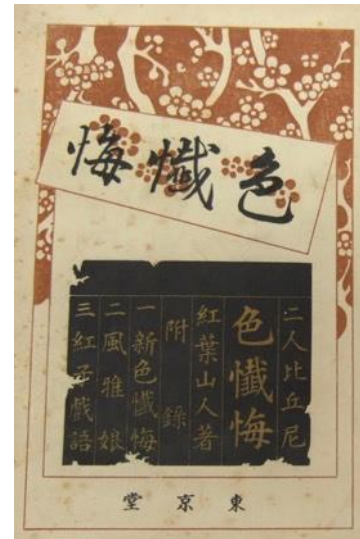


Figure 22 - *Two Nuns' Confession of Love* (1889), cover illustration

³⁷ Oka, *Meiji bundan no yū*, 67.

³⁸ Originally published in *Bunko*, reprinted in the supplemental review section of Kōson, *Horidashimono*, 45.

³⁹ Originally published in *Shuppan geppyō*, reprinted in the supplemental review section of Kōson, *Horidashimono*, 8.

⁴⁰ From *Jogaku zasshi*, reprinted in the supplemental review section of Kōson, *Horidashimono*, 20-21.

Love, as he probed every minor element of the image and critiqued what he saw as sloppy artwork:



Figure 23 - *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, illustration #1, by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi

As for Yoshitoshi's illustration, the nun's face is perfectly fine, but the creases in her hood seem a bit excessive. Her hand is poised awkwardly in an attempt to hold back her conical hat from the wind, which blows violently and nearly rips it away. Perhaps I'm not seeing this right [*higame ka*], but the ramshackle hut in the distance looks like it was drawn with invisible ink [*aburidashi*]. Also, I can't tell if the leaves are falling from the tree, or blowing up from the ground. In his signature, Yoshitoshi depicts the two characters of his name as though they are being blown away by the same wind, which makes for a strange effect.

In his evaluation of the next image, by Matsuoka Ryokuga, Roan clearly treats the text as the defining medium of the narrative, while expecting the illustrations to remain faithful to their source. He writes:



Figure 24 - *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, illustration #2, by Matsuoka Ryokuga

Ryokuga's illustration is a first-class accomplishment, but it appears to differ slightly from the text. Take, for example, "Vestiges of snow continue to fall lightly from the evening sky..." and "having lost his headband, his side locks were wild after strenuous battle..."

Roan's qualms would appear to be with the details of Ryokuga's depiction, which gives no impression of a snowy landscape, as described in the text, and appears to add a headband to the character of Kōshirō, whom the narrative leaves bareheaded.

For the final illustration, by Watanabe Seitei, Roan suggests that, on occasion, the image might even surpass the text in terms of vividness and emotional impact, as he praises Seitei's illustration, almost to the detriment of Kōyō's text:



Figure 25 - *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, illustration #3, by Watanabe Seitei

As for Seitei's illustration, Yoshino makes a weak attempt to stop the wounded Kōshirō from taking his life. The image threatens to engulf the entire narrative in its visual pull..... forgive me for making the outrageous comparison to a Takeda *karakuri* [a variety of mechanical puppet show]. As for the image of the folding screen, I can't quite make out what's going on—are those flowers, either hemp or violets, on a block of wood? And why are petals falling in clusters from a flower pot in a room with no wind? Still, the flowers are so vivid that one can almost smell them inviting gnats with their scent.

Taken together, Roan's comments suggest a contemporary mode of reading in which illustration was treated as a fundamental element of the literary work. At times, he privileges language as the vehicle of the narrative, while, at other times, he suggests that the illustrations supersede the text, both in terms of their aesthetic power and their artistic accomplishment. Throughout his review, he compares words and pictures with an almost microscopic attention to detail, treating both forms as two sides of the same artistic expression.

While there is good reason to assume that Kōyō's fiction was illustrated in large part due to the demands of his readership, a closer inspection of his work reveals that his interest in

illustration extended to a basic concern with the relationship between visual and literary art. From his earliest fiction to his final works, Kōyō repeatedly wrote stories that center on images, whether paintings, photographs, or mental pictures, which draw his characters on with an almost irresistible pull. His narratives set images in opposition to words, both of which reveal different aspects of reality, often in contradictory terms. Such stories were frequently illustrated, with pictures that take on various functions, including perfunctory illustrations demanded by the publisher as a means to attract readers, carefully crafted works of art created in close collaboration with the illustrator, and pictures that appear as central elements of Kōyō's texts, even when they are set in opposition to his words. Kōyō's interest in images, including his criticism of contemporary illustrative practice, might be understood in terms of his concern with the representational abilities of language. In his fiction, images function as metaphors for language, which the author divides into the categories of *gazoku setchū* and *genbun itchi*. These same literary styles in turn correspond to the categories of painterly vs. photographic, or mediated vs. unmediated. While Kōyō's primary concern in his fiction was with the power of language to express the author's vision, he was constantly attentive to the ways in which images both supported and contradicted his text, while suggesting an element of vivacity that escaped the realm of language entirely.

Faces: Visual Transmission

In Kōyō's *Namu Amida Butsu* (1889) a young girl named Oume lies critically ill in a hospital bed after contracting a lung disease. With little hope of recovery, she begins to correspond with Ueno Kanejirō, the nephew of her wet nurse, developing a romantic relationship with him via letter. Eventually, however, Ueno's letters no longer satisfy Oume's desire for him, and so she asks for him to send a photograph instead. At the end of the story, a life-saving tonic and the desired photograph are delivered to Oume's hospital room at the same moment, but rather than drink the tonic first and look at the picture later, she clutches the photograph in ecstasy and dies. *Namu Amida Butsu* is the first of many stories in which Kōyō explores the power of images to negotiate absence by mediating the distance between the viewer and the object of desire. In this and later stories, images emerge as cultic objects that disrupt the logic of the narrative and give rise to manic obsessions in his characters, who attempt to regain lost connections to the past by devoting themselves entirely to images. In some stories, the desired image is a photograph, while in others it is a portrait painting, or otherwise a view that has been obstructed by blindness. In almost every case, the pull of the image proves to be insurmountable, as characters sacrifice their lives and livelihood at the altar of the image. Beyond a narrative focus on pictures, however, such stories also negotiate the boundaries of text and image directly in their format, by juxtaposing different forms of literary language with various styles of illustration. Comparing literary and visual modes of storytelling, Kōyō questions the limits of words and pictures to capture reality, as both have the ability to either confirm or distort the world that they purport to represent.

One month after making his mainstream debut with *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, Kōyō published the first installment of *Namu Amida Butsu*, on May 10, 1889, in an unusual format. Rather than a literary magazine or standalone book, the first volume of his new story appeared in the debut issue of *Hyakkaen*, a magazine that specialized in printing stenographic transcriptions of *rakugo* and *kōdan*, or traditional forms of oral narrative with origins in the Edo period. While the choice of venue might suggest that Kōyō was interested in trying his hand at oral

performance, or at least that he was interested in attempting to mimic *rakugo* via his writing, both the story itself and comments by the author suggest otherwise. Kōyō later related the circumstances of the publication by claiming that he was originally quite averse to the idea of publishing a novel (*shōsetsu*) in a magazine focused on *rakugo*, which he derided as a popular art form with limited artistic potential, but that he ultimately took the request as an opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of the novel over traditional forms of storytelling.⁴¹ The text that he devised, *Namu Amida Butsu*, largely replicates the literary style of his debut, with frequent use of *taigen dome* (substantive stops), extended ellipses (one example in the original publication is twenty-four periods long) and a highly-wrought style of narrative prose, punctuated by the mimetic dialogue of his characters.

As in *Two Nuns Confession of Love*, Kōyō's narrative passages in *Namu Amida Butsu* are dense with figural language and clever wordplay—elements of language that are generally easier to comprehend in text than they are in speech, thereby demonstrating the strengths of writing as a method of communication. As for the dialogue, Kōyō nearly goes out of his way to imitate spoken language, with representations of hesitation, stuttering, and slurring, which he expresses through the use of ellipses and repeated sounds. The title of the story, *Namu Amida Butsu*, foregrounds the aural dimension of the text by referencing the *nenbutsu* chant of Pure Land Buddhism, in which the devotee calls on the name of Amida Butsu (Buddha Amitābha) ten times in a row, with the goal of achieving rebirth in paradise. The chant opens and closes the narrative, where it is repeated twice, thus embedding the entire text within the framework of its sound. Further emphasizing the sonorous quality of the chant is its representation in the text, for in the original publication the title of the work is given as ((*Namu Amida Butsu*)) (((南無阿弥陀仏))), with *kanji* embedded in double parentheses, as though the spoken phrase remains beyond the full capture of text. Complicating the interplay between oral and written language, however, is a third dimension of the work, which is its illustration, or its visual expression via images. In *Hyakkaen*, *Namu Amida Butsu* was published with four black-and-white woodblock prints, one for each chapter, including two by Watanabe Seitai, one by Utagawa Kunimatsu, and one by Tanaka Yūdō. When collected into a single volume by Shinshindō the following year, in 1890, it was released with eight new images (including the cover and title page illustrations) by Takeuchi Keishū, an illustrator who would go on to become one of Kōyō's closest collaborators, and whose artistic style would come to define the visual expression of his work. On top of all of these elements might be added the content of the narrative, which focuses on an exchange of letters and photographs, each of which possesses a different access to reality, via either visual or literary form.

Namu Amida Butsu opens with a pivot from oral to written language, as it begins with a representation of its namesake chant, before turning immediately to the reading of a line of text printed on a grave marker:

Namu Amida Butsu—Namu Amida Butsu. At the Renkōji Pure Land temple in Nakadera, Osaka lies the deceased. A fresh mound of earth, a wooden grave tablet still smelling of trees, her Buddhist name dyed with black ink, *Shunmu Hōkaku Shinnyo*, April 2, Meiji 22. Only four or five days ago she was still of this world—

⁴¹ As related in the literary column “Sakka kushindan” (Conversations with Authors on the Hardships of Their Work) in the magazine *Shincho gekkan*, volume 1, number 4, July 3, 1897. Reprinted in *Kōyō zenshū*, 196-209. The section on *Namu Amida Butsu* appears on pages 206-207.

but then, something even more pitiful. On the other side, her secular name, *Tsunami Umejo*, deceased at 18—ah yes, that’s the age of her death.⁴²

As the narrator reads the name of the eighteen-year-old girl on a grave marker in Osaka, he is moved to tears by the thought of one who left the world so young. He expresses the tragedy of the situation in a literary idiom full of poetic flourishes, such as in the following passage:

Faintly accompanying the melancholy mood of the scene was a single plume of incense smoke, which, as I watched, turned halfway to ash. Invited by the wind, both shadow and form became emptiness. Witnessing the smoke, I thought of the saying, ‘the transience of human life is as lighting in the evening or dew in the morning,’ which only served to fill me with greater longing. Aa!⁴³

Weeping before the grave, he hears the footsteps of an approaching figure, the wet nurse Oyoshi, who comes to offer prayers for the deceased. According to the narrator, the story that follows is based on Oyoshi’s account, although he continues to relate the events in his own voice. Remarking that he decided to title his version of Oyoshi’s story (*Namu Amida Butsu*), the identity of the narrator is overlapped with that of the author, Kōyō. The idea that his story was based on a true account is reinforced in the collected version of the work, which includes a thank you letter signed by Kōyō and addressed to one of the story’s characters, Ueno. In the letter, Kōyō begs for Ueno’s forgiveness for taking liberties with his account, which he decided to “make into a novel” (*shōsetsu ni nareba*) with the title (*Namu Amida Butsu*). In a later essay, Kōyō concedes that both Oyoshi and Ueno were actually fictional characters, but claims that he did, indeed, base his story on a true account related by a pharmacist in Osaka, with whom he occasionally corresponded via letter.⁴⁴ Adding one final layer of complexity to the narrator’s position in *Namu Amida Butsu* is the opening illustration by Keishū, which pictures a figure who clearly resembles the author, Kōyō, in a graveyard, where he watches a woman praying before a grave.

In his version of Oyoshi’s account, the narrator proceeds to tell the story of Oume and Yoshinosuke, two siblings from Osaka who lost their mother at a young age. After being abandoned by their father, they were left without any relatives to care for them, but were taken in and raised by Oyoshi, their wet nurse, under whose care they grew into promising young adults. After ten years of selfless service, Oyoshi was called back to Tokyo, but just before she left, Oume contracted a deadly lung disease and saw her prospects for a happy future cut short. Using a colorful metaphor in an attempt to convey the tragedy of her situation, the narrator exclaims, “Ask any sailor, after passing through the waves of an endless ocean, just as one approaches home, paddling towards the shore, a violent wind—violent rain, the boat is torn on hidden reefs, and with land just within sight, one clings desperately to a mast that has snapped in half.”⁴⁵ Having just laid out his extended metaphor, however, the narrator negates his ability to explain the situation in words, as he calls the descriptive power of language into question: “Is there a tongue that can be relied upon to express what lies within the wet nurse’s heart—are there words that can describe it? Come to think of it, what is the use of studying language or writing at all?”

⁴² Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 1:129.

⁴³ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 1:129.

⁴⁴ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 10:207.

⁴⁵ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 1:134.

After returning to Tokyo, Oyoshi continues to correspond with Oume via mail, but she relies upon her nephew, Ueno Kanejirō, to write her letters for her. Moved by Oume's pitiful situation, Ueno gradually introduces his own lines of encouragement into Oyoshi's letters, into which he pours his heart. His writing, motivated by the sincerity of his emotions, is effortless, and effectively manages to communicate the tenderness of his feelings. Oume responds with a letter addressed by her younger brother, Yoshinosuke, but Ueno is instantly able to recognize the true identity of the writer by virtue of her frail handwriting:

There's no doubt about it, this is the brush of a woman [*onna fude*]. Moreover, she appears to be terribly ill, judging by the messiness of her lines and *kanji* characters. Even if I die, I won't forget the suffering that she put into these letters. Looking once again at her expressions of thanks, I can faintly smell the burning of her emotions. If she doesn't die today...⁴⁶

As Oume continues to correspond with Ueno, she deciphers his personality according to the style of his brush, which she judges as neat, skillful, and clearly indicative of a kind heart. As such, both characters respond less to the semantic meaning of each other's words, and more to the visual impact of their handwriting. As Oume comes to realize that her illness might soon bring an end to her life, she worries that she will die without ever seeing Kanejirō face-to-face, which leads her to beg him for a photograph. She so longs to see his face that she starts to see it in her dreams, and, wondering if the face in her sleep might not be the real thing, she asks her brother to describe what he imagines Kanejirō to look like. As though by miracle, both siblings describe the same face, but Oume cannot be satisfied as long as the image is held only in her head. Finally, at the end of the story, she receives the photograph of Ueno along with the tonic that could save her life, but rather than drink the medicine first, she clutches madly at the photograph. As she dies in a passionate frenzy, the story fades back into the chant with which it started: *Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu...*

In *Namu Amida Butsu*, Kōyō explores the divergent qualities of verbal and visual communication in a story that centers on an exchange of letters and a photograph. In the narrative, his characters tend to privilege visual experience over linguistic exchange, to the point that they spend far more time analyzing one another's handwriting than the content of each other's letters. At times, the narrator appears to be critical of their obsession with surfaces, or faces, which he contrasts with the superior knowledge of the heart, as in the following passage:

When it comes to loving people, there are many kinds of love, but all kinds fall into two general categories: love of the face and love of the heart. There are those who fall only for the face, while others burn in their hearts. Some even know both. Young men and women who have yet to develop their powers of imagination, whose eyes have yet to recognize subtle beauty, have their hearts stolen by the mere sight of a beautiful thing... All who are human love beauty, but beauty is not the heart of love. Beauty is only the thread...⁴⁷

At other points, however, the narrator suggests that it is exactly the face, or the appearance of things, that leads to the heart. The narrator even diminishes the ability of language to capture the

⁴⁶ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 1:143.

⁴⁷ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 1:141.

emotional core of his text, particularly when he exclaims, “What is the use of studying language or writing at all?” While Oume might be criticized for clinging to a photograph, to the point of neglecting her own life, she is never portrayed as insincere, but is rather depicted as a sympathetic character due the intensity of her love.

In a story about surfaces and visual communication, *Namu Amida Butsu* expresses its aesthetic interest not in words alone, but through the numerous illustrations that accompany the text, in both the magazine and book versions. While, during the Meiji period, it was not unusual for subsequent publications of a work to reproduce illustrations from a previous edition, even if with minor alterations, in the case of *Namu Amida Butsu*, Kōyō elected to have entirely new images drafted for the book version of the text, indicating that, he, too, cared about the visual presentation of his work. When considering the fact that the author makes a personal appearance in the opening illustration of the book, in a portrait designed by one of his closest artistic collaborators, the idea that he personally contributed to the work’s visual makeover is only reinforced; which is not to say, however, that the original illustrations are incompetent works of art or insignificant in their relationship to the text. Rather, by comparing the illustrations from both versions of the story, one finds different stresses in their visual expression, which help to illuminate the aesthetic values that underpin the work.



Figure 26 - *Namu Amida Butsu* (*Hyakkaen* version, 1889), vol. 1, illustration by Utagawa Kunimatsu

To begin, the most puzzling illustration in *Namu Amida Butsu* is the first one, by Kunimatsu, which opens the *Hyakkaen* version of the text, as it depicts a scene that is never described in the story, and that corresponds to no part of the opening chapter in which it appears. The image depicts Oume in a boat on a lake, hunched over a letter as she sobs into her sleeves. Ueno appears in a ring-shaped frame at the top-right of the image, from which he proffers a branch to Oume. Because Ueno does not appear in the text until the following chapter, the work’s original audience would have had no means of interpreting the image, other than to assume that it was a preview of later events. Oume’s depiction on a boat, however, is not found

anywhere in the text, unless one considers the narrator's comparison of her illness to a shipwreck at sea. Despite its divergence from the narrative, however, Kunimatsu's illustration captures the tragic tone of the text with a visual metaphor (a sick woman, floating on the waves, dreaming of her lover as she reads his letter). Oume's pose, in which she is hunched over the letter to the point of collapsing, corresponds to frequent descriptions of emotional agony and uncontrollable tears in the text, and thus fully alerts the reader of what to expect from the story. Finally, the image is full of intricate details and subtle visual flourishes, from the numerous waves depicted on the water, to Oume's exquisite kimono and coiffure, which indicate, if nothing else, that the artist took his representation of the story seriously, and that his image represents an attempt to extract the emotional value of the text.

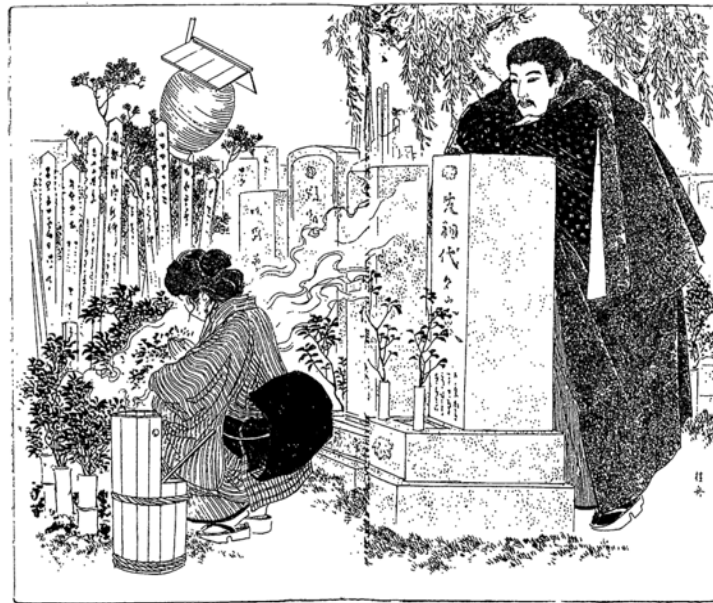


Figure 27 - *Namu Amida Butsu* (Shinshindō version, 1890), illustration #1, by Takeuchi Keishū

Turning to the Shinshindō version of *Namu Amida Butsu*, the opening illustration, by Takeuchi Keishū, is crammed with tiny visual details that correspond precisely to the opening paragraph of the narrative. Depicting the graveyard in which the narrator overhears Oyoshi's tearful prayers, Keishū pictures wooden grave markers, grave stones, a lantern, willow branches, grass, flowers, a wooden bucket, and the story's characters in full detail, leaving almost no area of the illustration's surface untouched. Most extravagant of all, however, is his depiction of Ozaki Kōyō, a towering, authoritative figure whose every hair is carefully delineated, together with the thousands of textural swirls that appear on his woolen overcoat. Rather than the love affair that will soon unfold, Keishū's image foregrounds the role of the author as mediator between the real world and the world of fiction. His image focuses on the literary exchange that takes place in the opening chapter, and which functions as a pretense for the text's existence.



Figures 28, 29, and 30 - *Namu Amida Butsu* illustrations (*Hyakkaen* version, 1889) –
Vol. 2 by Watanabe Seitei,
Vol. 3 by Tanaka Yūdō
Vol. 4. By Watanabe Seitei

The illustration of the following chapter in *Hyakkaen*, by Watanabe Seitei, depicts Oume languishing on her futon, with a scroll-shaped letter unfolded by her side, while her mental image of Ueno appears in an inset frame bordered by tufts of leaves. The image emphasizes Oume's immobility, as she lies motionless under layers of heavy bedding, dreaming of the outside world. The subsequent image, by Tanaka Yūdō, features awkwardly poised characters and abbreviated line work, which appear almost amateur in execution; it also depicts an entirely unfamiliar vision of Oume, who looks much older than she does in any of the other illustrations in *Hyakkaen*, and who sits upright with a tobacco pipe (*kiseru*) in hand. At the same time, the illustration continues the theme of Oume picturing Ueno's face, as the latter appears in a background frame, which extracts a landscape from a nearby folding screen and expands it into a vision of Oume's distant lover as he wanders through the mountains. The final illustration, again by Watanabe Seitei, finally pictures the "real" Ueno, who, the viewer might confirm, looks completely different from the figure pictured in Oume's daydreams in the other illustrations. In the final image, Ueno bows sullenly before a pot of offertory incense, ruminating silently on the loss of his lover, but there is no inset frame to connect him to the deceased. The total effect of the illustrations in *Hyakkaen* is to highlight the distance between characters—the immobile Oume and the absent Ueno—while playing on the idea of picturing unfamiliar faces in one's imagination, without access to their true countenance. Returning to the Shinshindō version of the

text, Keishū's second two-page illustration also pictures Oume reading Ueno's letter in bed, but does not include a depiction of Ueno's face (unlike all four illustrations in *Hyakkaen*). In fact, Ueno appears in none of the illustrations in the book version of *Namu Amida Butsu*, and thus can only be pictured within the reader's mind.



Figures 31, 32, and 33 - *Namu Amida Butsu* (Shinshindō version, 1890), illustrations by Takeuchi Keishū

While Keishū's images might be said to correspond more closely to the text of *Namu Amida Butsu* than the earlier illustrations, a few details of his work suggest an entirely new dimension to the story. To begin, he ends two chapters with illustrations of Cupid, whose image appeared frequently throughout Meiji period publications, often as a symbol of romantic love, particularly as derived from Western traditions. The images of Cupid in *Namu Amida Butsu* might be said to correspond to a fleeting moment in the text, in which Oume learns from her English teacher, Ms. Anna, about the romantic freedoms enjoyed by women in the "civilized nations" (*bunmeikoku*) of the West, which leads directly to the central plot of her fiery passion for Ueno's face. Even more bewildering is a minor feature in Keishū's illustration of Oume languishing in bed, in which he depicts a hidden crucifix in the top right corner of the image. As neither Kōyō nor Keishū were known to have any affinity with Christianity, the image might be read as a symbol of Western culture and romanticism, which reinforces the sentimental values of the text. One more religious image closes out the Shinshindō version of Kōyō's story, right after the fading refrain of "Namu Amida Butsu," at the very end of the text. The image is of the Buddha, standing on a lotus throne and ensconced in a massive halo of light. In Pure Land Buddhist practice, although the chant of "Namu Amida Butsu" is considered as a sufficient means of achieving rebirth in a higher realm, believers often couple their recitation with a focus on an image of the Buddha, including in near-death rituals where they tie strings from their wrists directly to the image, with the hope of being "pulled" into paradise.⁴⁸ The illustration of

⁴⁸ This ritual is described by Jacqueline I. Stone in an entry on "Death" in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 69. Summarizing the ritual as

the Buddha that appears at the end of *Namu Amida Butsu*, then, functions as a cultic image and focus of veneration, in a manner analogous to the photograph of Ueno in the text. Although Ueno's letters bring a certain degree of comfort to Oume on her deathbed, she is only ready to pass into the next life when she sets her eyes on a visual representation of his form.

In one of his most critically-appreciated works, *Darkness of the Heart* (*Kokoro no yami*, 1893), Kōyō again explored the conflict between visual and verbal perception, this time in a story that was originally published without illustrations, but which was later published with an image designed by the author himself. Originally published in *Yomiuri shinbun* from June 1 to July 11, 1893, *Darkness of the Heart* featured no illustrations, in keeping with the newspaper's policy of prioritizing text, as defined by Kōyō, the editor, himself. Kōyō first took over the literature section of the *Yomiuri shinbun* in 1890, which he thereafter used as a platform for the publication of his own work, as well as that of other Ken'yūsha members, while also publishing stories by respected writers such as Shōyō and Rohan. Initially aiming for an exclusively educated audience, the newspaper forewent the usual use of illustration, which was largely standard in serialized fiction of the time, in order to emphasize the artistry of language over the spectacle of image.⁴⁹ When *Darkness of the Heart* was published as a standalone book, however, it included a full-color woodblock frontispiece by Tomioka Eisen (1864-1905), as well as a cover with illustrations by Kōyō. The visual split between Kōyō's fiction in the *Yomiuri shinbun* and his publications for Shun'yōdō was a constant feature of his work, as he regularly blocked images from his serialized newspaper novels, while personally contributing to the extravagant illustration of his books. Thus, while Kōyō has often been remembered for his stance against illustration, as espoused in the *sashi-e muyōron*, during his lifetime, he was just as often mentioned as a champion of illustrative art in the modern age. A special bulletin in *Waseda bungaku* in October, 1896, for example, remarked that while book illustrations had long been going out of fashion, the Shun'yōdō publishing company, along with their leading writer Ozaki Kōyō, were not only spearheading a resurgence in the form, but were creating more elaborate woodblock illustrations than had ever been made in the past. "Since *Kyara makura* [*The Elegant Pillow*, 1891]," the bulletin notes, "Kōyō's works have featured extraordinarily elaborate and colorful woodblock illustrations that go through twenty or thirty rubbings each. The face of illustration is renewed and the heart of illustration is revived by the triumphant efforts of Ozaki Kōyō and Shun'yōdō."⁵⁰ Although an exact reason for Kōyō's ambiguous stance in regard to illustration is impossible to define, the illustrations in *Darkness of the Heart* suggest that he remained committed to exploring the intersection between words and images in his fiction.

Darkness of the Heart tells the story of Sanoichi, a blind masseuse (or *anma*), who works at the Chizukaya Inn in Utsunomiya, and his obsessive love for Okume, the beautiful daughter of his employers. Early on in the story, a customer remarks how unfortunate it is that Sanoichi works with a girl as beautiful as Okume and yet is unable to see her. Sanoichi is infuriated by his remarks, for having worked with Okume most of his adult life, he believes he knows her much better than the customer who relies only on what he sees.

described by the Buddhist monk Kakuban (1095-1143), she writes, "The dying person should fix his eyes on the Buddha image, place his palms together, and take up the five-colored cords. By forming the mudra associated with that particular buddha or bodhisattva, chanting the deity's mantra, and performing the associated contemplation... he is certain to achieve birth in the pure land."

⁴⁹ Tsuchida Mitsufumi, "Sashi-e tenbō I: hen'yō kara shinsei e," 120-121.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Baba Mika, "*Shōsetsuka*" *tōjō*: *Ozaki Kōyō no Meiji nijūnendai* (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2011), 237. From "Ihō: bungakkai," *Waseda bungaku*, 19 (1896).

“If you press me, well of course I haven’t seen her,” Sanoichi thought, so frustrated that he felt himself at a loss for words. Of course, it goes without saying that no matter how desperately he longed to see her, as a blind man he never would. Still, he had worked alongside her over the last thirteen years, going in and out of the Chizukaya day after day. He may not have been able to see her physically, but in compensation for his lack of sight, he had developed exceptional hearing, and from the rumors he had heard about her, he could discern just how beautiful she really was. “Those with eyes can look at her with a glance, but they’ll never understand her personality as I’ve come to know it.”⁵¹

Sanoichi believes that he knows Okume better than others because he understands her as a complex person and not just as an image. Yet, despite his privilege of knowing her closely, he continues to feel anxiety about his inability to physically see her. Later in the story, the son of a high-level bureaucrat arrives from Tokyo with his friends and decides to stay at the Chizukaya, which prompts the owners of the inn to send their own daughter, Okume, to entertain their guests. Sanoichi is terrified that Okume might be attracted to one of the visitors, and so he hides in the shadows just beyond their room and strains to hear every word they say. Unable to judge the situation by their body language, he is forced to construct the scene based only on the words he catches. He later hears rumors that Okume spent the night with the official’s son, and though he initially finds the suggestion to be impossible, he later starts to doubt the woman he once thought he knew so well. Okume ends up marrying the bureaucrat and leaves Sanoichi to lament a life that never could have been. Having been robbed of love, Sanoichi turns all of his attention towards making money, but even after losing Okume, he takes revenge on her by haunting her dreams and forcing her to realize that she loved him too. The story ends with an ominous suggestion: “Longing without saying, doubting and full of fear. Is this too love, this darkness of the heart?”⁵²

Darkness of the Heart has long been regarded as one of Kōyō’s more realistic works, in part due to the psychologically nuanced portrayal of its main character, whose inability to see literally forces him into a space of interiority. A contemporary reviewer in *Waseda bungaku* wrote that Kōyō’s writing would finally appease the *shinjitsu-ha* (realist writers) and the *shinri-ha* (psychological writers) for having achieved an accurate representation of reality and the inner state of its characters.⁵³ Kataoka Yoshikazu later reinforced this understanding of the work as a realistic novel by remarking that it was close to reality (*riariti*) and that it was incisive and nuanced in its psychological portrayals.⁵⁴ The same reviews that credited *Darkness of the Heart* with achieving psychological realism, however, also pointed out some less real aspects of the text. The review in *Waseda bungaku*, for one, found that the work was marred by a certain linguistic opacity that kept it from ever fully achieving the psychological depth that it seemed to aim for.⁵⁵ Kataoka, on a similar note, remarked that the work was real and psychologically insightful, but that it possessed a certain sense of eeriness (*kikai*) that felt premodern. Baba Mika, in an extended analysis of the text, finds numerous similarities between Kōyō’s story and Edo

⁵¹ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 4:252.

⁵² Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 4:301.

⁵³ See Tosa Tōru, *Kōyō bungaku no suimyaku* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 2005), 305. From *Waseda bungaku*, no. 63 (1894).

⁵⁴ See Tosa, *Kōyō bungaku no suimyaku*, 304. From Kataoka Yoshikazu, ed., *Gendai nihon shōsetsu taikēi* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1956).

⁵⁵ See Tosa, *Kōyō bungaku no suimyaku*, 305. From *Waseda bungaku*, no. 63 (1894).

period kabuki, particularly in plays about the wicked monk Seigen, whose lust for a young princess causes him to lose the path to enlightenment.⁵⁶ Of course, the most obvious holdover from Edo period theater is the central character of the *anma*, or the blind masseuse, who was once a staple figure on the kabuki stage. When comparing the realistic and theatrical directions of *Darkness of the Heart*, however, one need not rely on the text alone, as the story's illustrations help to illuminate the author's interest in exploring issues of interiority and the limits of perception.



Figure 34 - *Darkness of the Heart* (1893), frontispiece by Tomioka Eisen

The opening illustration of *Darkness of the Heart* is a multi-color woodblock frontispiece by Tomioka Eisen, which depicts Sanoichi and Okume on two sides of a black fence (*kuroitabei*) topped with guard spikes (*shinobigaeshi*) and covered in snow. Sanoichi stands outside of the fence, holding a broken umbrella, with his eyes shut as snow falls all around him. Okume, on the opposite side of the fence, emerges from the front entrance of a building with a cylindrical paper lantern in hand. The image divides the two characters into separate visual planes by placing Sanoichi on the outside of the fence, in darkness, and Okume on the inside, surrounded by light. Another feature of the illustration, however, suggests that the image of Okume might actually exist only within Sanoichi's mind, who, according to the narrative, was not born blind, but only became so after contracting a childhood illness. On Okume's side of the image, the illustration is surrounded by a thick black border, which does not cross over onto Sanoichi's side of the illustration, but rather ends immediately at the fence. The effect of the border is to remove Okume from Sanoichi's plane of existence entirely, splitting them into separate spheres and setting an insurmountable distance between them. The black border might be interpreted as the deep darkness of Sanoichi's blindness, which, when coupled with the fence, emphasizes his position as an outsider, with no visual access to the world around him. The viewer of the image, however, is able to see all at once, thus recognizing both the interior world of Sanoichi's mind, and the colorful, exterior world that he inhabits, which, together, comprise the dual layers of the text.

⁵⁶ Baba Mika, "*Shōsetsuka*" *tōjō*, 223-234.



Figure 35 - *Darkness of the Heart*, cover illustration by Ozaki Kōyō, including map of Utsunomiya

The other images found in the Shun'yōdō version of *Darkness of the Heart* appear on the cover; they include a picture of Sanoichi, designed by Kōyō himself, and a map of Utsunomiya, the city in which the story takes place. The image of Sanoichi pictures the protagonist of the story shrouded in a mysterious darkness, which envelops his entire physical form. Surrounded by a landscape of freshly fallen snow, the darkness that encircles him does not originate in the environment, but rather emanates from within, as though representing the blindness that separates him from the world outside. The snowy city in the background appears to be the work of an expert illustrator, and thus suggests the contribution of a hand other than Kōyō's (most likely Eisen's), although it is probable that the author directed the composition of the image himself, including the juxtaposition of a human figure with a snowy cityscape and the map of Utsunomiya. The decision to include a map of the story's setting, in particular, suggests an effort to capture a realistic sense of space—an interpretation that is further implied by the work's history. As Baba points out, Kōyō personally visited Utsunomiya when planning *Darkness of the Heart*, where he stayed at an inn that would serve as a model for the story's setting.⁵⁷ As he did with *Two Nuns' Confession of Love*, Kōyō once again endeavored to transmit his observations of the story's setting directly into words, although this time he added a map of the work's location to the text, as though to reinforce the reality of his vision.

The tension between verbal and visual perception as competing methods of transmitting reality is apparent from the opening pages of *Darkness of the Heart*, in which the author describes the story's setting in hyper-realistic terms. Using a combination of seasonal motifs, theatrical allusions, and minute descriptive details, Kōyō creates a vivid impression of the work's location and its main character, but with a mix of metaphors so disparate that it can be difficult to reconcile them into a single image. Lying somewhere in between rhetoric and reality, his description suggests the limits of visual language in capturing an authentic vision of the story's world.

From the early summer season of azaleas and rhododendrons, to the late fall season of autumn leaves, Utsunomiya station in Nikkō was crowded with people. The Chizukaya inn in Tenmachō was the best-known lodging in the area. Even after the countless other inns had called it a night, noisy revelry would pour forth from its twilight gate. Amid the noise would enter the *anma*, disheartened, with stoop-shoulders slinking from behind. He must have been twenty-four or twenty-five. His bald head was shaved so smooth it looked as though he was wearing a wig, his skin was the color of white pears on a votive shrine, and his eyes were shut tight as though fastened with glue.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Baba, "Shōsetsuka" *tōjō*, 234-240.

⁵⁸ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 4:248.

Drawing on a combination of colorful metaphors to describe Sanoichi's appearance, the narrator's description of the character is almost too vivid to imagine, distorting his countenance into a grotesque abstraction of a human face. Rather than a real person, the passage suggests an actor playing an *anma*, particularly in the description of a shaved head resembling a wig, which recalls the headpieces worn by kabuki actors when playing bald characters on stage. As the narrator proceeds to describe Sanoichi's clothing, he focuses on the features of his dress with an almost microscopic attention to detail, as though describing a person who stands before him.

On top of what looked like a brand new, handwoven, lined kimono made of cotton, he wore a somewhat faded overcoat of greenish-black pongee silk, whose collar was still turned out, as though he had dressed himself in a hurry. He wore a brown *obi* sash of Kokura cotton up high on his chest, a mixed cotton-and-wool under-kimono with a collar so tight it looked like it might choke him, white *tabi* socks that were faded from washing, nicely-matched Nikkō *geta* sandals made of bamboo, which he maneuvered in with no hesitation, as though thoroughly accustomed to wearing them, and a staff that he used to feel the thresholds of buildings as he made his evening rounds, laughing forcefully and calling out with the customary greeting, "Oh how cold it is tonight!"⁵⁹

In contrast to the vivid descriptions laid out by the narrator, the character of Sanoichi is unable to see anything of the environment that surrounds him, thus forcing him to retreat into a space of interiority. Unable to rely on sight, he endlessly doubts and reexamines his ideas about a world that presents itself to him only as text. His profound feelings of distrust and alienation impart the impression of a real person, whose disconnection to reality is expressed through the metaphor of blindness. The split between Sanoichi and his environment is in turn reflected in the work's illustrations, which reinforce the impression of an interior world separated from the visual plane.

A Shrine for Pictures: *Great Passion, Great Sorrow*

In *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* (*Tajō takon*, 1896), Kōyō explores the power that images hold over their viewers in the story of a man's desperate attempt to recapture the presence of his departed wife. At the outset of the story, the reader is introduced to Sumi Ryūnosuke, a college professor who has recently lost his beloved partner, Orui. Her premature death has caused him to fall into a deep depression, which his family and friends attempt to dispel by finding him a replacement companion. Ryūnosuke, however, resists all attempts to end his self-imposed isolation, as he ceaselessly laments the absence of his wife and pores longingly over her photographs. Ryūnosuke's best friend, Hayama Seiya, offers him a room in his own house, but Ryūnosuke refuses due to his inexplicable loathing for Hayama's wife, Otane. Ryūnosuke eventually accepts Hayama's offer, but he spends most of his time in a dark attic with a bottle of a wine and a life-sized portrait of Orui to keep him company. Imagining that the portrait is a real person, he speaks to it and makes sure to visit it every time he leaves or enters the house. Little by little, Ryūnosuke and Otane become accustomed to one another, as Ryūnosuke comes to take solace in their relationship. Late one night, Ryūnosuke wanders into Otane's room hoping to speak with her, but Otane's father-in-law witnesses his intrusion into her

⁵⁹ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 4:248.

quarters. The father-in-law promptly alerts Hayama of his friend's suspicious behavior, which compels Hayama to expel Ryūnosuke from his home. At the end of the novel, Ryūnosuke erects a shrine to both Orui and Otane, where he places photographs and paintings of the two women side-by-side, to keep him company in perpetuity. In a story that centers on the power of images to recall the presence of the dead, *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* utilizes both text and image to explore the role of visuality in mediating absence. During its original serialization and later publication as a standalone book, the novel featured dozens of illustrations by twenty-one different artists, which, when paired with Kōyō's text, explore the divergent strengths of words and pictures in simulating the presence of invisible figures, while connecting the material world to a realm beyond the visual plane.⁶⁰

Shortly after its publication as a collected work on July 18, 1897, *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* became one of the most widely discussed novels of the decade, as it came to occupy the center of a lively debate on the value of realism in literature. Reviews were largely mixed, as critics heaped praise on Kōyō's polished prose, but expressed frustration with his meandering narrative. Common criticisms included the supposedly excessive length of the work (five-hundred-and-five pages in the Shun'yōdō version), the absence of a central plot or design (*shukō*), the relentless melancholy of its lead character, the endless harping on a single subject (Ryūnosuke's mourning), and the ambiguity of its tone (many reviewers were unable to decide if the work was supposed to be a comedy or a tragedy).⁶¹ While some critics referred to the novel as a work of literary realism that probed the depths of its characters' psychologies and the ambiguity of their relationships, others found it flat and unrealistic, with characters who never developed into real people. What almost all reviewers agreed upon, however, was the sheer brilliance of Kōyō's language, which many claimed had the power to make the story appear clearly before the reader's eyes. Strangely enough, only a minority of reviewers even mention the fact that the text was written entirely in *genbun itchi*, thus marking a major departure from Kōyō's usual style of florid, literary prose (*gazoku setchū*), as they continued to characterize his writing primarily as vivid (*yakujo*, *iki iki*) and verbose (*kudakudashii*, *kudo*, *jōman*, etc.).⁶² Even in the midst of negative remarks, almost every review reserved a paragraph or two to discuss the flawlessness of Kōyō's literary style, with one reviewer noting that the phrase "the wonder of

⁶⁰ The illustrators include Takeuchi Keishū, Watanabe Seitei, Kajita Hanko, Ogata Gekkō, Tomioka Eisen, Hashimoto Chikanobu (also known as Toyohara or Yōshū Chikanobu, 1838-1912), Mizuno Toshikata (1866-1908), Tsutsui Toshimine (1863-ca. 1934), Migita Toshihide (1862-1925), Mishima Shōsō (1856-1928), Watanabe Kinshū (dates unknown), Suzuki Kason (1860-1919), Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900), Yamada Keichū (also known as Yamada Toshitada, 1868-1934), Kubota Heisen (1852-1906), Kobori Tomoto (1864-1931), Kobayashi Kiyochika (1847-1915), Terasaki Kōgyō (1866-1919), Murata Tanryō (1872-1940), and Shimomura Izan (1865-1949).

⁶¹ These points are all brought up in "*Tajō takon to sehyō*," an article featured in the November 1897 issue of *Waseda bungaku* (volume 7, number 2), which compiled reviews of *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* from several contemporary magazines and newspapers. See pages 35-39. Similar opinions were expressed in a joint review by four critics writing under the pennames Somegawa, Maiyō, Hōgetsu, and Shōyō, in "*Tajō takon gōhyō*," which was featured in the previous issue of *Waseda bungaku* (volume 7, number 1), from October, 1897. See pages 19-27. It is possible that Hōgetsu and Shōyō refer to Shimamura Hōgetsu (1871-1918) and Tsubouchi Shōyō. Once again, similar frustrations were expressed by Mori Ōgai and Yoda Gakkai (writing under the pennames Mujō Danshi and Tenpō Rojin) in a joint review in *Mezamashigusa*, 21 (August, 1897): 1-3.

⁶² It was not Kōyō's first work to be written in *genbun itchi*. The author started experimenting with the style much earlier, in 1892, in part two of *Two Wives* (*Futari nyōbō*, 1891-1892). Other major works written in *genbun itchi* include *Murasaki* (1894), *Cold Fever* (*Reinetsu*, 1894), and *Green Grapes* (*Aobudō*, 1895). Ironically, for an author remembered especially for his ornate prose, Kōyō's works written in *genbun itchi* have typically fared better with critics in posterity than the stories that made him famous during his lifetime.

Kōyō's rhetoric" (*shūjijō no myō*) had even become something of a proverb (*kotowaza*).⁶³ The mix of praise and condemnation, both in regard to Kōyō's literary style, can be seen most clearly in a joint review that appeared in *Waseda bungaku*, in which a reviewer under the penname of Somegawa proclaimed:

The rhythm of the dialogue displays a level of polish that none other can attain. The language of the narrative exhibits the singular style of its accomplished writer, Kōyō, who has now entered into a phase of maturity. Furthermore, the author takes the scenery of the surrounding environment and the subtle movements and gestures of his characters and uses his utmost skill to make them appear clearly [*iki iki*] before the reader's eyes [*genzen*]. In four or five simple lines of his brush, he creates beautiful, elegant landscapes, which emerge from the page like sea spray from the ocean.⁶⁴

Despite his lavish praise for Kōyō's prose, however, the above reviewer immediately proceeds to criticize Kōyō's language as overly decorative and lacking in true depth, which he contrasts with the prose of Kōda Rohan, who is harder to read, but apparently more interesting and profound.

Not all critics felt that Kōyō's verbosity negatively affected the realistic qualities of his work, as multiple reviewers defended *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* as a masterpiece of literary realism, which succeeded in large part thanks to its style. Referring to Kōyō as a "writer of realistic fiction" (*shajutsuka*), one critic in *Waseda bungaku* wrote, "The author takes the family life, words, manners, and ideals of the Edokko gentleman and makes them appear vividly before the reader's very eyes [*ganzen ni yakujo tarashimuru*]; this is the wonder of Kōyō's literary style."⁶⁵ Another critic, writing for *Kokumin*, proclaimed of Kōyō's writing, "The wonder of realism [*shajitsu no myō*] lies in discarding the membrane, one piece at a time, and revealing the reality [*shin*] of social conditions [*setai*]. The inner truth of human affairs is not exhausted with one thousand phrases or ten thousand words, but a single well-placed metaphor can grasp its essence, delivering the killing blow with utter calm."⁶⁶ One of the most enthusiastic reviews of *Great Passion, Great Sorrow*, appearing in *Waseda bungaku*, singles out the realism of Kōyō's style as the novel's greatest strength, while comparing the expression of his text to a work of visual art. "In the world of painting," he writes, "this would be called a realistic portrait; as an extreme example of literary realism, it might even be referred to as a photographic novel [*shashin shōsetsu*]."⁶⁷ The critic ends his review by concluding, wholeheartedly, that *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* is a work that exhibits profound insights into social behavior and a keen understanding of human psychology. He explains the power of the work by again drawing on a visual metaphor: "In his novel, [Kōyō] takes the psychological and internal aspects of the story and converts them into visible phenomena, thereby exposing the depths of his timid characters' hearts."

In the decades following its debut, *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* gradually came to acquire the status of a hidden masterpiece, as it was repeatedly singled out by scholars as an outstanding example of literary realism in Japan. Not only was it frequently identified as Kōyō's

⁶³ Shōyō, "*Tajō takon gōhyō*," 25.

⁶⁴ Somegawa, "*Tajō takon gōhyō*," 20.

⁶⁵ Maiyō, "*Tajō takon gōhyō*," 21.

⁶⁶ From *Kokumin*, quoted in "*Tajō takon to sehyō*," 36.

⁶⁷ Hōgetsu, "*Tajō takon gohyō*," 26.

greatest work, but it was often said to offer one the most convincing portrayals of real life among the novels of its time. Early on, a reviewer in *Taiheiyō hyōron* called the novel a “masterpiece” (*kessaku*) of realistic fiction, criticizing readers who were too impatient to recognize the depth of its nuanced psychological portrayals.⁶⁸ Rather than acting as one wanted, the reviewer argued, the characters acted like real people, in part by defying the expectations of the reader. Similar comments were made by Hōgetsu in *Waseda bungaku*, who argued that the work showed the world exactly as it was, in the manner of a photograph, and that it exposed the inner workings of its characters’ minds by relying on psychological principles.⁶⁹ In later decades, naturalist writers such as Masamune Hakuchō (1879-1962) and Tayama Katai praised *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* as Kōyō’s crowning achievement, even though they were largely critical of his other work.⁷⁰ Even Enchi Fumiko, who otherwise expressed a deep disdain for Kōyō’s fiction, conceded that the story was deeper and more realistic than his average novel.⁷¹ Later critics would go on to praise the novel in superlative terms, such as Nakamura Mitsuo, who called it the only great work of Japanese fiction written in the Meiji or Taishō periods.⁷² Others were similarly effusive in their praise; Maruya Saiichi referred to it as “the masterpiece of its generation” and “the representative example of the Japanese novel in long-form,”⁷³ while Nakamura Shin’ichirō called it “a miracle deserving of awe, in a time a when the Japanese novel had yet to fully develop.”⁷⁴

In several later reviews, scholars seized on Kōyō’s switch to the simplified linguistic form of *genbun itchi* as the source of his newfound realism, a fact that early critics had largely ignored, as they instead focused on the “vividness” and “verbosity” of his prose. Unlike in his earlier work, the prose in *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* is consistently clear and easy to follow, almost exceptionally so, as it is composed primarily of simple declarative statements, with minimal rhetorical flourishes (contrary to the claims of contemporary reviewers). Take, for example, the following passage, from early on in the story:

Sumi Ryūnosuke graduated college with a degree in geology and was employed in the physics department at the University of Tokyo. He was hardworking and cordial. Because he was so competent, he was popular with his colleagues and trusted by his students. Aside from rumors that he graded tests a bit harshly, no other criticisms were ever made of his character. He was truly a cherished and respected member of his department.⁷⁵

The difference between this simplified form of language and the baroque opening passage of *Two Nuns Confession of Love* could hardly be more pronounced. Unlike the dense rhetoric of his

⁶⁸ “*Tajō takon* to sehyō,” 37-38.

⁶⁹ “*Tajō takon* to sehyō,” 38. “*Tajō takon* gōhyō,” 26-27.

⁷⁰ See Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 141. Quotes from Masamune Hakuchō, *Bundan jinbutsu hyōron* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1932), 116; Tayama Katai, “Ozaki Kōyō to sono sakubutsu,” *Ozaki Kōyō, Hirotsu Ryūrō, Uchida Roan, Saitō Ryokuu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1970), 382.

⁷¹ Enchi Fumiko, “Ozaki Kōyō no kenkyū,” *Enchi Fumiko zenshū* (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1978), 445.

⁷² See Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 141. From Nakamura Mitsuo, “Sakuhin kaisetsu,” in *Nihon gendai bungaku zenshū: Ozaki Kōyō shū*, edited by Itō Sei, et. al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1963), 424

⁷³ Maruya Saiichi, “Kaisetsu,” *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:474.

⁷⁴ From Nakamura Shin’ichirō, “Kōyō zenshū kankō no kikai ni: *Tajō takon* o saidoku,” originally published in the evening edition of the *Mainichi shinbun*, March 15, 1994. Reprinted in Munakata Kazushige, “Ozaki Kōyō *Tajō takon*: shōzōga to shashin,” *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 39.7 (June, 1994): 24.

⁷⁵ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:18.

earlier work, the narrative of *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* creates a sense of transparency, as though offering unmediated access to the fictional world that it describes. This sense of linguistic immediacy has been noted by several critics, who see it as evidence of Kōyō's move towards literary realism. Donald Keene, for example, writes of the text, "there is not one false note... the gembun itchi style, masterfully employed, lends vividness to the scenes."⁷⁶ Agetsuma Yūki examines the structure of Kōyō's language in-depth, which brings him to the conclusion that it is the author's restricted grammatical constructions that impart the oft-noted quality of psychological realism to the text.⁷⁷ He focuses particularly on Kōyō's use of *no de aru* as a neutral copular ending, which gives the impression that one is merely stating a given fact.⁷⁸ This establishes the position of the narrator as an objective observer of the story, who has a clear view of every aspect of the narrative, including the characters' psychological states. By switching to *gembun itchi*, such critics suggest, Kōyō reduced the distance between the narrator, the reader, and the characters in the story, thus offering what felt like an unmediated and more realistic experience of the world of the text.

While scholars have long focused on the linguistic aspects of *Great Passion, Great Sorrow*, particularly in regard to the story's expression of realism, far less has been said about another major aspect of the novel: its illustration. This oversight is surprising for a few reasons; first, because *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* was one of Kōyō's most richly illustrated works, including over fifty illustrations across both its serialized and collected versions, with contributions by nearly two dozen illustrators. During its original serialization, the story was printed with roughly thirty illustrations by a staff illustrator, likely Nakae Gyokkei, a pupil of Takeuchi Keishū and one of few female illustrators active at the time.⁷⁹ When the collected volume of the text was first advertised in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, the names of all twenty illustrators were prominently featured next to the title of the work, thus underscoring the attraction of the story's images as a major feature of the novel. Opening the book itself, the names of the illustrators appear before any other content, even before the title page, once again foregrounding the interest of images in the story. Of course, the prominent position given to the illustrators' contribution might be surmised as a mere matter of marketing, and yet, a single extant draft image by Kōyō himself, which includes extensive notes in his own hand, indicates that he was intimately involved in the work's illustration. Beyond circumstantial evidence, the illustrations are featured in a narrative that centers on matters of visual perception and the power of images to mediate the viewer's experience of reality, thus increasing their significance to the work as a whole.

Among the numerous scholars who have written on *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* over the years, only two reference the illustrations in any meaningful way. It is revealing, then, that both discuss the centrality of visuality to the narrative, which naturally leads them to comment on the topic of the work's illustration. The first article, by Munakata Kazushige, points out that *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* was published during an era when stories about portrait painting

⁷⁶ Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 141.

⁷⁷ Agetsuma Yūki, "Ozaki Kōyō *Tajō takon* no katari to gohō (1): katari no seikaku," *Fuji Joshi Daigaku kokubungaku zasshi*, 79 (November, 2008): 40-41.

⁷⁸ "Ozaki Kōyō *Tajō takon* no katari to gohō (2): no de aru no buntai," *Fuji Joshi Daigaku kokubungaku zasshi*, 84 (March, 2011): 24

⁷⁹ Nakae Gyokkei (dates unknown) regularly contributed illustrations to the *Yomiuri shinbun*, including in works by Kōyō, thus making it likely that the images in *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* were also her own. Nakae's illustrations tend to focus on background details, props, and settings, often omitting characters entirely. Nishimura Kiyokazu, *Imēji no shūjigaku*, 249.

appeared frequently in magazines and newspapers. Focusing on the significance of portraiture and photography to the narrative, Munakata argues that *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* establishes a “grammar of vision” (*shikaku no bunpō*) by asking the reader to compare images of Orui, both as they are described in the text and visualized in the work’s illustrations.⁸⁰ He ends the article by discussing the struggle between painterly and photographic modes of representation as a conflict that defined an entire generation of artistic production. The second article, by Tamai Tomo, explicitly discusses *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* as a novel of the gaze (*manazashi*), or a visual novel, which explores the relationship of Ryūnosuke to Orui and Otane by examining the different forms of looking described in the narrative.⁸¹ As Tamai indicates, in *Great Passion, Great Sorrow*, Kōyō makes frequent use of the verb *miru* (to see) throughout the novel, but uses two alternate characters to write the same word (見る vs. 視る), with the first denoting a simple act of looking, and the latter indicating a concentrated gaze that leads to a profound realization. He similarly situates *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* within an era of new representational technologies, from postcards and photographs to panoramas and movies, and argues that the text centers on the act of visualization (*genzenka*). Both Tamai and Munakata reference the same illustration by Kobayashi Kiyochika in their articles, which depicts the life-size portrait of Orui described in the narrative, and both quote the same passage from Susan Sontag’s *On Photography*, in which she describes the photograph as “a pseudo-presence and a token of absence” that incites the viewer to reverie.⁸²

Turning back towards the narrative of *Great Passion, Great Sorrow*, one finds a work centered on the possibility of visualizing a fading memory. The narrative begins with an absence, which precedes even the opening paragraph of the work:

Two weeks have passed since Sumi Ryūnosuke lost his wife. Every day that passes, she grows more distant, although, for him, fourteen days ago feels like it was only yesterday. At times, it feels like just this morning, or even just now. If he thinks hard enough, it even feels like she’s still alive.⁸³

Having begun with a description of absence, the narrative proceeds to portray Ryūnosuke’s increasingly desperate attempts to recapture Orui through visual means. Over the course of the story, Ryūnosuke encounters various images that remind him of Orui, including photographs, paintings, and living resemblances, which he encounters both on his own and through the intervention of friends. As the story progresses, he becomes increasingly obsessed with possessing an image that can finally replace Orui, thereby helping him to overcome his profound sense of loss. The first object that strikes him as a worthy resemblance is a collectible image of a Hindustani woman included in a pack of *Pinhead* cigarettes, which he shows to Hayama after visiting Orui’s grave. The episode is quoted here at length, as it demonstrates the complexity of Kōyō’s treatment of visual perception through his careful use of language.

“Hey, look at this [*mitamae* 見たまえ].”

⁸⁰ Munakata Kazushige, “Ozaki Kōyō *Tajō takon*: shōzōga to shashin,” 24-28.

⁸¹ Tamai Tomo, “Ozaki Kōyō *Tajō takon*: manazashi no yukue: shashin, shōzōga, ranpu no imi,” *Bungei kenkyū* 123 (2014): 139-54.

⁸² Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 16.

⁸³ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:3.

“What? What is it?”

“Look closely” [*yoku mite kure tamae* 能く見てくれたまへ] he said, passing the picture along to Hayama, insisting that he accept it. Just as requested, Hayama took it in his hands and looked closely, but he didn’t notice anything unusual. The image was of a Hindustani woman holding something like *mochi* in a bowl. In the single picture handed to him, she was standing upright.

“Okay, I’m looking closely... so what?”

“Don’t you get it? Look closely!” he said again, staring intently [*nozokikonde* 覗込むで] at the image, then looking [*nagameru* 眺める] again at Hayama’s face. “Don’t you get it?” Ryūnosuke’s look suggested, as though asking Hayama to search for a hidden image [*esagashi demo miru yō ni* 絵探しても見るように]. As he looked [*miteiru* 視ている] left and right, Ryūnosuke lost his patience.”

“It looks just like her, no?” [*nitoru janai ka* 肖とるじゃないか]

“Who?”

“Don’t you get it? My wife, Orui, who died,” he said, yanking the image away from Hayama, and staring at it intently [*jitto miru* 昵と視る].

“Does it really look like her?” Hayama said. Accustomed to Ryūnosuke’s odd behavior, he wasn’t surprised. “I think you’re mistaken,” he informed him.

Ryūnosuke shook his head, “No, it looks like her. It looks like her... It doesn’t just look like her. It looks *exactly* like her, no?” Looking intently [*jitto miteinagara* 昵と視ていながら], it was as though he was sucked entirely into the picture [*sono e no naka e hikikomaresō na yōsu* 其絵の中へ曳込まれそうな様子].⁸⁴

Ryūnosuke’s insistence that the picture looks exactly like Orui bewilders Hayama, who sees no resemblance whatsoever, thereby suggesting the complexity involved in recognizing likeness. Resemblance, the above episode suggests, is a matter of feeling, and not just of the eyes.

Following Hayama’s denial of the image’s resemblance, Ryūnosuke proceeds to show him four photographs of the deceased Orui, each with a different hairstyle, including the styles of *shimada*, *marumage*, *ichōgaeshi*, and *sokuhatsu*. Each hairstyle signifies a different aspect of his wife—the *shimada* is traditionally worn by unmarried women and the *marumage* by married women, while the *ichōgaeshi* is a popular style from the late Edo period and the *sokuhatsu* is a modern trend of European origin. Comparing the images in earnest (*waza to majime ni e to hikikurabete*), Hayama comes to recognize the resemblance of the Hindustani woman to Ryūnosuke’s wife:

“Now that you say so, it does look like her. Here, place them side-by-side,” he said, setting the photograph next to the picture on the same paper wrapping.

⁸⁴ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:48-50

“It does look like her. It does look like her,” he conceded, handing the photos back in a hurry, thinking that it would bring the conversation to a close.

“It does look like her, doesn’t it? How strange.”

Reopening the wrapping, he once again compared the pictures for a moment. “I bought these cigarettes on my way to visit Orui’s grave.”

The implication, it would seem, is that Ryūnosuke was fated to buy the cigarettes, as though Orui’s spirit had directed him towards the uncanny picture on his way to the graveyard. Rather than bringing him solace, however, the image only reminds him of Orui’s absence, and thus deepens his desperation to recuperate her missing form.

As Ryūnosuke continues with his mission to capture a living likeness of Orui, he has one of his photographs converted into a life-size oil painting of his departed wife. In a scene that appears towards the end of the story, Ryūnosuke returns to his lodging at the Hayamas’ with his new painting in tow. The painting captures every detail of his photograph of Orui, which gives Ryūnosuke the impression that his wife has been brought back to life, as though her very spirit has descended into the image. Hayama, however, is appalled by the painting, whose exacting precision strikes him not as lifelike, but as gaudy and excessive. Rather than a realistic resemblance, the painting is simply proof of Ryūnosuke’s poor taste, as well his willingness to be fooled by the artlessness of verisimilitude. Paralleling the excess of the image is Kōyō’s language, which imitates a photorealistic portrait in attempting to capture every element of the imagined scene. The episode, quoted again at length, strikes at the very heart of Kōyō’s concern with the possibility of representation, and particularly his struggle to reconcile photographic and painterly forms of realism. Speaking to his entire history of literary experimentation, the passage juxtaposes Kōyō’s usual style of description, in the flowery *gazoku setchū* idiom, with the vernacular language in which *Great Passion*, *Great Sorrow* is largely related.

The figure of Orui in the painting was based on Ryūnosuke’s favorite photograph of her, which showed her on a return trip to her family home. Her hair was styled in a towering *taka shimada* bun, with a “peach and mountain sparrows” hairpin. The edge of a peony-shaped comb was just visible in the shadows of her tall, upswept bangs, which appeared next to splendidly arranged side locks. The combination of her broad forehead, sparse, line-shaped eyebrows, small, sharply penetrating eyes, average nose, charming, tightly-pursed lips, taught cheeks and jaw, and thin, small-framed face all imparted a sagacious look, which somehow pressed upon the viewer. Her figure was turned slightly to the side, with one hand placed on a chair, and her right hand tucked into her sleeve. She wore three layers of silk crepe kimono with a white collar, an overcoat of pale blue with a crest of rounded, four-sided quince flowers, an under-kimono of blue-black cotton print, a dark purple *obi* sash with a pattern of gold-brown stitching, a delicate flock of silver-gray plovers in the style of the Kōrin school, and a few Chinese-style pine trees, appearing here and there, woven in the ground fabric. The inner sash used to fluff out her *obi* was adorned with entangled tufts of scarlet, tie-dyed flowers, which rose up to her chest, in the pattern of cranes flying in the clouds, while her *obi* fastener displayed a golden camellia petal inside of a willow ring.

The picture was gaudy, with a surface that looked like it was slathered in watercolors. Painted in extremely fine detail, it was full of vulgar touches and

worked over to excess, veering not one iota from the details of the photograph. Ryūnosuke was extremely pleased...

“Wow, it’s very well done,” said Otane, staring [*nagameteiru* 眺めてい
る] at the curious object.

Looking and looking again [*mīmī* 見い見い] at the face, staring intently [*nozokikonde* 覗込むで] at the picture, Ryūnosuke proclaimed, “It looks just like her, doesn’t it? It looks *exactly* like her.”⁸⁵

In a novel that largely forgoes the author’s usual details of costume or setting, Kōyō’s linguistic description of the painting of Orui parallels the gaudy excess of the image itself. The passage appears like an intrusion of the painterly form of description into a world of photographic realism. Rather than providing a judgment on the preferred style, however, the scene only serves to further complicate the boundaries between reality and formalism. Centering on a painting based on a photograph that is excessively realistic and yet overly formal at the same time, the passage suggests a deep entanglement of mediation. Furthermore, the image is perceived differently by its viewers: whereas Ryūnosuke perceives a masterpiece that perfectly captures the likeness of Orui, Hayama sees nothing but surface, or an image whose excessive details obscure the subject beneath the façade.

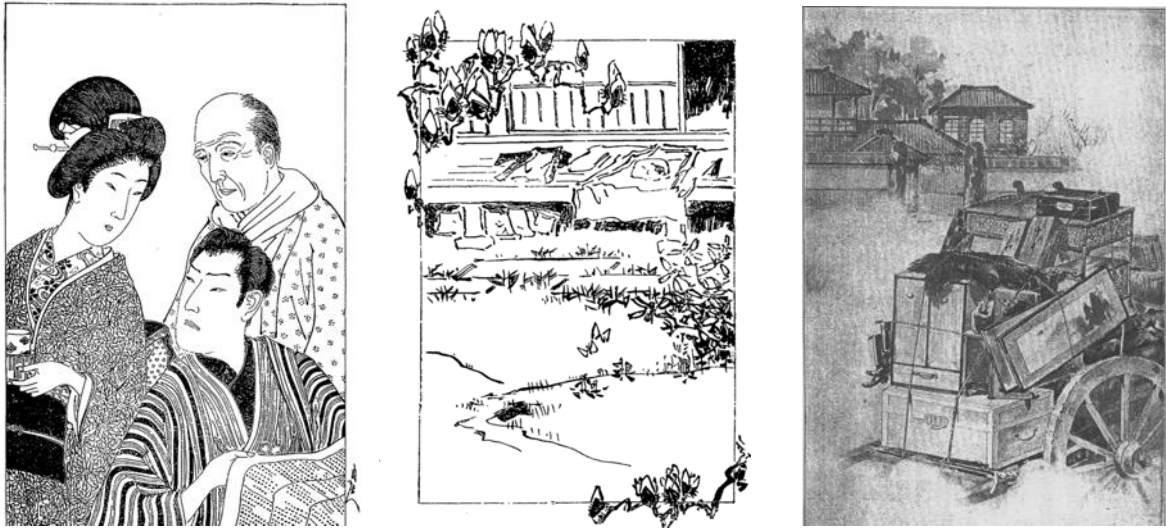
Unmoved by Hayama’s lack of enthusiasm, Ryūnosuke is fully absorbed into the image. Pondering its every line and detail, he imagines that it comes to life:

Gazing wholeheartedly at the picture, as though not to lose a thing [*yonennaku nagame tsukushiteiru ma ni* 余念なく眺め尽くしている間に], he forgot himself entirely, as though watching a dream [*yume miru gotoku* 夢見ることく]. The sharply penetrating eyes of the painted image moved with longing, its tightly pursed lips broke into a smile, and even its face turned slightly forward, as though motioning to move towards his side. Standing there before him, with a pleased expression on its face, the image ventured to speak.⁸⁶

For Ryūnosuke, the verisimilitude of the image is a product of the artist’s attention to detail, which causes the figure of Orui to nearly emerge from its frame. He is not the only one who is fooled by the painting—later on in the narrative, Orui is shocked when she comes upstairs to the attic to visit with Ryūnosuke and finds a woman standing by his bed. The woman is actually the painting of Orui, which appears to descend from its place on the wall and move towards Ryūnosuke’s side. As the story continues, Ryūnosuke gradually emerges from his long bout of depression, in large part thanks to the newfound company of the painting, which he makes sure to visit every time he comes or goes from the Hayamas’ house. His attraction to the image is never exhausted: at the conclusion of the narrative, he installs the painting in an alcove, next to a photograph of Otane, where he can admire both images in the silence of his room. As symbols of painterly and photographic modes of representation, the combination of photograph and painting finally succeeds in simulating the presence that has alluded him throughout the narrative.

⁸⁵ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:262-263.

⁸⁶ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:265.



Figures 36, 37, and 38 - *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* (1896), illustrations by Toyohara Chikanobu, Shimomura Izan, and Watanabe Kinshū

Turning from text to image, one finds that Kōyō's exploration of visuality in *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* occurs not in words alone, but is manifested also in the work's illustrations, which continue to explore the act of looking as a major theme of the novel. One of the most immediately noticeable aspects of the work's visual component is the sheer variety of artistic styles represented, which run the gamut from kabuki-esque illustrations of the story's main characters, by veteran artists Toyohara Chikanobu and Toyohara Kunichika (depicted in the traditional *nigao-e* "actor portrait" style), to loose, impressionistic sketches of the story's setting, by Watanabe Seitei and Shimomura Izan, to a single densely shaded lithograph of Ryūnosuke's belongings by Watanabe Kinshū. Functioning like a gallery of representational styles, the variety of images suggests that there is not a single method of visualizing the text, but rather that each individual will convert words into images in a different manner. The discrepancy in representational modes can be seen clearly in depictions of Ryūnosuke, the most frequent subject of the work's illustrations, whose appearance naturally alters depending on the hand of the artist who draws him. Ryūnosuke is first visualized in an illustration in the middle of the third chapter of the book, dozens of pages into the work, which also marks the first time that his physical appearance is described in the text. His appearance is noticed by Otane, who is surprised by his unkempt figure.

Otane thought, "Can this be the man whom Orui loved, this man who hasn't been able to stop crying like a woman, even two weeks after she passed away?"

Looking at him, but trying not to look indiscreetly [*mite minu furi de* 見て見ぬ風で], she ended up observing [*chūmoku* 注目] every aspect of his appearance.

She recognized that he was thin and pale, his hair was long and messy, his heavily bearded face was absolutely filthy, and he looked like someone who had just overcome an illness. Looking closely [*yoku miru to* 能く視ると], she saw that he had crust in the corner of his eyes, dandruff on the collar of his coat, and dirt that looked like an ink stain around the base of his ears. "Good heavens, he

looks like he might even start growing maggots soon,” she thought, before finally averting her eyes.⁸⁷

In contrast with Kōyō’s microscopic description of a filthy and miserable wretch, as channeled through Otane’s line of sight, Mizuno Toshikata’s illustration of Ryūnosuke shows a slightly unshaven and messy-haired gentleman, who is otherwise clean and elegantly poised. If Kōyō’s text bears the signs of photographic realism, in which no visual detail is left unturned, then Toshikata’s illustration depicts an idealized character whose appearance is kept at a remove from the viewer’s eye. In Toshikata’s illustration, Ryūnosuke leans against an open window with a cigarette in hand and a downturned countenance. Outside of the window lies a view of trees, rooftops, and Mt. Fuji in the distance, none of which are described in the narrative. While such an image might be said to depart from Kōyō’s description of the scene in the chapter, it succeeds in contrasting Ryūnosuke’s hidden interior, or the invisible screen onto which he endlessly projects his memories of Orui, and the vast world outside, which he entirely fails to notice.



Figures 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43 –
Great Passion, Great Sorrow,
illustrations of Ryūnosuke by:
Mizuno Toshikata
Kajita Hanko
Yamada Keichū
Kubota Heisen
Tomioka Eisen

⁸⁷ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:58.

Similar images of Ryūnosuke appear in later chapters, such as in an illustration by Kajita Hanko in chapter five, which depicts the main character ruminating in a graveyard overrun by plants and grasses. Once again, his attention is turned completely inward, as he contemplates the figure whose absence is denoted by the gravestone. While this second illustration follows closely on the first in terms of style, subsequent illustrations depart even further from the initial description of Ryūnosuke. In Yamada Keichū's illustration, for example, Ryūnosuke suddenly has short hair and a round, clean-shaven face, while in Kubota Heisen's image he appears like a comical caricature, with a plump, misshapen form and a face full of sparse, elongated whiskers. Even when Ryūnosuke appears with largely the same features as he does in the first illustration, such as in images by Kōbori Tomoto and Tomioka Eisen, he still looks like a completely different character, due in large part to variations in the individual styles of the artists. The result is that each image offers a different interpretation of Ryūnosuke's appearance, or an idea of what he might look like, while reinforcing the fact that his "true" form exists only in the text, beyond the capture of image.



Figures 44 and 45 - *Great Passion, Great Sorrow*, illustration of Otane by Terasaki Kōgyō, draft image by Ozaki Kōyō

While the variant styles of illustration that appear throughout *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* might be attributed to the idiosyncratic visions of their individual artists, an extant draft image in Kōyō's own hand suggests that all of the story's pictures were carefully orchestrated by the author himself. The draft image depicts Otane as she ascends a darkened staircase to Ryūnosuke's room with a bottle of wine. The image was delivered to Terasaki Kōgyō to reproduce as an illustration for the text, together with further instructions on how to design the final product. Almost all of the details that appear in Kōyō's draft image are reproduced in Kōgyō's illustration, including the basic layout of the work and the further details requested in the notes. In the draft image, Kōyō asks that Kōgyō depict Otane wearing *tabi* (split-toed socks) and an overcoat of *meisen* silk (*meisen no haori*). She should have one foot placed on the upper level of the staircase, another on the lower, and a bottle of wine held up high, close to her face. Going into more detail, Kōyō gives the following directions: "Draw the character somewhat smallish, so as to make the darkness around her stand out." Of Otane's figure, he requests: "draw an attractive woman of twenty-three or twenty-four, slightly standoffish, like the wife of a

company employee, and the rigid expression of a homemaker.”⁸⁸ In addition to providing evidence of Kōyō’s involvement in the work’s illustration, the placement of the image in the narrative hints at an impending development in the text. Namely, the image of Otane follows an illustration of Orui (as an oil-painting) almost immediately, with both pictures appearing in closer proximity than almost any other illustrations in the book. Furthermore, a resemblance between the images suggests that Ryūsuke is beginning to conflate his mental image of Orui with his best friend’s wife, thus foreshadowing the story’s conclusion.



Figure 46 - Great Passion, Great Sorrow, illustration of Orui’s portrait by Kobayashi Kiyochika

Shortly following Ryūsuke’s acquisition of the painting of Orui in the narrative, Otane is described in the manner of a painting as well, after being transfigured by Ryūsuke’s probing gaze. As she prepares for a party with her husband, Otane puts on makeup and dresses in unusually colorful clothing, which causes Ryūsuke to see her in an entirely new light. He notices every detail of her clothing, in a passage that replicates the narrator’s earlier observation of the oil painting of Orui. As described by the narrator, Otane wears “a silk crepe overcoat, the color of drywall, decorated with small-sized family crests, a black satin round *obi* sash, two layers of grayish-blue under-kimono dyed with a pattern of willow twigs, a light brown collar woven of fine twill, and flesh-colored long underwear of medium-sized crepe.”⁸⁹

Lingering on the details of her hair and makeup, Ryūsuke is smitten by the very sight of her (*mihoreteiru* 見ほれている), as he finally sees her, fully and clearly, for the first time (*nao yoku mieru* 猶好く見える). Ryūsuke’s gaze is returned by

Otane later in the narrative, when he sneaks into her room late at night in search of consolation. Looking back intently (*jitto minagara* 睨と視ながら) at the invader, Otane is shocked by his sudden intrusion.⁹⁰ For the reader, Ryūsuke’s lustful intent is practically manifested in the visual form of the *kanji* characters on the page, for what Otane notices, specifically, is the sign (*keshiki* 気色) of his intrusion. The word *keshiki* might be interpreted as meaning “indication,” or “warning,” or, more figuratively, as “an emotion that arises from one’s heart and appears clearly on one’s face.” Flipped around, however, the characters read *iroke* (色気), or “sex appeal.” Otane proceeds to stare away, fixing her gaze upon Ryūsuke’s face (*niramu bakari ni otoko no kao o misueteireba* 睨むばかりに男の顔を見据えていれば). Ryūsuke stares back, manifesting his lustful emotions in his gaze: “The penetrating look [*miiru mezashi* 見入る眼色] that he returned was sharper than usual; the expression that arose on his face matched the disquieting romantic emotions that he felt within.”

⁸⁸ Waseda Daigaku Toshokan, *Sōritsu hyakushūnen kinen kichō shoten zuroku* (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Toshokan, 1982), 67.

⁸⁹ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:281.

⁹⁰ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 6:324.

In a story where characters are constantly described as staring, gazing, observing, peering, noticing, and seeing truly for the first time, the manner in which they look unlocks their hidden desires, bringing them either comfort or confusion with every glance. The stare that Ryūsouke exchanges with Otane in the scene of his intrusion is simply too deep for comfort, particularly in the context of his friendship with her husband. Repelled by the force of their ocular exchange, Ryūsouke returns to the comfort of his oil painting, which he pairs with Otane's photograph, as he resolves to love both figures from a distance, as captured in his visual mementos. Almost none of these pronounced visual qualities of the narrative, however, were apparent to early reviewers of the text, who instead focused on the verbosity of Kōyō's language, paying no attention to the function of image in the work. Even before opening the work, however, the visual center of *Great Passion, Great Sorrow* appears in vivid color, on the very cover of the book. Taking the novel in hand, one finds an image of Otane in her private quarters, where she breastfeeds her child. Her breast is fully exposed, hanging from the gap in her open kimono, as she gazes at some unseen figure who appears just outside the frame. Right on the cover of the book, in the opening illustration, the entire five-hundred pages of text is summarized in a single image—an intimate exchange of gazes, which finally fills the absence in Ryūsouke's heart.



Figure 47 - *Great Passion, Great Sorrow*, cover illustration

Overrun by Images: *The Gold Demon*

Kōyō's most famous passage of prose appears towards the end of his final novel *The Gold Demon* (*Konjiki yasha*, 1897-1903), a work that has come to define his legacy as a writer and his contribution to modern Japanese literature during its foundational period. Featuring a dense literary description of the mountainous landscape of Shiobara, a rural hot springs resort northeast of Tokyo, the passage marked an unexpected detour in a seemingly endless tale of lost love and revenge. The narrative of *The Gold Demon*, in brief, tells the story of Kan'ichi, a young

man who turns to a life of usury after being rejected by his one true love, Miya, when she decides to marry Tomiyama Tadatsugu, a wealthy capitalist, instead. After dozens of chapters of dramatic, dialogue-heavy storytelling, which had been serialized in sporadic bursts over the previous years, Kōyō suddenly turned his attention towards the story's setting, as he expressed Kan'ichi's amazement with the landscape around him. As recalled by Oka Yasuo in 1984, the passage was so highly regarded as an example of elegant literary language in pre-war Japan that it was regularly included in middle school text books.⁹¹ Oka recalls the following section most vividly, as the passage that every middle schooler was required to learn and recite from memory:

Spurring the rickshaw forward, on past Shiraha Hill, we crossed the Lookout Bridge, where we spotted a towering cascade, ten meters wide, and entered into the mysterious depths of the mountain landscape. As we moved forward, wherever there was a path, there was water, and where there was water, there was inevitably a bridge, with thirty bridges spanning the length of the valley. Where there were mountains, there were crags, and where there were crags, there was inevitably a waterfall, with seventy waterfalls spread throughout the mountain peaks. Where there was earth, there were springs, and where there were springs, there was inevitably heat, with forty-five hot springs spread throughout the villages. Counting everything together, there were twelve superior sights, sixteen famous places, and seven mysteries; who, pray tell, could search them all out, one at a time?⁹²

Once upheld as a paragon of elegant Meiji writing, the passage was eventually eclipsed in notoriety by the story's most famous illustration, by Takeuchi Keishū, of Kan'ichi kicking Miya after discovering her intention to marry Tomiyama. Although Keishū's image was widely panned for its vulgar expression upon its release, it eventually became the visual emblem of Kōyō's entire literary output, overshadowing his career of painstaking literary production and confirming his distrust of illustration. Having struggled to keep *The Gold Demon* image-free throughout most of its serialization, Kōyō found his work leaving his control as it became a centerpiece of Japanese visual culture, as it was repeatedly adapted to stage, film, and illustrated digests. Comparing Kōyō's most famous passage of prose to the notorious illustration of his text, one finds an author who was deeply concerned with the divergent potentials of text and image to represent reality in vivid terms, as he agonized over the proper visual expression of his work.

As one of the most commercially successful novels in modern Japan, *The Gold Demon* caused a sensation upon its initial release, when it became a hit with readers from across the country and single-handedly propelled the *Yomiuri shinbun* from the status of a moderately successful newspaper to the position of the most widely-read periodical in turn-of-the-20th-century Japan. The work was so popular with readers that they repeatedly threatened to stop buying the newspaper during frequent pauses in its serialization, which occurred due to Kōyō's rapidly deteriorating health, and endlessly pestered the ailing author to continue with his story, which ultimately remained unfinished upon his death in 1903. The popularity of *The Gold Demon* would far outlast the legacy of Kōyō's other literary work, as it became one of the most frequently reprinted novels in pre-war Japan: the collected, single-volume edition of the novel, which was only one among many other versions, was reprinted 189 times between 1915 and

⁹¹ Oka Yasuo, "Zoku zoku Konjiki yasha (ichi) no ni o megutte," *Gakuen*, 533 (May, 1984): 2-3.

⁹² Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 7:395.

1927, three decades after the story first appeared in the pages of the *Yomiuri shinbun*.⁹³ Aside from the text itself, *The Gold Demon* reached an unprecedented level of popularity via frequent adaptation in other forms of media, including theater, poetry, painting, popular song, and film, leading scholars such as Seki Hajime and Sezaki Keiji to characterize it as a definitive example of “media mix” in the Meiji period, or as a cultural phenomenon that was essentially multi-media in nature.⁹⁴

The downside to *The Gold Demon*’s massive popularity, naturally enough, was that the constant stream of plays, movies, and pictures completely overshadowed Kōyō’s text, not to mention the rest of his fiction, as his name became synonymous with what many have called his most lowbrow novel. In light of this history, Hata Kōhei goes so far as to propose that, had it not been for *The Gold Demon*, then Kōyō might still be remembered as a genuine artist today.⁹⁵ It is for this same reason that Baba Mika titles her book-length study of Kōyō’s fiction *Enter the “Novelist”’: Ozaki Kōyō in the Meiji Twenties*, which she proposes as an “introduction” to the work of a largely forgotten literary giant, while purposely leaving *The Gold Demon* out of her study entirely. On the other hand, *The Gold Demon* has not always been seen in such a negative light, and, in fact, was well-received by critics upon its initial publication. It continues to fascinate scholars, who have examined the work from the various perspectives of literary history, media studies, gender studies, art history, political science, and economics.⁹⁶ While the increased attention given to *The Gold Demon* in recent years suggests that it is, at the very least, a text worthy of study, it has also often been held up by scholars as an absorbing work of fiction, if not a compelling work of art.⁹⁷ Looking closely at the work, one finds a novel that seems almost self-aware of its oscillation between popular and high literary modes, as expressed through both its text and its illustration.

While it is difficult to defend the entirety of *The Gold Demon* as a literary masterpiece, one section stands out for the complexity of its exploration of literary form. The scene is of Kan’ichi’s journey to Shiobara, which he decides to undertake after experiencing a nightmare of Miya’s death. As pointed out by Oka Yasuo, the passage describing his journey to the countryside was long upheld as a representative example of elegant Meiji writing, as well as a definitive sample of Kōyō’s extravagant literary style. The passage appears suddenly towards the end of the text, in the middle of a narrative that is otherwise focused almost exclusively on human affairs. The shift in style is extreme, as Kōyō veers from a text composed largely of dialogue, with only brief forays into descriptive prose, to an extended reverie on the natural landscape. According to Kōyō’s diary, the shift was immediately noticed by readers, who felt compelled to personally complain to the author, whom they accused of shirking his duty to the

⁹³ Seki Hajime, *Shinbun shōsetsu no jidai: media, dokusha, merodorama* (Tokyo: Shin’yōsha, 2007), 53-54.

⁹⁴ Seki, *Shinbun shōsetsu no jidai*, 53-84. Sezaki Keiji, “Konjiki yasha to Atami: kuchi-e no chikara to genzai,” *Kokubungaku kō*, 201 (March, 2009): 1.

⁹⁵ Hata Kōhei, “Kōyō no hihiyōsei,” *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū*, 19.3 (March, 1974): 59.

⁹⁶ Mark Anderson approaches the text from the perspective of political and economic history in *Japan and the Specter of Imperialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 121-152. Ken Itō examines the work through a history of melodrama, gender, and representations of family life in *An Age of Melodrama: Family, Gender, and Social Hierarchy in the Turn-of-the-Century Japanese Novel* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 86-139. Miya Mizuta Lippit examines the work in the context of *bijinga*, both as a traditional art form and as a rhetorical strategy, in her upcoming monograph, *Aesthetic Life: Beauty and Art in Modern Japan*. This is in addition to the work of scholars based in Japan, referenced elsewhere throughout this chapter.

⁹⁷ Shindō Masahiro examines the complex reception of the text, as both a work of literature and a popular novel, in “Ozaki Kōyō *Konjiki yasha*/ryūkō to bungakusei ni tsuite: Meiji Taishō ryūkō shōsetsu no kenkyū (I), *Gengo bunka kenkyū*, 1 (March, 1994): 31-46.

story, as they charged, in his own words, “What do you mean by examining the geography of Shiobara at a time like this!”⁹⁸ As one of the last passages of prose that he would ever write, the description of Kan’ichi’s journey to Shiobara finds Kōyō exploring a familiar theme, or the limits of representation via language, which he approaches through a combination of painterly and photographic modes. The text itself exhibits the painterly mode, dense with rhetorical flourishes, formal literary constructions, and archaic phrases, which mediate the landscape through the lens of Kani’ichi’s sublime experience. The text was accompanied, however, by an actual photograph of Shiobara, taken by the author himself, which presents the landscape to the viewer as an “unmediated” observation of the natural world. As though saying to the reader, “Here, look for yourself!” the photograph calls into question the ability of the author to transmit the landscape vividly to the reader, while the romantic register of his literary description evokes a subjective experience that is impossible to locate in the photograph.

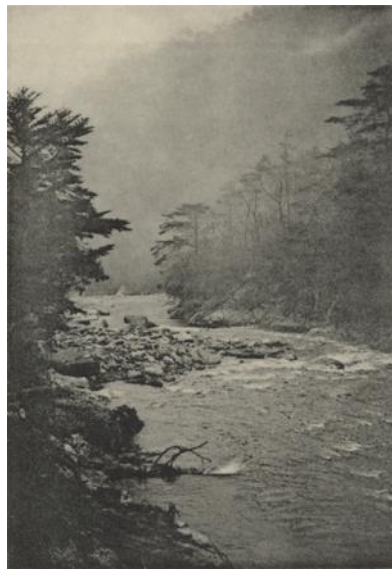


Figure 48 - *The Gold Demon*, vol. 5, frontispiece, photograph by Ozaki Kōyō

Kōyō’s decision to describe the landscape of Shiobara in *The Gold Demon* followed a personal visit to the region during a recess in the story’s serialization. In a separate account of his journey, written in the literary mode of the *kikōbun*, or travel piece, Kōyō describes the landscape of Shiobara in prosaic terms, never reaching towards the lofty heights of his later literary description. While, in the *kikōbun*, the author acts as an objective observer of the natural environment, in *The Gold Demon*, the narrator mixes observations of the landscape’s natural features with descriptions of Kan’ichi’s subjective responses to the world around him, as he moves from a prosaic description of natural geography to a literary description of an encounter with the sublime. An example of this discrepancy can be seen in two passages compared by Oka Yasuo, in which Kōyō describes the similar scene of a *nodate ishi* (a single, large stone standing in a valley) in Shiobara, but in vastly different tones. In the travelogue, Kōyō writes:

⁹⁸ Quoted in Oka Yasuo, “*Zoku zoku konjiki yasha* (ichi) no ni o megutte,” 3.

After passing two villages, I saw a single stone standing in a field. There was a giant boulder in the middle of the valley, and many smaller boulders piled on top of each other. Standing on top of the boulder, my feelings of enchantment were greatly diminished, for, while the boulder itself was mysterious, the view of the twisting river valley that appeared before my eyes [*mokuzen*] looked simply narrow, and nothing more.⁹⁹

A similar scene is described in *The Gold Demon*, but in far more romantic terms:

In the middle of the tangled rapids lay a massive stone, over six meters high, with a flat surface so expansive that one hundred people could easily stand on it at once. It's ancient skin, battered by rain and wind over the years, had become the color of cold ashes, without scales, without hair, crouching menacingly, in the shadow of old trees, drenched in the crashing waves of the rapids. Night after night, summoned by the enchanted wind of Tengu Crag, one could nearly hear the monstrous beast howling.¹⁰⁰

Unlike Kōyō in his travel narrative, Kan'ichi is entirely mesmerized by the landscape that appears before him. Observing the twisting rapids and giant boulders that litter the valley, he is "frozen in place" and "shaken to his core." Unable to look away, "peering with ferocious intensity," he is "tongue-tied," lacking the means to express the profundity of his emotional response.

According to Oka, Kōyō's more colorful description of Shiobara in *The Gold Demon* mixed personal observations of the valley with information likely gleamed from earlier travel narratives and literary accounts, which exalted the landscape in a lofty register closer to Kōyō's fiction.¹⁰¹ Rather than describing exactly what he saw, in *The Gold Demon*, Kōyō described what he was expected to have seen, or what he imagined he saw, in part by borrowing from earlier narratives. The rigid formalism of his description, therefore, likely owed more to literary precedent than to objective observation, as Kōyō pushed the landscape of Shiobara to deliver on its sublime potential. Contrasting with his painterly description of the valley, however, is the photograph of Shiobara, originally included in the fifth volume of *The Gold Demon*, which depicted not what Kōyō learned through mediated narratives, but instead suggested an unmediated view of the valley, as it appeared before his very eyes. The intended effect of the photograph is jarring. If Kōyō's description of the landscape in the narrative is formal, elegant, and sublime, his photograph suggests a far more mundane realm of experience, which exists not just outside of the text, but outside of language altogether. By inserting a photograph directly into his story, Kōyō suggested a point of view that was beyond the capture of language. The complexity of his juxtaposition suggests a new level of formal possibilities for the text-image relationship, which, one can only imagine, Kōyō would have continued to explore if given the opportunity.

While Kōyō personally intervened in his work's visual presentation with the photograph of Shiobara, much of the story's earlier serialization found him struggling to keep pictures out of

⁹⁹ Quoted in Oka, "Zoku zoku konjiki yasha (ichi) no ni o megutte," 4. For Kōyō's original description in his travelogue, see *Kōyō zenshū*, 11:94.

¹⁰⁰ Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 7:397.

¹⁰¹ Oka, "Zoku zoku konjiki yasha (ichi) no ni o megutte," 2-17.

his text entirely. When the story first appeared in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, on January 1, 1897, it was illustration free, and remained that way until December 4, 1899, when it began to feature illustrations by Kajita Hanks.¹⁰² In January of the same year (1899), readers had begun to request that the work be illustrated, as evidenced by a contribution to the reader's column, in which one fan wrote, quite simply, "I want illustrations in Ozaki Kōyō's *The Gold Demon*."¹⁰³ The following month, Kōyō expressed his frustration with the ubiquity of illustration in contemporary fiction during his lecture at Waseda University, thereby suggesting that he was under pressure from the *Yomiuri shinbun* to concede to readers' demands for pictures. After making his concession, readers responded enthusiastically to the inclusion of illustrations in his work, such as one reader, who wrote in November, 1900, "At last, after endless waiting, *The Gold Demon* has resumed publication... moreover, now that the text includes illustrations by master artist Kajita Hanks, one could hardly be more thankful." In another reader response, published the following month, a contributor exclaimed, "The skill of Kōyō's dialogue, combined with Hanks's images, imparts the impression that one is watching a play." While readers were increasingly enthusiastic in their responses, however, Kōyō was apparently displeased. On May 11, 1902, the final illustrated episode of *The Gold Demon* appeared in the *Yomiuri shinbun*. Shortly afterwards, Kōyō quit the paper.

Although Kōyō fought against the illustration of his work in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, when *The Gold Demon* was later published in five volumes by Shun'yōdō, he consented to the inclusion of multi-color woodblock frontispieces with each of the first four volumes (the fifth features his photograph of Shiobara), and even contributed personally to their design. Artist Kaburaki Kiyokata, in his memoirs, recalls being approached by Kōyō with a request for the frontispiece of volume four, which was to depict Kan'ichi's dream of Miya drowning in a river.¹⁰⁴ Kōyō presented Kiyokata with a copperplate photograph of a famous geisha (Yukimatsu of the Murasakiya in Tokushima) and took him to Shinbashi to see a different geisha (Oen of the Komatsuya) and asked that he combine the facial features of both women in his depiction of Miya. Kiyokata based his draft image on a combination of the photograph, his memory of a painting of Ophelia,¹⁰⁵ and his first-hand observations of the Tsukiji river in Tokyo. He brought the draft image to Kōyō, who made further requests for alterations, and who was apparently so pleased with the final product that he took Kiyokata out for dinner and drinks. As frequently remarked by scholars, this episode suggests a certain ambivalence in Kōyō's approach to illustration, as he actively restricted the use of images in the novel's serialization, while supervising every element of the frontispieces that appeared in its collected form. Kōyō's decision to include such images in his books might be judged as a fatal one, however, for it was the garish frontispiece that appeared in the first volume of *The Gold Demon* that would come to encapsulate the entire work, as well as his literary output as a whole. The image, by Takeuchi Keishū, depicts Kan'ichi kicking Miya down to the sand on a beach in the resort town of Atami after discovering her plans to marry Tomiyama. The figures in the image are stiff and contorted into awkward poses, as though twisted into strange shapes by the sheer weight of their emotional

¹⁰² Tsuchida Mitsufumi, "Sashi-e tenbō I: hen'yō kara shinsei e," 120-121

¹⁰³ Reader responses to Hanks's illustrations are all quoted by Seki Hajime in *Shinbun shōsetsu no jidai*, 62.

¹⁰⁴ Kiyokata, *Koshikata no ki*, 223-228.

¹⁰⁵ Kiyokata's reference is likely to *Ophelia* (1852) by John Everett Millais (1829-1896), a Pre-Raphaelite painting that depicts the eponymous character floating down a river as a pale and elegant corpse. The image influenced depictions of suffering heroines in numerous stories by Japanese authors in the early 20th century, as seen in works such as *The Gold Demon* by Kōyō and *Kusamakura* (1906) by Natsume Sōseki.

conflict. They enact an almost cartoonish scene of violence, whose garishness is only highlighted by its cruelty.



Figure 49 - *The Gold Demon*, vol. 1, frontispiece by Takeuchi Keishū

The visual impact of Keishū's frontispiece was so immediate that multiple critics made certain to denounce it in a joint review of *The Gold Demon*, which covered the first three volumes of the collected work. Of the image, one critic wrote, "It doesn't match the text, where Kōyō writes, 'Sea spray rose on distant, undulating waves, the moon shone faintly on the sand of the bay, the sky and the beach were pale white, and both figures stood stock still, like shadows dripping with black ink.' The characters [in Keishū's illustration] are both lacking in attitude, Miya is strangely aged, and, to be honest, the color scheme of the whole thing just looks cheap."¹⁰⁶ Another reviewer wrote, "If one thinks the pine trees look bad, the artist's depiction of Miya is absolutely vulgar. This frontispiece does significant harm to the text." Even Keishū referred to his own illustration as a "monumental blunder" (*daishissaku*), whose pale, contorted characters looked like ghosts, which he blamed on his experimentation with using Japanese ink on Western-style paper.¹⁰⁷ Despite initial reactions to the vulgarity of the frontispiece, however, the image eventually became a centerpiece of the story for audiences, who frequently consumed the text in the form of plays and movies. While these adaptations generally followed the basic outline of Kōyō's text, there is evidence that they took inspiration for the scene at Atami from Keishū's illustration in particular. As noted by Sezaki Keiji, in the earliest staged versions of *The Gold Demon*, the episode at Atami was not yet featured as a central element of the story, but only became a crucial scene in theatrical and filmic adaptations following the publication of volume one of *The Gold Demon*, which included Keishū's illustration as a frontispiece.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Critics' responses to Keishū's *kuchi-e* are all quoted in Sezaki Keiji, "Konjiki yasha to Atami," 9-10. Their responses are originally found in "Konjiki yasha jōchūge hen gōhyō," *Bungei* (August, 1902). The quote from *The Gold Demon* is found in Kōyō, *Kōyō zenshū*, 7:61.

¹⁰⁷ Merritt and Yamada, *Woodblock Kuchi-e Prints*, 66-68.

¹⁰⁸ Sezaki, "Konjiki yasha to Atami," 3.

Today, Kōyō's name has become largely synonymous with *The Gold Demon*, while the rest of his writing has been consigned to the domain of literary history, where it is occasionally encountered by scholars and historians, but few others. Moreover, even *The Gold Demon* is known primarily for its most pivotal scene, especially after its endless repetition on stage and in movies, rather than for its elegant literary style. Writing in 1978, approaching a century after the work's debut, Peter Kornicki exclaimed, "the celebrated scene on the beach at Atami [is] familiar even today to Japanese who have never read a single word Kōyō wrote."¹⁰⁹ Sezaki, writing in 2009, expressed a similar sentiment. In an article on the reception of Keishū's frontispiece, he points out that a bronze statue of the scene was erected on the beach at Atami, where it still serves as a major tourist attraction; travelers might even acquire Hello Kitty versions of Kan'ichi and Miya, or Kewpie dolls, whose packaging features a reproduction of Keishū's infamous print.¹¹⁰ Although Kōyō toiled endlessly in the effort to perfect his writing, he is remembered especially for a single act from a single novel, due in large part to the frontispiece that helped to center its position in the text. Even if the rest of Kōyō's writing is eventually forgotten, this single image will likely endure. Considering its ability to overshadow his entire literary career, the image suggests that Kōyō's suspicion of illustration was well-placed.

¹⁰⁹ Kornicki, "The Novels of Ozaki Kōyō," 183.

¹¹⁰ Sezaki, "*Konjiki yasha* to Atami," 13-14.

Chapter 3

Venerating Images: Izumi Kyōka's Passion for Picture-Books

“Lover's Treatment”: The Foundation of Izumi Kyōka's Visual Imagination

Among authors of the modern period, few are more frequently associated with *kusazōshi* than Izumi Kyōka. The connection was established by the author himself, in stories that describe a childhood spent immersed in the picture-books and woodblock prints of the Edo period. Raised in the snowy northern city of Kanazawa, far from the center of modern print culture in Tokyo, Kyōka experienced the world of *kusazōshi* at a remove from the literary transformations taking place elsewhere in the country.¹ His knowledge of illustrated fiction came primarily through his mother, Nakata Suzu (1854-1882), a transplant from Tokyo who moved to Kanazawa upon marrying his father, Izumi Seiji (1842-1894), a local goldsmith and engraver. Among the few possessions that she brought with her on her arduous journey from the capital was a prized collection of picture-books, whose intricately detailed illustrations would leave a deep impression on Kyōka's literary imagination. In his essay “Lover's Treatment” (“Iro atsukai,” 1901), Kyōka describes a childhood spent absorbed in illustrated fiction, a passion for which he maintained as an adult, as he continued to collect picture-books throughout his lifetime. Eventually, he would amass one of the most thorough collections of *kusazōshi* in modern Japan—one whose level of completion suggests an almost fanatical devotion to the comic book-like form.² In his own fiction, Kyōka repeatedly referenced his favorite *kusazōshi* as visual anchors in his literary world, while evoking the richly illustrated medium of the picture-book through the physical format of his publications. In his late writing, he underscored his reverence for picture-books by equating them with religious icons, particularly in stories of miraculous *kusazōshi* that transmit messages from the dead and manifest supernatural power through their images. Treating illustration as an enchanted artistic medium, Kyōka referenced pictures as a central element of a literary project focused on conjuring spirits of a bygone world.

Scholars have long noted the centrality of *kusazōshi* to Kyōka's literary imagination, referring to picture-books variously as “the strongest influence... on his writing,”³ “the seedbed of his literary endeavors,”⁴ and “the womb of his work.”⁵ Charles Inouye describes Kyōka's childhood experiences of listening to *kusazōshi* read aloud and tracing images from their pages as key elements in his literary formation. He writes, “Kyōka's life as a writer began with this act

¹ Kanazawa, the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture (historically known as the Kaga province), is located on the northern coast of Japan, separated from Tokyo by the Japanese Alps. Due to its relative distance from the capital, social and technological change arrived at a slower pace in Kanazawa than in Tokyo. In his fiction and essays, Kyōka often portrays Kanazawa as a small town with a flourishing traditional culture. The city continues to be renowned as a center of traditional Japanese art, crafts, and architecture even today. James L. McClain describes the artistic and social heritage of the city in *Kanazawa: A Seventeenth-Century Japanese Castle Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 93-94; 101-102; 139-146.

² As recounted in the introduction, Kyōka's personal collection of *kusazōshi* includes over five hundred volumes of illustrated books, most of them *gōkan*. His collection features individual volumes from forty-eight different titles, some of which are complete. The collection is preserved at Keiō University.

³ Okitsu Kaname, “Izumi Kyōka to Edo gesaku,” *Meiji Taishō bungaku kenkyū*, 21 (1957): 17.

⁴ Asada Shōjirō, “Kyōka no shōsetsu to Edo bungaku: ushinawareta toki no tansaku-tachi,” *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, 41.14 (1976): 130.

⁵ Masatane Koike, “Kyōka bungaku no kosō: koten no sekai,” *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, 46.7 (1981): 115.

of tracing. Eventually, the impulse to reaffirm the power of... images would lead him to produce verbal images that would reconfigure the world of his mother's illustrated texts."⁶ Emphasizing the centrality of *kusazōshi* to Kyōka's literary project, he later adds, "Just as their scenes of romance, mayhem, and transformation preceded the telling of the stories dwelling within, the foundations of the author's literary imagination, established by this process of *etoki* or explaining the pictures, required the visually oriented style of narration for which he became famous."⁷ Yoshida Masashi similarly emphasizes that, for Kyōka, "seeing came before reading, just as the visual reception of a particular scene preceded the structure or plot of a story."⁸ Yoshida argues that pictures lie at the foundation of Kyōka's verbal narratives, providing their formal structure and acting as keys to his work. In common with other scholars who make similar claims, Yoshida finds evidence for his argument in "Lover's Treatment," an essay that has proven crucial in deciphering Kyōka's relationship to the fiction of the Edo period.

In "Lover's Treatment", Kyōka describes an abiding passion for illustrated literature that began with his mother's collection of *kusazōshi*. He starts the essay by noting that, long before he learned to read, he would stare in endless fascination at the illustrations in his mother's picture-books and wonder what the characters depicted in their pages were doing. After bugging his mother relentlessly to read to him, she finally consented, but rather than read him the texts directly, she narrated the images to him via the process of *etoki* ("explaining pictures"), or a form of oral recitation in which the narrator uses images as a storytelling guide. In *etoki*, the narrator verbally animates the story's illustrations for the listener, treating them like virtual actors on an illustrated stage. Kyōka describes a childhood in which he was surrounded by women who would narrate *kusazōshi* to him in the *etoki* style, including his mother, older cousins, and neighbors, and recalls being particularly fascinated with the story of Princess Wakana, from *The Tale of Shiranui*, a spider-magic wielding heroine whose illustrated adventures were still vivid in his mind many years later. Drawn repeatedly to the images that he found in his mother's collection, Kyōka began tracing the illustrations from her picture-books on thin sheets of paper, thereby committing their visual form to memory.



Figure 50 - *The Tale of Shiranui* (1849-1855), written by Ryūkatei Tanekazu, illustrated by Utagawa Kunisada, et. al.

⁶ Inouye, *The Similitude of Blossoms*, 13.

⁷ Inouye, *The Similitude of Blossoms*, 14.

⁸ Yoshida Masashi, "Izumi Kyōka to kusazōshi: *Shaka hassō Yamato bunko o chūshin to shite*," *Izumi Kyōka: bi to gensō*, edited by Tōgō Katsumi (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1991), 174.

As he grew older, Kyōka's passion for Edo period fiction only intensified. The title of his personal history, "Lover's Treatment," metaphorically pictures his relationship to *kusazōshi* as a passionate affair. In the essay, he personifies picture-books as illicit lovers whom he takes with him to bed and keeps hidden within his fondest thoughts. He writes that, as a student, he would hide illustrated books in his English language primers and, at home, he would sneak them up to his room, far away from the disapproving gaze of his father, where he would pore over their pages in darkness until they robbed him of his eyesight (thus explaining the origin of his glasses). As a child, he had known only the woodblock-printed fiction of the Edo period, which formed the bulk of reading materials available in the provincial capital of Kanazawa, where typeset publications only arrived years after they first appeared in Tokyo.⁹ Emphasizing the traditional nature of his literary upbringing, he claims to have only encountered a typeset newspaper—then the primary venue for fiction—after entering English school at the age of 11 (in 1884). Although Kyōka eventually became an avid reader of newspaper fiction from Tokyo, and especially the classically-oriented works of popular writers such as Shōyō, Kōyō, and Rohan, he maintained an abiding passion for *gesaku* that continued to influence his literary ideals as an adult. Writing in 1901, he avowed that his favorite works of fiction were still all from the Edo period, including works by Santō Kyōden, Shikitei Sanba, Ryūtei Tanehiko, and, his favorite text of all, Jippensha Ikku's *Shank's Mare*, which he regularly kept by his bed stand and took with him whenever he traveled around Japan. Like the *kusazōshi* that he slipped in between the pages of his English language textbooks, Edo period fiction remained constantly at the heart of Kyōka's art.

In the closing remarks of "Lover's Treatment," Kyōka shifts from a straightforward account of his literary habits into a tale of living images, in which illustrations emerge as enchanted conduits to the past. After describing his favorite fiction from the Edo period, Kyōka suggests that his love for *kusazōshi* is ultimately tied to his longing for his deceased parents, the memories of whom had become indelibly tied to his nostalgia for picture-books. He writes:

Yep, it's true, I still enjoy *kusazōshi* today. Books like Kyōden's are filled with memories of my mother and father, so when I feel lonely, I keep them by my pillow. Looking at pictures of Princess Wakana, spider webs arise like magic and form phantoms before my eyes.¹⁰

The image described above—that of an illustration that comes to life—would become a major theme in Kyōka's fiction. In many of his stories, the author treats illustrations like enchanted icons, which serve as bridges between severed worlds. In a manner analogous to religious iconography, illustrations preserve the spirits of the past in their visual form, whose supernatural power is activated by the reverent attention of the viewer. Illustrations create their own narratives, by both reflecting and transforming the texts that surround them. At the same time, images function like ghosts, silent and uncanny, and are only brought to life by the stories that give them narrative form.

⁹ Although small, privately circulated newspapers first appeared in Kanazawa in the early 1870's, roughly around the same time as in Tokyo, Kanazawa's first widely circulated newspaper, the *Hokkoku shinbun*, was only established in 1893, four years after Kyōka moved to Tokyo. See Louise Young, *Beyond the Metropolis: Second Cities and Modern Life in Interwar Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013), 62-63.

¹⁰ Izumi Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973-1976), 28:659-660.

The haunting power of images appears as the central theme in one of Kyōka's late short stories, "Picture-Book Spring" ("Ehon no haru," 1926), in which the author suggests the process by which pictures produce narrative, while simultaneously relying on language for their transformation into literary texts. In the story, the narrator recounts an incident from his youth in which he stumbled upon a mysterious bookstore in a back ally in his hometown.¹¹ Hoping to indulge in his passion for picture-books, which were strictly forbidden by his father, the narrator sneaks back to the alleyway day after day, but fails to find the courage to approach the doors of the bookstore. One day, he encounters a beautiful stranger on her way back from the public baths. Taking him by the hand, the stranger leads him to the store, where she shows him a haunted work of *kusazōshi* kept in an abandoned shrine.

For some three to five days after first spotting the sign reading *kashihon* [books for rent], I returned to the alleyway to look again, until that beautiful woman reappeared, as though passing through to somewhere else. She approached me from behind, took me by the hand, and led me to that gloomy, ruined garden, where I opened the doors of the old shrine and witnessed, in the light of a votive candle, in an armor chest like the kind I had only seen in pictures, a single *kusazōshi*.

"Shall I read you the pictures?" [*etoki shiteagemasu ka*] (Author's note: *etoki* is when mothers or older sisters narrate the pictures from *kusazōshi* to young children).¹² Can you read it? It's all in *kana*."¹³

"I can read it"

"That's a good boy."¹⁴

The boy rushes home with the *kusazōshi* tucked into his kimono, as he hopes to hide it from his father until he can get back to his room, but when he finally gets home, he discovers that the book has somehow disappeared. All he can remember is that he saw a page with the character for snake (*mi*, 巳) printed over and over again (巳巳巳巳).

After the bizarre incident, the boy meets with a local fortune teller and recounts the details of his experience to her. Frightened, the old woman urges him to look at the supposed bookstore through a telescope, by which she reveals to him that the structure in the alleyway is actually an abandoned manor, with no sign reading "books for rent" (*kashihon*) to speak of. She then relates to him the story of the building—not so long ago, the loyal servant of a sickly samurai sought a woman born on the year, month, day, and hour of the snake (stylized in the text as 巳巳巳, 巳), as it was believed that the liver of such a woman would cure his master's illness.

¹¹ In the following synopsis, the narrative is arranged into chronological order. In the original text, the story jumps back and forth in time.

¹² The "author's note" is Kyōka's own, as featured in the original text.

¹³ During the Edo period, literature aimed at educated audiences (such as *yomihon*, or books for reading) utilized a combination of phonetic script (*kana*) and Chinese-derived logographs (*kanji*). *Kusazōshi*, on the other hand, were written almost entirely in cursive *kana* (*kuzushiji*), thus making them legible to a diverse demographic of readers, including women, artisans, merchants, and older children. Ironically, this makes them especially difficult for the modern reader to parse. This is due to a combination of factors, including divergent cursive styles, the use of non-standardized characters, the lack of logographs (which facilitate reference), and the lack of punctuation or spaces between words. The narrator's assertion that he is able to read "all in *kana*" demonstrates his intimate familiarity with an archaic form of writing.

¹⁴ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 23:11-12.

The servant acquired a young maiden matching this criteria from a slave trader, stripped her naked, nailed her to a door, sliced open her stomach, and harvested her blood and liver for his master (the boy cringes at these details, while the old fortune teller urges him to keep listening). On his way to deliver the liver to his master, however, the servant found that the prized organ had been replaced by a red bran bag—the kind used by women at the public baths, as frequently depicted in *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, particularly those falling into the category of *bijinga*, or “pictures of beautiful women.” Bewildered, the servant returned to examine the corpse, but was later found dead in his master’s yard, asphyxiated by a scarlet bran bag stuffed down his throat. Rumors later spread that the servant had been killed by a mysterious woman, apparently the same one whom the narrator witnessed in the alleyway. Hoping to appease the spirits of the deceased, the local people erected a shrine in the garden. Within the altar, they placed a sacred work of *kusazōshi*, which preserved the grisly history of the manor in its illustrated pages.

At the conclusion of the story, the narrator relates that, many years later, his hometown was stricken by a flood, which unleashed a nest of vipers that slithered through the streets. While the connection between the two parts of the story is left unspoken, the reader can infer that the snakes that filled the protagonist’s hometown were the same snakes that filled the pages of his miraculous *kusazōshi*. The closing scene thus suggests an endlessly repeating loop between text and image, in which pictures lead to words and back to pictures, ad infinitum. The story centers on a logograph, or the character for snake (巳), which retains the pictorial imprint of its referent (a real snake) curled into a menacing loop. Text and image are enunciated in the same moment, thereby suggesting a shared origin in the visual field. This dual-layered structure of visual and verbal meaning is mirrored in Kyōka’s fiction, in which illustrations from Edo period *kusazōshi* give shape to the author’s text-based narratives, just as his stories recreate the visual worlds of *kusazōshi* by rendering them into text. In this formulation, words and pictures are fundamentally interdependent, as neither truly exists without reference to the other.

Layers of Visuality: Illustration, Visual Referents, and Mental Images

In Kyōka’s fiction, images function on at least three levels, all essential for understanding the role of visuality in his work. These levels include: (1) actual illustrations, designed by visual artists to accompany his text, (2) referential images, or allusions to images in other works of art or literature, and (3) mental images, which are described or suggested through language. In many of Kyōka’s stories, all three levels are present at once, resulting in a complex layering of visual elements across both text and image. On the most concrete level, Kyōka’s fiction featured images in the form of actual illustrations—hundreds of them, created by dozens of artists, over a nearly five-decade career. While many of these illustrations were perfunctory images, designed by staff illustrators to meet reader demands, others were carefully crafted works of art that enhanced the ghostly atmosphere of Kyōka’s fiction and added a layer of visual complexity to his work. Two artists tower above the rest in regard to their importance to Kyōka’s literary project—Komura Settai and Kaburaki Kiyokata¹⁵—although many others played an important

¹⁵ Muramatsu Sadataka, the author of the first critical biography on Izumi Kyōka (written in 1966, long before Kyōka was widely acknowledged as a canonical writer), was also the first critic to comment on Settai and Kiyokata’s illustrations, as well as their close friendship with the author. See *Izumi Kyōka* (Tokyo: Nara Shobō, 1966), 206. He was prescient in his recognition, however, as the subject of illustration in Kyōka’s work only began to attract wider critical attention in the late 1990’s. In a later work, from 1996, Muramatsu refers to Settai and Kiyokata’s illustrations as “sister arts” (*shimai bungei*) to Kyōka’s literature, which, he writes, “strew flowers in his

role in both supplying his fiction with images and inspiring his visual imagination.¹⁶ Not all of Kyōka's fiction was illustrated; in fact, many of his most critically acclaimed stories feature minimal illustration, with only one or two pictures at most, including *The Holy Man of Mt. Kōya* (*Kōya hijiri*, 1900), *A Day in Spring* (*Shunchū/Shunchū gokoku*, 1906), *The Grass Labyrinth* (*Kusameikyū*, 1908), and *A Song by Lantern Light* (*Uta andon*, 1910). Many of his other stories, however, feature dozens of images, including works of popular fiction that were first serialized in newspapers and later adapted to theater, such as *Tale of the Vigil* (*Tsuya monogatari*, 1899) and *A Woman's Lineage* (*Onna keizu*, 1907), and late gems that have long been acclaimed by Kyōka scholars as being among the author's most complex and rewarding works of fiction, such as *Of the Mountains and the Sea* (*Sankai hyōbanki*, 1929) and *Pale Plum Blossoms* (*Usukōbai*, 1937). As the topic of the current study, the actual illustration of Kyōka's literature will be discussed at length over the following chapters.

The second level of visuality present in Kyōka's fiction is found in the form of references to images that are *not* featured as actual illustrations in his publications. These references are usually to works of art from the Edo period, with a particular focus on *kusazōshi*, although allusions to works from earlier time periods are represented as well, including references to Nō plays, Tang poetry, and Buddhist sutras.¹⁷ The influence of early modern art and literature on Kyōka's fiction is considerable and has been studied by scholars for decades,¹⁸ but the sheer amount, variety, and complexity of his references means that there is always more material to explore. In common with the art forms of the Edo period, Kyōka's fiction is intensely intertextual, oftentimes requiring access to other works, either by himself or other artists, in order to fully comprehend elements of a particular narrative. In one of Kyōka's most critically lauded stories, *A Song by Lantern Light*, the narrative is structured on dual references to Jippensha Ikku's *Shank's Mare*, a classic work of illustrated comic fiction from the late Edo period, and the

stories and should not be overlooked in the critical evaluation of his work." See *Teihon Izumi Kyōka kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1996), 11.

¹⁶ Other artists closely associated with Kyōka's literature include Hirezaki Eihō (1880-1968), who designed a number of iconic frontispieces for Kyōka's books, and Hashiguchi Goyō (1880-1921), a modern *ukiyo-e* artist and book designer known especially for his work in *shin hanga* (new woodblock prints), as well as for his Art Nouveau-inspired book designs for novels by Natsume Sōseki and Izumi Kyōka. See Matsumoto Shinako and Yayoi Bijutsukan, *Yōen suibi: yomigaeru tensai eshi Hirezaki Eihō no sekai* (Tokyo: Kokusha kankōkai, 2009) and Nishiyama Junko, *Hashiguchi Goyō: sōshoku e no jōnetsu* (Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu, 2005). Two other artists, couple Ikeda Shōen (1886-1917) and Ikeda Terukata (1883-1921), designed a handful of images for Kyōka's fiction, but are more important to his work as reappearing characters. Shōen, who died young, often appears in Kyōka's stories as a ghost, while Terukata is represented as a grieving husband who drowns his sorrows in alcohol. See Yoshida Masashi, "Izumi Kyōka to sashie gaka: Ikeda Shōen, Terukata," *Ronshū Izumi Kyōka 3* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1999), 133-157.

¹⁷ Kyōka was known as a devoted reader of Tang poet Li He (791-817), an idiosyncratic figure who wrote densely imagistic poetry filled with ghostly and bizarre themes. For the influence of Li He's poetry on Kyōka's fiction, see Tōgō Katsumi, *Izumi Kyōka: bi to gensō* (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1991), 188; Arakawa Hōshō, *Izumi Kyōka: shōgai to saku hin* (Tokyo: Shōwa Tosho Shuppan, 1981), 49-51. Kyōka also frequently referenced passages from the *Lotus Sutra* (Jp: *Hokekyō*) in his fiction. See Izumi Kyōka, *Shin bungei dokuhon, Izumi Kyōka* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō shinsha, 1991), 47-48.

¹⁸ Representative works on this subject include the aforementioned Okitsu Kaname, "Izumi Kyōka to Edo *gesaku*," Asada Shōjirō, "Kyōka no shōsetsu to Edo bungaku," Masatane Koike, "Kyōka bungaku no kosō," and Yoshida Masashi, "Izumi Kyōka to kusazōshi." Other important works include: Tōgō Katsumi, "Kyōka to Edo geibun: kōdan o chūshin ni," *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū*, 30.7 (June, 1985): 68-74; Takada Mamoru, "Kyōden, Kyōka, rantōba: Edo yomihon to kindai shōsetsu," *Yuriika*, 32.13 (October, 2000): 158-165; Suda Chisato, "Kyōka bungaku no gensen: Chūgoku bungaku, Edo bungaku, mindan, sashie," *Yuriika*, 32.13 (October, 2000): 166-175; Suda Chisato, "Kusazōshi toshite no Fūryūsen," *Bungaku*, 5.4 (2004): 104-112.

Nō play *The Diver (Ama)*, a work with origins in the mid-14th century. Weaving the plots and characters of these two stories into a complex narrative full of extended references, the work relies heavily on the reader's familiarity with its predecessors in order to communicate its basic meaning. Without at least a vague knowledge of the allusions featured in the text, the narrative can be nearly impossible to follow.

In his references to works from the Edo period, Kyōka demonstrated a preference for popular culture that permeated his fiction, in which he often championed the vivid expressions found in the art of the common people. With few exceptions (Nō being the major one),¹⁹ allusions to elite or refined artistic traditions are nearly absent from Kyōka's writing, while references to picture-books, *ukiyo-e*, works of comic fiction, itinerant storytelling, circus sideshows (*misemono*), paper doll plays (*kami shibai*), and amateur theater abound. Mentions of the classical schools of Japanese art, such as the Rinpa, Kanō, and Tosa schools, are almost nowhere to be found. This preference for the popular is often connected by scholars and biographers to Kyōka's upbringing in the merchant quarters of Kanazawa, the provincial capital of the wealthy Maeda clan, whose conservative governance enforced a culture of strict social segregation and hierarchy. Living by the Asano river in the northern reaches of the city, Kyōka spent his early life in close proximity to the geisha quarters, as well as the sprawling complex of Buddhist temples located on Mt. Utatsu, both just across from the Asano river. His family and neighbors included merchants, artisans, actors, musicians, and geisha, but not samurai or aristocrats, who lived in the center of the city, which was elevated both geographically and socially from the world of the lower classes below. As suggested by Yanagita Izumi, the anti-authoritarian spirit of Kyōka's fiction was nursed by a childhood spent immersed in the popular arts of the Edo period, and bears a clear imprint of the rebellious *chōnin* (merchant) spirit that shaped the aesthetic values of the age.²⁰

Beyond simply referencing images associated with popular culture, Kyōka used his fiction to explore the intersection between vulgar and sacred varieties of art, in narratives that elevated the lowly form of *kusazōshi* to the lofty world of religious iconography. During the Edo period, sacred and profane images existed on a continuum of artistic forms, instead of being separated into discrete categories, as often demanded by modern sensibilities. As demonstrated in his writing, Kyōka clearly recognized the close connection between popular and religious imagery that existed in early modern society, which he learned by absorbing the traditional culture of his hometown of Kanazawa, and particularly that of the temples and tea house quarters at the edges of the city, where the visual culture of Buddhism intersected with folkloric religious practices and popular entertainment.²¹ Throughout the 19th century, in regional centers all over the country, temples housed and commissioned works by well-known woodblock print artists,

¹⁹ Kyōka's frequent references to Nō might be considered an exception, as the art form is more often associated with upper class refinement than with popular entertainment. It is important to note, however, that Nō was practiced as a form of musical recitation across social classes, and that it was occasionally made available to the masses, particularly during special religious events. Kyōka's connection to Nō was also highly personal, as his father played Nō drums in Kanazawa and his mother was descended from a long line of Nō actors and musicians from the Kadono school in Edo. See Muramatsu, *Izumi Kyōka*, 33.

²⁰ Yanagita Izumi, "Kyōka no yomihajime," *Zuihitsu Meiji bungaku* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2005), 3:237. Originally printed in *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, 2.9 (1937): 61-64.

²¹ McClain writes that that area around the northern banks of the Asano river, near the Buddhist temple complex on Mt. Utatsu, became a center for kabuki, amateur performance, and prostitution in the mid-18th century, thus mirroring the religious-entertainment complexes found in larger cities, such as Sensōji in Edo, even if on a much smaller scale. See *Kanazawa*, 144-145.

such as Kuniyoshi²² and Kunimasa,²³ who created religious imagery in the same style as their picture-book illustrations. Likewise, *kusazōshi* served simultaneously as texts for religious edification and popular entertainment, often by combining moral instruction with kabuki-style plots of intrigue, romance, and revenge. In recognizing the confluence between popular and religious art that permeated Japanese society, Kyōka acknowledged that classes of artistic distinction were artificial from the start. Rather than naturally isolated spheres, the categories of sacred and profane, lowly and elevated, were shown in his work to be reflections of discriminatory social hierarchies, which were written into the very cityscapes from which they emerged.

In his fiction, Kyōka repeatedly referenced pictures by two *ukiyo-e* artists in particular, Utagawa Kunisada and Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, both of whom were among the most prolific illustrators of the 19th century. With images that ranged from scenes of religious piety to pictures of the stage, images of prostitutes, and depictions of modern life, Kunisada and Yoshitoshi's work reached into virtually every cultural sphere. Kyōka's interest in Kunisada might be considered as an inheritance from his mother, who assiduously collected *ukiyo-e* and *kusazōshi* by the artist, including three long-running series of illustrated fiction, *Fake Murasaki*, *Country Genji*, *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, and *The Tale of Shiranui*.²⁴ All three texts were among the most popular series of fiction published during the Edo period and reached a broad audience of readers both literate and semi-literate, including women, children, merchants, samurai, bureaucrats, and anyone else capable of following their extended narratives through a combination of words and pictures. Along with being incredibly popular, all three series were also among the most elaborately illustrated works of literature produced in premodern Japan, owing to a combination of Tanehiko's expert draft images and Kunisada's intricately detailed woodblock illustrations. When creating images for *kusazōshi*, Kunisada drew on his previous work in designing actor portraits (*nigao-e*) and images of kabuki plays (*shibai-e*) to turn the printed pages of the texts he illustrated into a form of virtual theater. The effect of Kunisada's pictures is often spectacular, as his images appear to move through three-dimensions and jump out of the illustrated page.²⁵ Kyōka expressed his love for Kunisada's art in his short story,

²² Sensōji temple owns votive images by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Utagawa Kunitaru (1818-1860), Torii Kiyotada (d.a.), and Torii Kiyomoto II (b. 1789), all *ukiyo-e* artists from the two main schools of woodblock printing and illustration in Edo. Another image owned by the temple, carved in wood, is clearly based on a print by Yoshitoshi, "Ushiwakamaru to Benkei," although it is signed by the carver, Suzuki Tō'un. *Kinryūsan Sensōji zuroku* (Tokyo: Sensōji, 1978), figs. 17, 27, 33, 38, and 39.

²³ Kunimasa illustrated a guide to the 100-temple pilgrimage route of sites dedicated to Kannon, in both east and west Japan, which features origin stories for each temple, usually involving a miraculous appearance of the bodhisattva. The text is written by Mantei Ōga. *Saigoku Bandō Chichibu hyakuban Kannon reigenki* (Tokyo: Kodama Yakichi, 1882).

²⁴ Despite his popularity and influence in the early modern period, Kunisada has only gradually come to be recognized for his major contribution to the art of Japanese woodblock printing in more recent years. This is likely because, unlike figures such as Hokusai and Hiroshige, whose landscape prints resonated with interest in nature imagery around the world, Kunisada's work was concentrated on pictures of contemporary fashion, theater prints, and *kusazōshi* illustration, all art forms that have made less of an impact on the global imagination in regard to Japanese art. Recently, however, his work has been increasingly showcased in museum exhibitions in both Japan and the US, as new scholars and fans have come to recognize the superior quality of his work. See, for example, Hinohara Kenji, Ōta Kinen Bijutsukan, eds., *Utagawa Kunisada: kore zo Edo no iki* (Tokyo: Tokyo bijutsu, 2016) and Sarah E. Thompson, Matsushima Masato, and Katsumori Noriko, *Kunisada x Kuniyoshi* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2017).

²⁵ Kunisada's characters frequently cross over artificial frames and borders as they reach into subsequent illustrations, as though attempting to physically emerge from the space of the page. Their movements are

“Illustrated by Kunisada” (“Kunisada egaku,” 1910), in which the narrator likens his mother’s collection of woodblock prints to living people—“the sultry women and cunning dandies of Shitaya and Fukagawa” (both neighborhoods in east Edo that served as popular settings for early modern fiction).²⁶ In the short story, the narrator compels his mother to sell her entire collection of Kunisada prints, some two-hundred images in all, to fund the purchase of a plain, black, science textbook. Regretting his decision almost immediately, he feels as though he has sold his very family into slavery. As an adult, Kyōka would keep the illustrated world of Kunisada’s prints close at hand by focusing his collection of *kusazōshi* on works illustrated by Kunisada in particular, regardless of author, and by pasting characters from *Country Genji* on a folding screen that surrounded his writing desk.



Figure 51 - Fake Murasaki, *Country Genji*, frontispieces by Kunisada

One of Kyōka’s favorite texts from the Edo period, Mantei Ōga’s *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, featured illustrations by Kunisada in what was essentially a didactic account of the life of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, meant to educate audiences by providing a visual digest of religious history. The title was one of the longest running series of picture-books in the Edo period and featured prominently in both Kyōka and his mother’s collections of *kusazōshi*. While the text itself is dense with Sanskrit-derived terminology and difficult plot points, whose level of obscurity might be considered appropriate only for scholars, Kunisada’s *ukiyo-e* style illustrations transformed the world of Shakyamuni into a kabuki-esque spectacle, which made the work accessible to a wide cross-section of readers. The result often blurs the boundaries between religious instruction and worldly entertainment, with illustrations that mix elements of sacred art with the visual flair of *kusazōshi*. In an early scene from the first volume, for example, the mother of the Buddha, Māyādevi, is shown bathing in the nude, in an image that resembles another work by Kunisada, whose subject is a beautiful woman (*bijin*) from the eastern district of

accompanied by a shifting visual perspective, which treats the setting of the story as a fully-realized, three-dimensional “stage.” The characters themselves are drawn in the manner of actor portraits (*nigao-e*), thus recalling the postures and facial expressions of real kabuki actors.

²⁶ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 12: 700.

Imagawa in Edo.²⁷ Whether local beauty or mother of the Buddha, both figures are expressed through the same visual lens of *ukiyo-e*. With its popular appeal, *kusazōshi* like *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha* reflected a world where earthly and supernatural elements all inhabited the same plane of existence. Seizing on this early modern conception of reality, Kyōka used his fiction to recreate a world where entertainment and veneration were two sides of the same coin, or where picture-books and religious icons offered equal access to a realm of gods and spirits.



Figure 52 – Illustration of Māyādevi by Kunisada from Mantei Ōga's *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, vol. 1 (1841)



Figure 53 – Woodblock print of a woman from Imagawa by Kunisada, from the series *One Hundred Beautiful Women from Famous Places in Edo* (1858)

Kyōka's interest in Yoshitoshi, one of the most prominent artists of the 19th century, might be boiled down to a single image: "The Lonely House in Adachigahara, Ōshū" ("Ōshū Adachigahara hitotsuya no zu," 1885), a print that combines shocking violence with a hidden message of the saving power of Kannon (Avalokiteśvara), the bodhisattva of compassion. The infamous picture depicts the ghastly scene of a pregnant woman bound and hung upside down by an *onibaba*, or demonic hag, who sharpens her blade on a whetting-stone as she prepares to slice open the woman's belly and cut out her fetus.²⁸ The image is based on a legend originating in Northeast Japan, which tells of an *onibaba* who murders a series of young, beautiful women in her isolated hut in Adachigahara (in present-day Nihonmatsu, Fukushima prefecture).²⁹ In some versions of the story, the *onibaba* is a merciless thief, who kills her victims after robbing them

²⁷ The print can be found in the popular series of *bijinga* (pictures of beautiful women) *One Hundred Beautiful Women from Famous Places in Edo* (*Edo meisho hyakunin bijo*, 1858). See, Hinohara, *Utagawa Kunisada*, 29.

²⁸ A copy of the print can be found in Kyōka's personal collection, currently housed at Keiō University.

²⁹ The origins of the story are uncertain, but it appears to have been told as early as the 10th century. Variations of the legend can be found in present-day Fukushima, Saitama, and Tokyo. See Murakami Kenji, *Yōkai jiten* (Tokyo: Mainichi shinbunsha, 2000), 16. During Kyōka's own lifetime, the story was adapted as an illustrated children's story by Iwaya Sazanami (1870-1933) in volume seventeen of the series *Old Tales from Japan* (*Nihon mukashibanashi*, 1894-1896). See *Adachigahara* (Tokyo: Hatsudamoto hakubunkan, 1896). Folklorist Yanagita Kunio tells a variation of the tale set in Asakusa, Tokyo in *Nihon no densetsu* (Tokyo: Jipūsha, 1950), 12



Figure 54 - The Lonely House in Adachigahara, Ōshū (1885) by Yoshitoshi

only as a means of silencing them, while in other versions she kills with the intent of harvesting the liver of her victim's unborn fetus, which she requires as a cure for her master's daughter. The ghastly narrative originated as a folkloric account, but was frequently adapted to Japanese art and theater, including in the Nō play *Adachigahara* (also known as *Kurozuka*), the *bunraku* puppet play *Ōshū Adachigahara* (1762) by Chikamatsu Hanji (1725-1783), and the kabuki play *Hitotsuya*. Yoshitoshi's print of the *onibaba* belongs to a subgenre of *ukiyo-e* known as a *zankoku-e*, *muzan-e*, or *chimidoro-e* (cruel, ruthless, or blood-soaked pictures), which were especially popular in the mid-19th century, both before and after the Meiji restoration.³⁰ Shocking

³⁰ Segi Shinichi points out that Yoshitoshi was launched to fame with two series of extremely brutal prints that were published right around the time of the Meiji restoration: *Twenty-Eight Infamous Murders with Accompanying Verses* (*Eimei nijūhasshūku*, 1866-1867) and *One Hundred Selections of Warriors in Battle* (*Kidai hyaku sensō*, 1868-1869), the latter co-illustrated by Ochiai Yoshiiku (1833-1904). He situates such prints within an era of "fin de siècle fervor," in which audiences clamored for violent entertainment as the social order of the Tokugawa period appeared

images of torture, mutilation, decapitation, and sexual violence captured the national imagination and were circulated as standalone prints, in books, and, most prominently, in illustrated news stories, known as *shinbun nishiki-e* (newspaper brocade prints).³¹ Such images arose during an age of political and social turmoil, as the reestablishment of imperial rule led to violence and bloodshed in Edo and other parts of the country. Despite regular censorship of visual and literary arts by both the Tokugawa and Meiji governments, *zankoku-e* evaded censors by operating under the pretense that they were simply recording violence as it actually occurred, or, otherwise, that they were adaptations of traditional folk stories with clear moral messages.³² Whatever the reasons for the popularity of bloody prints, for Kyōka, they appeared as windows into the darkest recesses of the early modern imagination. The level of brutality and violence seen in Kyōka's fiction is oftentimes as shocking as that of Yoshitoshi's prints, as the author vividly describes scenes of torture and bloodshed in many of his works. In a few stories, Kyōka even compares his description of carnage to Yoshitoshi's print in particular, thus giving evidence of its central influence on his literary explorations of violence.³³

In addition to its popular appeal, Yoshitoshi's print belonged to a lineage of sacred iconography, which incorporated depictions of physical carnage in images meant for religious veneration. In most versions of the *onibaba* legend, the tale ends with the appearance of Kannon, who saves a particularly pious believer from death and puts an end to the *onibaba*'s reign of terror. A variation of the legend plays a major role in the founding narrative of the Sensōji temple in Asakusa, the most iconic temple in all of Tokyo.³⁴ In the Sensōji version of the *onibaba* legend, the demon hag is a common thief who works together with her beautiful daughter to lead unsuspecting travelers to an isolated hut, where she crushes their heads with a rock as they sleep and robs them of all their possessions. In the legend, Kannon is manifested as

to collapse around them. See Yoshitoshi: *The Splendid Decadent*, translated by Arthur Birnbaum (Tokyo; New York: Kodansha International; New York: Distributed in the U.S. by Kodansha International/USA, through Harper and Row Publishers, 1985), 34-38.

³¹ Sepp Linhart writes that these prints, also known as *nishiki-e shinbun* (brocade print newspapers), contained three elements: "(sensational) information," "moral advice," and "a great amount of entertainment and distraction," with a focus on stories of violent crime, adultery, and spectacles of the modern age. The prints were incredibly popular with readers and were sought as souvenirs and collectible items. As Linhart writes: "The pictures, often sensational, guaranteed continued reader interest." "Shinbun nishiki-e, nishiki-e shinbun: News and New Sensations in Old Garb at the Beginning of a New Era," *Written Texts—Visual Texts: Woodblock Printed Media in Early Modern Japan* (Amsterdam: Hotei, 2005), 353.

³² Segi writes that Yoshitoshi's bloody warrior prints were created after he directly witnessed fighting at the Battle of Ueno in 1868. "The horrible blood bath still burning in his mind, he brought a sensational realism to his depictions of battle mutilations... Yoshitoshi thus made a name for himself in feeling out the pulse of the times and offering exceedingly graphic coverage of current events..." *Yoshitoshi*, 42.

³³ Kyōka explicitly references Yoshitoshi's image in *The Mushroom Sermon* (*Kinoko seppō*, 1930). See *Kyōka zenshū*, 23:462. Indirect references to either Adachigahara or the *onibaba* appear in *Kanmuri Yazaemon* (1892), *The Armory Shrine* ("Katsuchūdō," 1910), and *The Sacred Heron Volume* (*Shinro no maki*, 1933).

³⁴ According to temple chronicles, Sensōji was built upon the spot where two fishermen found a miraculous golden image of Kannon in the year 628, after which their nets were never empty. A makeshift temple was built on the spot some twenty years later, eventually becoming the massive Sensōji temple complex, centered on the worship of the Asakusa Kannon image. Over the centuries, the site became a major destination for pilgrims in search of miraculous answers to their prayers, eventually securing the official patronage of the Tokugawa shoguns in the 17th century, after the shogunate established its new capital in Edo. Thereafter, it gradually transformed into a gathering place for both prayer and entertainment, providing a perfect snapshot of the comingling of religious and popular culture in the Edo period. Nam-lin Hur, *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensōji and Edo Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press, 2000), 4-13.



Figure 55 - Ema (votive tablet) of onibaba legend, Sensōji temple, Tokyo, painted by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, ca. mid-19th century

a child, who mesmerizes the *onibaba* into attacking her own daughter, after which the *onibaba* is horrified by her actions and becomes a repentant follower of the Buddha. Demonstrating the importance of the *onibaba* narrative to the temple's foundation, an image of the demon hag is permanently installed in the main worship hall of the temple (*shin hondō*) and is featured as a prominent piece in the official collection of sacred treasures.³⁵ The image is found in the form of a votive tablet (*ema*) created by Kuniyoshi, Yoshitoshi's mentor, and depicts the *onibaba* attempting to stab her own daughter, while Kannon, appearing in the form of a young traveler, sleeps soundly in the background. Kyōka recognized the *onibaba* imagery as part of a visual culture that combined horror with veneration—a formulation that he returned to repeatedly in stories that explored the intersection between violent imagery and the sublime.³⁶

The most abstract level of visibility represented in Kyōka's fiction, or the mental image, refers to pictures that are evoked via language, either by description or suggestion. Mental images are recalled or conjured up via the imagination, normally without access to the picture in reference. Because they exist within the mind's eye, mental images are able to simulate pictures of things that are normally difficult or impossible to see, such as the faces of departed loved ones, pictures from childhood, hidden spaces, deities, Buddhas, and ghosts. Mental images might

³⁵ See Tsuji Nobuo, *Kisō no keifu: Matabē—Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1970), 133-134. See also Sensōji, *Kinryū sairin* (Tokyo: Sensōji, 1956), figure 7.

³⁶ Nam-lin Hur writes "By the mid-eighteenth century, Sensōji was Edo's foremost center of prayer and play. Its Asakusa Kannon ranked high as a favorite object of folk piety and worship, and its precincts and front districts were crowded with all kinds of playful enterprises. Within Sensōji Buddhism, prayer and play were two sides of the same coin, inseparable and interdependent." *Prayer and Play*, 27. Andō Yuichirō similarly writes that Sensōji was simultaneously a space of worship and entertainment, which offered the citizens of Edo a chance to gather, relax, and play outside of the strict social structure imposed by the Tokugawa government. The area was known for its thriving merchant culture, theater, sideshows, restaurants, tea houses, and places of prostitution. Periodic revelations of the temple's central image, known as *kaichō* (opening the curtain), were celebrated with massive street festivals, which became occasions of both worship and debauchery. See *Ōedo otera hanjōki* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2009), 131-162.

be defined by their illusory quality, as they tend to blur when one concentrates on their specific features.³⁷ Scholars have long suggested that Kyōka's literary imagination was fueled by the search for one particular mental image, that of his mother, whom he lost at the age of nine.³⁸ Although this reading relies heavily on biographical information, it is often arrived at by readers after encountering dozens of vaguely similar narratives of a young, male protagonist who chases a faceless woman into a womb-like realm of watery darkness. At times, the protagonist catches glimpses of the woman only to lose her, while, in other cases, he chases her into a realm of the afterlife, or even unto death. In many stories, the mother's face is manifested partially through illustrations, sacred icons, or other forms of visual art, often with origins in the popular culture of the Edo period. In Kyōka's later fiction, the faceless woman is visually represented in actual illustrations by artist Komura Settai, whose visual style complements the ghostly atmosphere of Kyōka's writing to an almost supernatural degree (a topic explored extensively in chapter six). In this manner, the three levels of visibility—mental, referential, and illustrative—are united by their shared basis on the vague mental image of a faceless and archetypal mother.

Sacred Images: From Māyādevi to Kunisada

Kyōka's overlapping interest in *kusazōshi* and religious iconography is most vividly expressed in his late short story "Blessings of Lady Maya," ("Bunin rishōki," 1924), a tour-de-force of the visual imagination that explores the intersection between popular and religious imagery as a central theme. In the text, a traveler returns to his hometown of Kanazawa and discovers several images that resemble the face of his departed mother, before finding an illustration from a popular work of *kusazōshi* that transforms into her exact likeness. Over the course of the story, the narrator repeatedly references works of popular fiction from the Edo period, which he embeds in erudite discussions of religious imagery, thereby linking the illustrated pages of *kusazōshi* to the visual culture of Buddhist iconography. Originally appearing in *Josei (Woman)* magazine, "Blessings of Lady Maya" was included in an issue on the topic of "Journey by Pictures" (*e ni yoru tabi*), which featured stories and essays exploring the connection between text and image by writers such as Nagai Kafū, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927), and Tokuda Shūsei (1872-1943), as well as illustrated texts by artists Takehisa Yumeji (1884-1934) and Nakagawa Kigen (1892-1972). Although "Blessings of Lady Maya" itself includes only a single, simple illustration of a flower (none of the stories in the issue are illustrated to any great extent), it features numerous detailed references to images by Kunisada from *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, which serve as indirect illustrations of the text. While the topic of "journey by pictures" was not of his own choosing, Kyōka took full advantage of the opportunity offered by the theme to pour out his love for the visual culture of the Edo period, which he connected back to his perpetual topic of searching for the invisible face of his departed mother.

³⁷ For a fascinating discussion of translucence, opacity, and other qualities of mental images, see Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1999).

³⁸ Muramatsu Sadataka, the founder of modern Kyōka studies, wrote in 1973, "Kyōka took the grief of losing his mother at a young age and poeticized it as a form of maternal desire. This feeling of eternal yearning for a woman became the fount of Kyōka's literary imagination." Although rather blunt in formulation, this reading both establishes and characterizes a long-standing and nearly unavoidable theme in studies of Kyōka's literature. "Kyōka bungaku no shiteki isō: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō no bungaku to no kanren in oite," *Bungei dokuhon: Izumi Kyōka* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1981), 149.

In “Blessings of Lady Maya,” Kyōka tells the story of a man named Kijima, modeled on himself, who travels to Kanazawa to pay respects at his mother’s grave, having neglected to do so after many years of living in Tokyo. The story opens with Kijima staring at a photograph of an unknown woman, which draws him into a world of enchanted visuality: “Within a grove of trees beneath a clear lapis sky, the shadow of a hanging temple bell splays open like the round mouth of a dragon. Stealthily, a beautiful woman—somebody’s wife—looking at the photograph, Kijima shudders and his blood runs cold.”³⁹ Kijima is shocked not by the contents of the photo, but because he recognizes the face of the woman depicted therein. He recalls that he encountered her earlier during the day, when he saw her washing clothes by a river, as he journeyed between temples in the sacred grounds of Mt. Utatsu in northern Kanazawa. After visiting his mother’s grave, Kijima received a recommendation from a local monk to journey onwards to a temple that housed the image of Māyādevi (Maya Fujin), the mother of the Buddha, an appropriate object of worship for those who had lost mothers at an early age. This is because, according to tradition, Māyādevi passed away seven days after giving birth to the Buddha, but continued to communicate with him from her abode in heaven, eventually becoming enlightened by his teachings. On the way to the temple, Kyōka asks directions from the woman by the stream, whose face strikes him as the exact semblance of a deva from the Trāyastriṃśa heaven (Tōriten), or the heavenly realm into which Māyādevi was reborn. At the temple, Kijima is shocked to encounter the same face of the woman again in a photograph. The picture is one of dozens offered as thanks before a statue of Māyādevi, who is petitioned by local women with prayers for safe childbirth. Leafing through the photographs, Kijima describes them as living votive tablets (*ikita mama no ema*). Continuing his narrative, he fits them into a chain of sacred images, which eventually comes to include the statue of Māyādevi in the temple, an illustration of the same figure by Kunisada from *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, and the vague mental image of his mother, which haunts him many years after her death.



Figure 56 - Illustration of Māyādevi holding baby Shakyamuni, from *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, illustration by Kunisada

As he looks around the temple, Kijima discovers a series of raised-cloth images, or *oshi-e*, adapted from Kunisada’s illustrations from *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, which have been

³⁹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 22:498.

converted into sacred icons that adorn transoms over the temple doors. The *oshi-e* are luxurious devotional icons woven by the women of the temple from threads of *habutai* and *yūzen* silk, twill (*aya*), and brocade (*nishiki*). Kijima describes the images in detail, cross-referencing them with illustrations from *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*. His descriptions of various scenes from the work of *kusazōshi* demonstrate a deep familiarity with the text and its illustrations, which he recounts with expert knowledge. The *oshi-e* that first captures Kijima's eye depicts Māyādevi holding the Buddha as a child. Sitting in her arms, baby Shakyamuni is enveloped by Lady Maya's flowing hair, whose depiction in the *oshi-e* is so vivid that the image looks alive. The narrator describes the scene depicted in the image with exacting detail: When Śuddhodana (Jōbanō), the future father of the Buddha, set out on a royal hunting expedition, he caught sight of the beautiful Māyādevi. She was accompanied by her older brother Suppabuddha (Zenkaku), a royal chief of Devadarśita (Tenbijō), and her older sister Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī (Kyōdonmi), who would later become the adoptive mother of the Buddha, as well as the first Buddhist nun. In the scene in question, however, she is filled with jealousy when Śuddhodana dispatches his servant Udaayin (Udai) with marriage gifts to Māyādevi. In a fit of rage, she curses Māyādevi, causing her to fall ill. In the illustration from *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, Māyādevi cradles a vision of her future son, as she is stricken by the curse that will take her life shortly after he is born. Considering the level of detail given by the narrator in this scene, the reader might come to the conclusion that Kyōka was an erudite scholar of Buddhist history, and yet his description is drawn almost verbatim from a picture-book designed to educate semi-literate readers. Rather than a sutra or orthodox religious text, the image of Kyōka's veneration originates in a volume of *kusazōshi*.

Following the scene of the child ensconced in Māyādevi's arms, the narrator describes a series of other images adapted from *The Eight Lives of Siddhartha*. These include an illustration of Māyādevi descending from the Tuṣita heaven (Tossōten) on the back of white, six-tusked elephant, and her standing in the Lumbini garden (Ranbini-son) with ashoka flowers on her wrists as the child Buddha emerges from her right sleeve. One more image depicts Māyādevi bathing in a black lacquer basin, her upper body fully exposed to the viewer. The raised-cloth image adapted from the illustration, as described in the text, is woven of white, *habutai* silk, which has the effect of bringing the holy mother's pale breasts to life. The scene causes Kijima to feel a sense of anguish, as he longs for the mother who nurtured him and raised him on her milk. Enamored with the illustrations of Māyādevi designed by Kunisada, the narrator has them used as the basis for the creation of a sacred icon, which he commissions from a master sculptor in Kanazawa. He broaches the topic of the icon's face with a sense of shame, realizing that he is mixing earthly longing with spiritual aspirations. Far from scolding him, however, the sculptor commends his deep insight, as he explains the efficacy of sacred faces in transmitting esoteric knowledge. Responding to Kijima's apology, the monk proclaims:

Not at all, the sacred countenance is truly of the greatest importance! Holy priests from Akamon-dera, well-versed in religious terminology, often do me the honor of stopping by my store. They even have a word for it—the sermon of the face [*sōgō seppō*]. They say that, by simply looking at the blessed figure of a sacred countenance, the viewer's heart, body, and life are instantly filled with belief.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 22:523.

At the conclusion of the story, Kijima receives the figure of Māyādevi in the mail two weeks after returning to Tokyo. He is astonished to find that, despite its secure packaging, the statue has lost two fingers. He is shocked not because the figure was damaged, but because he nearly lost the same exact fingers in an accident not long before. He interprets the broken fingers as a sign that the sacred icon saved his hand by sacrificing its own. Looking closer at the figure, he is further astonished to find that it no longer resembles the panoply of faces that he encountered in Kanazawa, but has morphed into the exact likeness of his mother. Thus, at its conclusion, the story ties the series of images into a visual chain: photograph, illustration, sacred icon, mental image, and holy countenance all combine into one, culminating in the revelation of the mother's hidden face.

Kyōka ends "The Blessings of Lady Maya" with an author's aside, in which he suggests that he began the process of writing the work by holding an image in his mind and attempting to recreate it through text. He writes, "I have attempted to transcribe the sacred image of Māyādevi three times before, in *The Ashoka Tree* (*Muyūju*, 1906), *The Tea House Suicides on Mt. Maya* (*Minejaya shinjū*, 1917), and "Hall of the Sacred Mother" ("Bunindō," 1911). Even though I try again here, I am afraid that my clumsy effort is unable to evoke even the shadow of the shadow of her figure."⁴¹ Drawing on this quote, scholar Noguchi Takehiko proposes that much of Kyōka's fiction was based on the context of a mental image (*shinshō no kontekusuto*), whose outline he attempted to trace through language.⁴² It is a theme that appears repeatedly in Kyōka scholarship—the idea that the author's fiction began with the vague outline of an image, usually the face of his departed mother, whose ghostly form he pursued endlessly through writing.⁴³ Following this line of logic, Noguchi suggests that the author's fiction emanated from hidden mental images, known only to himself, which he forced the reader to spy in the darkness.⁴⁴ He argues that a foundation in image can help explain some of the puzzling inconsistencies and digressions that are so common in Kyōka's narratives. Rather than a syntactical line of cause and effect, he argues, Kyōka's literature is built like a spatial matrix in which elements overlap to create an image-like form.⁴⁵ He then points out the problem with this kind of writing for the reader, which is that the context of Kyōka's mental image is not the same as any other individual's. If Kyōka allows the image to dictate the creation of language and the direction of the story, and that image is not available to the reader, then at times (and as frequently happens when reading Kyōka) his story becomes difficult to follow. Noguchi writes:

He elicits without describing... his mental picture transforms itself into an image that automatically emits language. Kyōka sits within the visual field of his imagination and clearly distinguishes the mental pictures that lie before him. However, in order for the individual to mentally picture the same thing, he or she must search through a deep darkness where that mental image is hiding...⁴⁶

Of course, any author's *intended* mental image is unobtainable by the reader, but Kyōka's frequent lack of syntactical structure can be said to force the reader to make an especially

⁴¹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 22:525.

⁴² Noguchi, *Izumi Kyōka* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1982), 233-234.

⁴³ See, for example, Tanemura Suehiro, "Suichū kahenge," *Izumi Kyōka*, edited by Tsushima Yūko, etc. (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1992), 30-43; Waki Akiko, "Izumi Kyōka: bōsei tsuibō," *Izumi Kyōka* (1992), 96-102.

⁴⁴ Noguchi, *Izumi Kyōka*, 233-234.

⁴⁵ Noguchi, *Izumi Kyōka*, 245.

⁴⁶ Noguchi, *Izumi Kyōka*, 244.

concentrated effort to produce a mental picture of what is taking place in his stories. Far from offering no help, however, Kyōka gives various hints and possibilities of what might be imagined, with references to *kusazōshi* being one of the most common.

Late in his career, Kyōka revisited the many images that constituted his visual-literary universe in *The Votive Light Volume* (*Tōmyō no maki*, 1933) and *The Sacred Heron Volume* (*Shinro no maki*, 1933), a two-part story published simultaneously in *Kaizō* and *Bungei shunjū* magazines. Altogether, the work includes references to *kusazōshi* by Tanehiko, illustrations by Kunisada, the “Lonely House of Adachigahara” by Yoshitoshi, Buddhist iconography, votive tablets, images of the bodhisattva Kannon, and a ghostly woman who disappears into a watery veil at the end of the narrative. Unlike the other texts discussed in this chapter thus far, the work also featured its own illustration (in its second printing), whose role in the story expresses the centrality of images to Kyōka’s fiction. Although the two-part story has almost never been commented upon in scholarship before, it provides a nearly perfect snapshot of the author’s visually-oriented method of writing, as well as his interest in religious iconography and picture-books as two sides of the same visual culture.

In *The Votive Light Volume*, Kyōka tells the story of traveler who is led into a realm of ghosts by following a sacred image. At the beginning of the story, haiku poet Ogata Bonhai stops by a graveyard in the countryside of Miyagi prefecture to pay respects to his fallen ancestors. An old guide spots Bonhai in the graveyard and leads him to an empty temple, where the pair begin to discuss evil spirits and local ghost stories. Feeling uneasy, Bonhai inquires if there is an image of Kannon in the temple in which they might take refuge. The guide leads him to a figure carved from a single piece of wood with blue hair, a spot of red lipstick, a faint smile, and a gaze that looks back knowingly at the frightened pair. Bonhai, who is knowledgeable of icons and *kusazōshi* above all things, immediately identifies the figure as a Juntei Kannon, an esoteric version of the popular bodhisattva. Placed before the feet of the statue is a petition signed with the name Osei, which is the same name of a waitress from Tokyo whom Bonhai once secretly loved. Feeling that a reunion in a remote, abandoned temple in Miyagi would be nothing short of a miracle, Bonhai asks his guide to bring him a votive candle, which he places before the image.

Kyōka’s story of miraculous pictures continues in *The Sacred Heron Volume*, in which the guide informs Bonhai that there is a hidden image of a Heron Goddess in a nearby cave that looks almost exactly like the Juntei Kannon, but that this other image is not available for viewing. Determined to gain a view of the hidden icon, Bonhai proceeds towards the cave alone. As he approaches the entrance of the cave, the ordered world of his narrative begins to disintegrate. Leaving behind the fairly straightforward narrative style of *The Votive Light Volume*, the text delves fully into the logic of the visual as the thread of the story is lost in a sequence of overlapping images. At the entrance of the shrine, Bonhai runs into Osei, the waitress from Tokyo. She tells him that she is pregnant and was preparing to slice open her belly because the child’s father had disappeared. With the gruesome image of Osei’s intended impalement still lingering, the pair begins to discuss illustrated votive tablets, or *ema*. Osei begins by describing Yoshitoshi’s print of the lonely house in Adachigahara, whose nightmarish details derail the linear trajectory of the narrative, thereby allowing an image-centered logic to take over. Osei remarks: “Some time ago I saw a horrendous votive image of a nude, white woman bound face up, her full belly being cut open, the one of the lonely house in

Adachigahara.”⁴⁷ The narrator then interjects in parenthesis, “Actually, the *ema* was different,” but the meaning of his statement is unclear. Bonhai begins to shuffle through *ema* looking for the one she is referring to and clarifies her mistake:

“Osei, you must be imagining things. That’s not Koiginu⁴⁸ tied up on the cutting board in this *ema*. It’s a white heron lying on its back. Not only that, it’s not a horrendous *onibaba* cutting her up for dinner, it’s a stupid old man with his lips pushed out like an octopus. Don’t tease me, this isn’t a petition, it’s a votive image admonishing the killing of living creatures.”⁴⁹

Following the episode of the votive tablets, the story escalates into a frenzied pitch of juxtaposed images, some of them barely connected by grammatical syntax. Towards the conclusion of the text, Osei rushes to drown herself in a lake poisoned by tiger beetles:

Her red belly sash quickly unraveled, twice, three times, spinning in a circle, like the giant petals of a flower, bringing both wings together, the white heron skimmed over the surface of the water, in a straight line towards the bird professor approaching on the wave crest, cutting through the tide. On that flower petal, no, on the edge of that belly sash, there was a bug, shining blue.⁵⁰

For dedicated readers of Kyōka’s fiction, the scene is just barely comprehensible—Osei rushes to drown herself in a body of water, poisoned by tiger beetles, which attracts the protagonist with its promise of death and reunion with the sacred mother (an amalgamation of Juntei Kannon, the Heron Goddess, and Osei). At the story’s conclusion, words are left gesturing towards a hidden image, which they remain perpetually unable to describe.



Figure 57 - *Yoki koto kiku*: axe, koto, chrysanthemum kimono print pattern, synonymous with phrase “To Hear Auspicious News”

In the story of a hidden image, *The Votive Light Volume* contains a hidden picture of its own. The image is buried deep, in a game of words and pictures that stacks layers of references and allusions into a dense visual puzzle. The image is not found in the story’s original publication, in *Bungei shunjū*, which featured no illustrations,⁵¹ but rather in a later collection of short stories, titled *To Hear Auspicious News* (*Yoki koto kiku*, 1934). The very title of the collection is a visual pun that blurs the boundaries of text and image: it refers to a pictographic puzzle from the Edo period where images of an axe, koto, and chrysanthemum were to be read “*yoki koto kiku*,” representing the names of the items pictured, but also a synonymous phrase that means “to hear

⁴⁷ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 23:760. Osei’s details of the image differ from Yoshitoshi’s, but the word that she uses to refer to the “lonely house” (孤家, glossed ひとつや) is an idiosyncratic rendering used also by the artist.

⁴⁸ Koiginu is the name of the sacrificial victim in the *bunraku* version of the *onibaba* story, *Ōshū Adachigahara*.

⁴⁹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 23:762.

⁵⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 23:767-768.

⁵¹ In the original publication, the story is preceded by a tiny, sketchbook-style illustration (*koma-e*) of a woman flanked by plants and a house, but the image appears to have no relationship to Kyōka’s story. Similar images precede the titles of articles throughout the magazine, including works of literature and articles related to topics such as fashion, economics, and world culture.

auspicious news.”⁵² The cover and endpapers of the collection were illustrated by Settai, who collaborated with the author in creating an even more elaborate picture puzzle—one that engulfs the entire volume of text. The puzzle is complicated, and difficult to explain, but is worth deciphering, as it reveals the depth of Kyōka’s interest in pictures as a source of narrative form. The puzzle revolves around an endpaper print by Settai, which features the image of a half-naked woman reaching into a lotus bowl as she washes the back of her neck. There is no caption or explanation as to what the print depicts, nor any indication of how it might relate to the fiction contained within the volume. Buried in the collection, however, is the answer to the picture’s identity, which requires the reader to comb through the entire volume of text in search of a corresponding description.

In the introduction of *To Hear Auspicious News*, Kyōka introduces the mystery of the image, which he presents as a game for the reader’s amusement. He writes:

As you read this collection, I ask that you find where the image of the half-naked, seductive heavenly maiden in the back endpapers comes from. This is not a picture hunt [*e-sagashi*], nor is it a ploy to force you to read through the entire book. It is merely a diversion for young boys and girls on long spring days. It is not the kind of thing that distinguished men of letters or moody authors do, but is rather the kind of amusement that a writer of stories enjoys.⁵³

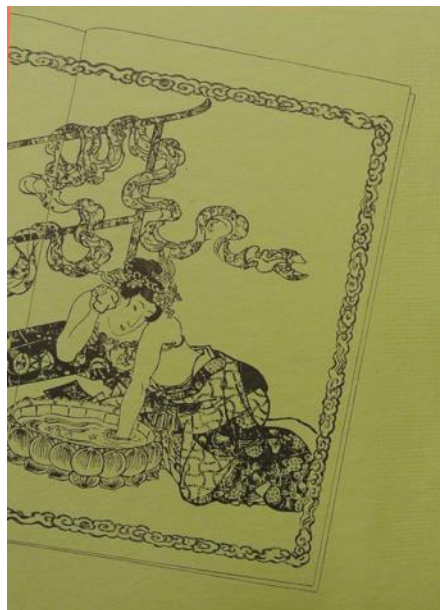


Figure 58 - *To Hear Auspicious News* (1934) back endpaper, illustration by Komura Settai, reproduction of print by Kunisada from Ryūtei Tanehiko’s *Miraculous Devotion: Jizō’s Journey* (1832)

Kyōka’s enigmatic instructions are not a joke; there really is a key to the picture buried somewhere in the nearly 500-page volume of collected stories. By asking the reader, in the

⁵² The pattern was famously worn by kabuki actor Onoe Kikugorō III on his kimono. See Ruth M. Shaver, *Kabuki Costume*, illustrated by Sōma Akira and Ōta Gako (Rutland, VT: C.E. Tuttle Co., 1966), iv.

⁵³ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:595.

introduction of the work, to hold the endpaper print in mind as he or she reads through the collection, he insists that the reader envision the entire volume of text through the frame of a single woodblock print. Although Kyōka explains his game as a mere diversion for children, he certainly had no expectations that children were actually reading the collection, especially when considering the difficulty of many of the stories featured in its pages. In fact, although he introduces the game with a nonchalant aside, his prank hides the visual kernel of his entire literary project. Like the volume in mention, his fiction is haunted by an image, which never stops repeating or reappearing in slightly altered form. His words thus appear as a pretext for the hunt, leading perpetually back to the picture that inspired their creation.



Figure 59 - Illustration of celestial maiden by Kunisada from Tanehiko's *Miraculous Devotion*

The description of the endpaper print in *To Hear Auspicious News* finally appears on pages 290-291, in the middle of *The Votive Light Volume*. The image is originally found in Tanehiko's *Miraculous Devotion: Jizō's Journey* (*Kimyō chōrai Jizō no michiyuki*, 1832), a *kusazōshi* illustrated by Kunisada, which tells a story of votive images (*ema*) that come to life at night and stage epic battles, only to fall silent again in the day as they return to their static, visual form. It is a rare and antique text, already a century old by the time that Kyōka mentioned it; as such, his audience could hardly have been expected to know exactly what he was referring to. Moreover, his reference to the text is nearly as obscure as the work itself, providing a daunting challenge to the reader intent on deciphering it. In *The Votive Light Volume*, Kyōka refers to *Miraculous Devotion* just after Osei utters the words *ureshii desu wa* ("I'm happy"), a phrase whose exact grammatical construction he finds to be an odd example of modern Tokyo speech. The phrase reminds the narrator of a scene in *Miraculous Devotion*, in which a heavenly maiden speaks in Edo period slang. When referring to the *kusazōshi*, the narrator begins by describing Kunisada's illustration, which depicts "a heavenly maiden on the ceiling of the Sensō-ji temple, undressed and applying make-up before a lotus-shaped washbasin... wearing something like a

pearl necklace that's shifted just slightly towards her armpit and away from where it was hiding her nipples..."⁵⁴ After introducing the image of the heavenly maiden, the narrator relates Tanehiko's accompanying passage of dialogue in exceptionally slurred, Edo-period slang, which reads something like:

"Heyaa Kumōsuke, how 'bout this eh? If we're headin' down to the human world, why dontcha be a dear and pick me up summa that *Senjokō* makeup from Kyōbashi? A girl can't mess around these days! It's gotta be today, cantcha get it for me riiiiight nooow?"⁵⁵

It is a self-indulgent reference in an already self-indulgent game of picture-hunting. In the original publication of *The Votive Light Volume*, in *Bungei shunjū*, the reader would have likely breezed by the reference with little concern for its particular content. Without access to the text or illustration in question, the scene is almost impossible to decipher. In the later collected volume, however, Kyōka insists that the reader actually reference the image—by including it in the endpapers—and contemplate its visual form. Moreover, he centers his entire collection of stories on the mystery of a hidden picture, whose face spills across the pages of his text.



Figure 60 - Māyādevi from *Eight Lives of Siddhartha*, illustrated by Kunisada



Figure 61 - Celestial Maiden from *Miraculous Devotion*, illustrated by Kunisada

⁵⁴ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 23:708.

⁵⁵ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 23:709.

Looking closely, one finds that the image included in *To Hear Auspicious News* is a variation of the same image referenced in “The Blessings of Lady Maya,” again by Kunisada, but this time switches Māyādevi out for a generic celestial maiden, just as, elsewhere, a similar image was used to represent a modern beauty from the city of Edo. All three images are variations on the same basic figure, a half-naked woman washing herself in a metal basin, or a lacquer bucket, or a lotus pool. Māyādevi is the same as the celestial maiden from Sensōji, who is the same as the earthly woman from Imagawa.⁵⁶ This logic, of pictures within pictures, is echoed in Kyōka’s stories, which repeatedly stage a search for an original form, but which instead uncover an endlessly repeating sequence of like images. If one takes a biographical approach, the original image might be identified as the face of the author’s mother. Kyōka strongly supports this reading himself in “Hall of the Sacred Mother,” a short essay in which he describes searching for his own mother’s face in the countenance of a statue of Māyādevi. In the essay, Kyōka describes a visit to a temple in Kanazawa, where he found a sacred image that transmitted the love of his mother from another world:

Longing for my mother, I accompanied my father on a visit to the temple... Well, my memory is somewhat hazy, but, as I recall it, to the right of the main temple was a single hinged door, which led to the Hall of the Sacred Mother [*Bunindō*]. Her image was enshrined in a votive cabinet, beneath the shadow of a twill curtain. As a youth, kneeling before the image, I remember seeing her towering figure, a single star glittering in her decorative comb. Looking up, I couldn’t help but worship. Floating eyebrows, drawn-on lips, her sacred gaze dripping with dew. From within the jewels of the glittering canopy surrounding the altar, she earnestly proffered her white, sacred chest, as though whispering faintly, “Come, find rest.” Noble, kind, sublime, her enchanting and beautiful form appears eternally before my eyes.⁵⁷

While, on one hand, the vague, mental image of the mother’s face remains permanently out of reach, her presence is manifested in the images that visually evoke her form. These images, though not actual representations of the mother, are imbued with miraculous power, simply by recalling her visage. The face of the mother is present in the Māyādevi statue, Kunisada’s illustrations, votive tablets, and *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints. All of these images, whether icon or illustration, give life to Kyōka’s text, by inviting his words on with their silent and beckoning form. In the absence of the original face, Kyōka settles on proxy images, which house the spirits that his literature attempts to resurrect. Considering the importance that Kyōka places on these pictures, it stands to reason that he would treat the illustration of his own work as a medium charged with creative potential—and he did. As a writer of ghost stories full of illusions and supernatural occurrences, Kyōka took full advantage of the opportunity to create ghostly effects across both text and image. In the following chapters, I explore how the illustration of Kyōka’s texts, when combined with his language, produce ghostly effects, all by

⁵⁶ One more variation of this image by Kunisada is found in volume twelve of *Country Genji*, this time involving the character of Futaba, the older wife of protagonist Mitsuuji. The details of the image are largely the same, but instead of washing her neck by herself, Futaba is bathed by her attendants. Additional variations likely exist in other *gōkan* illustrated by Kunisada.

⁵⁷ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:475–476. Muramatsu Sadataka quotes the same passage towards the beginning of his biography of the author, suggesting that it served as a major source of his fiction. *Izumi Kyōka*, 45.

means of visual games. These games, “the kind of amusement that a writer of stories enjoys,” are an essential part of understanding Kyōka’s fiction, in which both text and image were harnessed to suggest the existence of hidden worlds.



Figure 62 - Votive image of Māyādevi housed in Ryūgenji temple in Suzuka, Mie Prefecture

Chapter 4

Guide Markers to the Invisible: Izumi Kyōka and the Illustrated Newspaper Novel

In his preface to Natori Shunsen's (1886-1960) 1910 *Demo Picture Collection* (*Demo gashū*), Izumi Kyōka describes Shunsen's newspaper illustrations as guide markers to an enchanted literary universe.¹ He writes:

Even if the path of pictures is unknown to you, as you push aside the grasses on your climb, they appear like guide markers before you. Beloved in fields and mountains, bind and release them and they turn into butterflies, fold and shade them and they turn into flowers. Upon first entering the mountain peaks of newspaper illustrations [*shinbun no koma*], with a single look at Natori's familiar brush, I heard the rhythmic ringing of a scissor's bell. She pinned them in her hair, fastened them to her sash, placed them against her bare skin, and still there were more left over, wrapping papers folded into moons and snowflakes, hidden in a beauty's seven-tiered treasure box. Wind and dew may be pretty, but what a shame to let the pictures blow away, what a tragedy to get them wet, every time she takes them out of the box.²

It is a remarkably esoteric passage for an introduction to a collection of reprinted newspaper illustrations, originally designed by Shunsen as staff artist for the *Asahi shinbun*.³ The pictures contained in the collection belong to a genre of illustration known as *koma-e*, which were simple, black-and-white illustrations done in a loose, sketchbook style, frequently seen in newspapers in Japan around the turn of the 20th century.⁴ *Koma-e* often bore minimal connection to the stories that they illustrated, usually serving as decorative elements on the page, or as visual accents to the text, rather than essential components of the narrative. By referring to Shunsen's illustrations as enchanted guides, however, Kyōka suggests that even the humblest of images have the potential to open up new paths in the literary work. In Kyōka's own newspaper fiction, illustrations bring the author's literary world to life, at times by transforming it into a kabuki-esque spectacle, and other times by adorning it with accents and grace-notes that linger like

¹ Shunsen is better known today for his stylized portraits of kabuki actors (*nigao-e*), which he created as part of the new woodblock print (*shin hanga*) movement, though he began his career as an illustrator of newspaper fiction. He made a name for himself illustrating several novels by Natsume Sōseki, including *Sanshirō* (1908), *And Then* (*Sorekara*, 1909), and *Light and Darkness* (1916). For Kyōka, he illustrated *The White Heron* (*Shirasagi*, 1909) and designed the book cover for *The Pilgrimage Diary* (*Sangū nikki*, 1913).

² Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:629. Originally in Natori Yoshinosuke [Shunsen], *Demo gashū* (Tokyo: Jozandō, 1910).

³ The collection includes illustrations by Shunsen for *Sanshirō* by Natsume Sōseki, *Spring* (*Haru*, 1908) by Shimazaki Tōson (1872-1943), and *Soot and Smoke* (*Baien*, 1909) by Morita Sōhei (1881-1949).

⁴ The “koma” in “koma-e” is usually rendered phonetically in *katakana*, as コマ, although it occasionally appears with the character for a horse-shaped piece from the chess-like game of *shōgi* (駒), or with the characters for “small space” or “small room” (小間). In modern times, *koma* is often used to refer to a frame or a panel in a comic book (コマ), or otherwise a scene from a movie, having originally been used to refer to scenes in a play. The exact etymology of *koma-e* is obscure, but, taken together, the idea is that *koma-e* were like “small illustrations,” “brief visual impressions,” or “framed scenes from a story.” See Tsuchida Mitsufumi, “Sashie-shi tengai I: hen'yō kara shinsei e,” 122-123.

fragile ghosts. Using the metaphor of the guide marker, illustrations appear in Kyōka's fiction as signs that lead the reader deeper into the world of his stories. Like real guides, some signs are trustworthy, others are dubious, and some warn of dead-ends, but all have the power to reveal new corners in the works that they visualize.



Figure 63 -
Illustration by
Natori Shunsen
from *The White
Heron* (1909) by
Izumi Kyōka

As in so much of his fiction, Kyōka uses his introduction to Shunsen's collection of illustrations as an opportunity to tell a story of pictures that come to life, while allowing the visual form of the images that he narrates to dictate the logic of his writing. He begins with the metaphor of a path of pictures (*e no michi*), dense with mountain grasses, in which individual illustrations appear like guide markers (*shiori*) that lead the traveler onward. Although the word he uses for guide markers is commonly used to mean "bookmark," Kyōka's metaphor of the mountain path suggests an older etymology, "snapped twigs," which refers to the archaic practice of snapping branches on wooded trails to designate a proper path. An image of this practice is visually embedded in the *kanji* character for *shiori* (桼) itself, which depicts a repetition of the character

meaning "erase" or "cut" (干 x2=𣏟), over a tree (木), thus visually representing the act of carving a guiding sign into a tree trunk, or cracking a branch to indicate a trail. In the space of a single written character, then, Kyōka overlays the image of a bookmark with that of a guide marker on a mountain path, all within an extended visual metaphor for newspaper fiction. He continues the passage by describing pictures that transform into butterflies and flowers, but only after the traveler stops to admire them. By plucking them like branches from a tree, and either shading or releasing them, the guide markers transform into living creatures. Kyōka then connects his metaphor back to the subject of the book—Shunsen's illustrations. Like guide markers on isolated mountain paths, illustrations help the reader to navigate narratives of dense text. If one stops to linger on the markers themselves, they fill with a life of their own.

Immediately after introducing Shunsen's illustration, Kyōka jumps to an unrelated image, that of a beautiful woman (*taoyame*) cutting out pictures and encasing them in decorative folding paper (*tatōgami*), which she stores in her seven-tiered treasure box (*nanae no chibako*). There she keeps them hidden, fearful of taking them out, lest they blow away in the wind, or get wet in the rain. The transition between Shunsen's *koma-e* and the beautiful woman's treasure box occurs in the blink of an eye; the passage in which the transition takes place, embedded within a sprawling run-on sentence, literally reads "with a single look at Natori's familiar brush, the dry rustle of a scissor's bell, inserted in an ornamental hairpin..." This is all within an even longer run-on sentence, in which the author has transitioned from the image of guide markers on a mountain path, to magical butterflies and flowers, to newspaper illustrations, to folding papers shaped like moons and snowflakes, and finally to the beautiful woman and her box of pictures. Rather than delineating a syntactical order of events, Kyōka's run-on sentence strings together a series of images, all loosely juxtaposed, with no explanation as to their relationship. Images are allowed to interpenetrate and overlap, as one picture morphs into another with minimal resistance.

Within an already esoteric text, Kyōka's brief description of the beauty and her treasure box is one of the most difficult passages to parse, and yet, for those familiar with Kyōka's fiction, the scene presents itself as a central motif of his work. The transition begins with a sight, Shunsen's illustrations, which leads to a sound, the dry ringing of a scissor's bell (*hasami no suzu*). By "scissor's bell," Kyōka appears to be referring to the kinds of scissors that appear in *ukiyo-e* by Kunisada, or large shears with brass bells attached by a ribbon, often used by the beautiful women of Edo to cut their fingernails, especially in *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints. This interpretation is later reinforced by the identification of the woman in the passage as a *bijin* (美人), which evokes the world of *bijinga*, a genre of art popular throughout the 19th century.

Although it is never quite explained what the woman is cutting, the transition from Shunsen's illustrations suggests that the woman is also looking at pictures, which she wraps in thick folding paper and hides in her box of treasures. Knowing Kyōka's fiction, the scene in question is almost



Figure 64 - Woodblock print of woman cutting fingernails with "bell-scissors" by Kunisada, ca. mid-19th century

certainly that of a young woman cutting characters out of her *kusazōshi* and storing them in a personal collection of brocade prints (*nishiki-e*). If such is the case, then Kyōka uses his introduction to Shunsen's collection of *koma-e* to poetically evoke one of his favorite themes: his mother's collection of picture-books. The transformation of Shunsen's brush into a beauty's pair of scissors leads from one level of visuality to another, or from the world of modern illustrations, which appear briefly in the morning paper, to the romantic world of *bijinga* and *ukiyo-e*, lovingly preserved by a beautiful woman, who hopes to keep her treasured pictures safe for all eternity.

Kyōka ends his introduction to Shunsen's work with an abrupt transition back to the collection at hand, in which he only further compounds the complexity of his already dense forest of images. Having just described pictures scattered into the wind, Kyōka switches back suddenly to Shunsen's illustrations.

"Gather them together, in a single volume, which shall never gather dust!" he demands, but what is one to write, on a sleeve spread out on *tatami*, in order to win them over? A true *Edokko*, born and raised, my brother from Nihonbashi, he really knows how to talk. And thus it came to be, these pages of his greatest illustrations. The title's not quite clear, as I'm not exactly sure what *Demo gashū* is supposed to mean, but it reminds me of Oborozukiyo's poem, "nothing compares to the hazy moon on a night in spring." Every page is worth a thousand gold coins, guaranteed.

Alternating between a high classical register, humorous asides, and his own brand of linguistic obscurity, Kyōka repeatedly connects Shunsen's illustrations back to a deep history of Japanese art. This process can be seen most clearly in Kyōka's discussion of the title, *Demo gashū*, an unfamiliar combination of English and Japanese, whose exact definition he declines to explain. Sidestepping the difficulty of clarifying the title's etymology, Kyōka again links past and present by claiming that the title, *Demo gashū*, reminds him of a poem from the *Tale of Genji* (ca. 1001), the song of Oborozukiyo, which is based on an older poem by Ōe no Chisato (fl. late 9th

century), which is in turn based on an even older poem by Bai Juyi (772-846).⁵ It is quite an impressive pedigree to assign to a collection of ephemeral newspaper illustrations, which Kyōka sets on equal footing with some of the most celebrated works of literature in the Chinese and Japanese canons. Such grandiose allusions might be considered appropriate, however, for an author whose respect for illustration often bordered on reverence.

In addition to providing a window into Kyōka's lofty estimation of illustration as an art form, the author's introduction to Shunsen's book reveals his own visually-oriented approach to literary composition. Just before the end of the introduction, Kyōka suggests the process by which he wrote his passage, beginning with the pictures themselves: setting Shunsen's collection of *koma-e* before him, he turned reverently through the pages of pictures, which he allowed to guide his brush as he wrote. By focusing on drawing his words directly from Shunsen's images, he shaped his language according to the visual logic of Shunsen's artwork, thus allowing his words to unfold densely in space, rather than in a straightforward sequence over time. The result is a visual tour-de-force of complex, overlapping imagery, which evokes a dense history of Japanese art, both popular and refined, in the space of single paragraph, in less than a full page of text. The result reads something like a picture. It cannot be comprehended in a single read-through; indeed, it cannot be comprehended without stopping to treat every single word with care, as though carefully examining a painting. Every word must be studied for shape and form, as they interact to create a multi-layered visual impression, rather than a coherent statement with a clear beginning or conclusion. Similar passages might be found throughout Kyōka's writing, in books dense with imagistic language, literary allusions, and pictorial references. Some works take the complexity of the single-page introduction to *Demo gashū* and multiply it across hundreds of pages of text, creating a dilemma for all but the most dedicated of readers. This leads to the question: How is one to understand an author who buries so many obscure images and allusions in his writing? One solution, I propose, would be to follow the illustrations of his work, whenever they are made available. To borrow Kyōka's own metaphor, the illustrations in his fiction often function like guide markers, which open up new possibilities for reading deeper into his texts.

In the following chapter, I examine three extensively-illustrated newspaper novels by Izumi Kyōka, while exploring the role of illustration as both practical reading-guide and aesthetic visual counterpoint to the author's text. One story comes from the very beginning of Kyōka's career, *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, his debut work from 1892, and the other two from much closer to the end, *Of the Mountains and the Sea* (*Sankai hyōbanki*) in 1929 and *Pale Plum Blossoms* (*Usukōbai*) in 1937, but all three share the same basic set of traits. To begin, they were all originally published as serialized newspaper novels (*shinbun shōsetsu*), released in daily

⁵ The poem reads (in Royall Tyler's translation): "Nothing compares with the misty moon of a spring night, neither brilliant nor clouded" (*teri mo sezu / kumori mo hatenu / haru no yo no / oborozukiyo ni / shiku mono zo naki*). The poem first appears in *Kudai waka* (894), a collection of Ōe no Chisato's Japanese-style poetry (*waka*), based on themes drawn from Chinese poems (*kanshi*). An excerpt from the poem is sung by a character in *The Tale of Genji*, who is commonly known as Oborozukiyo ("Faintly misted moon at night"), named after the song which she sings in the famous scene. It was later included in the *Shin Kokinshū* (compiled 1201-1205). See Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, translated by Royall Tyler (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 156; Helen McCullough, *Brocade by Night: "Kokin wakashū" and the Court Style in Japanese Classical Poetry* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985), 254-261; Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from the Earliest Times to the Late Sixteenth Century*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 223-224; 691.

installments, together with illustrations that accompanied every chapter.⁶ Second, all three works are key texts in Kyōka's literary universe, presenting central aspects of his fiction, and figuring prominently in later scholarship on his writing. Finally, all three stories are frequently cited as being among Kyōka's most difficult works of literature, in part because of their length and complex narratives, but also because of the sheer intractability of their language, which is often dense with obscure imagery and vague allusions. In other ways, however, the works are quite different, particularly in the relationship of text and image expressed in their pages. *Kanmuri Yazaemon* was illustrated anonymously, in a style exactly like the other works appearing in the same newspaper. Its images were shocking and theatrical, matching the tone of Kyōka's early writing, which was heavily inspired by the fiction of the Edo period. The other two novels were illustrated by two of Kyōka's closest friends and frequent collaborators, Settai and Kiyokata, who were both accomplished artists in their own right, and whose subtle visual expressions resonated deeply with the ghostly atmosphere of Kyōka's later work.

Kanmuri Yazaemon, Kyōka's debut novel, was a text heavily indebted to the verbal-visual culture of *kusazōshi*. Featuring illustrations by an anonymous artist of the Utagawa school, the work relies on its images to carry forward a narrative that is nearly impossible to understand in words alone. As the product of an untested writer, the difficulty of the text might be attributed to Kyōka's lack of experience. At the same time, the illustrations in the novel reveal themes that would guide Kyōka's literary imagination for the rest of his career, including, most prominently, the image of a tortured woman, whose blood sacrifice is visualized as a religious icon. *Kanmuri Yazaemon* is a work that exists in-between genres (*kusazōshi* and novel) and in-between sign systems (words and pictures), thus resulting in an occasionally haphazard construction, and yet it provides a window into the early formation of Kyōka's visual imagination. When read together with its illustrations, the text suddenly becomes coherent, as words and pictures lock into a syncopated rhythm, relating a story of violence and revenge with visceral clarity.

Of the Mountains and the Sea (1929) was long treated as one of Kyōka's most unapproachable works, due largely to a complicated narrative, which unfolds via a sequence of seemingly unrelated episodes over some 400 pages of text. In recent years, however, the story has come to be seen as one of Kyōka's essential works, particularly after the appearance of a new edition of the text that includes all of the original illustrations. The nearly 300 black-and-white images, by Settai, reveal an intricate work of verbal-visual art, in which illustrations lead the reader through a shifting maze of ghostly illusions, while suggesting the existence of an invisible world that lies beyond the access of either text or image. *Of the Mountains and the Sea* is also one of very few stories whose illustrations Kyōka ever commented upon in his essays, in which he recounted traveling with Settai around Tokyo in search of visual referents for the story. Settai's illustrations for *Of the Mountain and the Sea* are full of optical illusions, dead ends, and ghostly apparitions, which complement the eerie atmosphere of Kyōka's text. Unlike in many of Kyōka's earlier stories, these illustrations were not coincidental, but were rather the product of a long partnership between author and artist, which reached a deep level of aesthetic resonance on the page.

Pale Plum Blossoms (1937) was Kyōka's final serialized newspaper novel, as well as his final work of illustrated literature. It was illustrated by Kyōka's longtime friend, Kaburaki Kiyokata, who took a brief break from the world of exhibition painting in order to lend his brush to the work. Kiyokata began his career as an illustrator for magazines and newspapers in the

⁶ This was not the case with everything that Kyōka wrote—many of his most critically appreciated texts were published as single installments in literary magazines, or as standalone books.

1890's, before transitioning to the world of exhibition painting in 1907, after which he became famous for his paintings of beautiful women (*bijinga*) done in the traditional *Nihonga* style. At the time of *Pale Plum Blossoms*' release, in the *Tokyo nichichi shinbun*, the novel was advertised as a collaborative work between two major artists, both known for their traditional aesthetics and refined artistic sensibilities. The story itself is set in the 1890's, when both Kyōka and Kiyokata were just beginning their careers, and depicts the lives of young writers at the outset of a new era of Japanese literature. As with the other works explored in this chapter, the plot of *Pale Plum Blossoms* is often difficult to follow, due to a combination of its complicated narrative, which is again told through seemingly random episodes, and the use of obscure language throughout the text. Over the course of the novel, however, a central plot becomes gradually discernible, which revolves around the love life of Kitada Usurai (1876-1900), a real-life member of the Ken'yūsha literary coterie, who died before she was able to fully establish her career. In the original publication, Usurai (known in the story as Okyō) is frequently depicted in the illustrations, by which she emerges as a central visual motif of the story. Although Kiyokata's tiny black-and-white illustrations might initially appear as insignificant elements of the story, buried as they are on the newspaper page, when read together with Kyōka's language, they come alive as guide markers, which lead the reader deeper into the forest of the text. Filling the space in-between Kyōka's words with wispy lines and faded landscapes, Kiyokata's illustrations hint of a world lost in twilight.

Kanmuri Yazaemon: Between kusazōshi and the novel

Kyōka made his literary debut in 1892 with *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, a serialized newspaper novel that incorporated dozens of illustrations to unify an otherwise unruly narrative. Appearing in the *Hinode shinbun* in Kyoto, *Kanmuri Yazaemon* was originally serialized in forty-two installments, with each chapter including a black-and-white, woodblock illustration designed by a professional staff artist, believed by scholars to have been either Utagawa Kunitatsu (1855-1944) or Utagawa Kunimine (1861-1944).⁷ As was common with newspaper fiction at the time, every installment of the story included a black-and-white, woodblock-printed image. Together, the forty-two illustrations that accompany *Kanmuri Yazaemon* help the reader to navigate an oftentimes confusing narrative by visually supplementing verbal descriptions of the story's action and setting. Beyond simply acting as a reading guide, however, the illustrations in *Kanmuri Yazaemon* reveal a unifying image around which the entire text revolves. The image is that of a tortured woman, whose bloody body is transformed into an object of religious veneration. It is an image that would exert a considerable fascination on the author, as he revisited it, in various forms, in stories written throughout the length of his career. Although *Kanmuri Yazaemon* occasionally becomes incomprehensible when approached in words alone, when read together with its original illustrations, it reveals a thematic focus on violent imagery that is most viscerally expressed through a combination of words and pictures.

Today, *Kanmuri Yazaemon* is read almost exclusively by Kyōka specialists, as the obscurity of its narrative provides a daunting challenge for any but the most dedicated of readers. Even trained critics of Kyōka's fiction, however, frequently express frustration with the work, which many allege borders on near incomprehensibility. Yanagita Izumi, in his early criticism of Kyōka's fiction, wrote in 1937 that the story was "absolutely awful" (*goku mazui*) and

⁷ Seki Hajime, *Shinbun shōsetsu no jidai*, 183; Yoshida Masashi, "Izumi Kyōka to sashie gaka: Kaburaki Kiyokata," *Ronshū Izumi Kyōka* (Osaka: Izumi Shōin, 1999), 196.

occasionally impossible to follow,⁸ while Masatane Koike, writing decades later in 1979, remarked that “the explanation of scenes [in *Kanmuri Yazaemon*] is so strikingly abrupt and disorganized that the reader is often made to feel unspeakably lost.”⁹ In a more recent evaluation, Charles Inouye suggests that the trouble with *Kanmuri Yazaemon* is that it functions as an illustrated text *sans* illustrations. After noting that the fiction of the Edo period consisted fundamentally of a combination of text and image, he writes, “In the words-only *Yazaemon*, in which these two realms of signs have been separated... the author had to rely on language to fulfill both lyrical and narrative functions.”¹⁰ Suggesting that Kyōka was not yet prepared to switch into a purely text-based mode of writing, Inouye argues that his debut novel suffered from a lack of visual explication, without which it barely even functioned as a text. While Inouye is correct in positing that *Kanmuri Yazaemon* was not illustrated in quite the same manner as Edo period literature, in which text and image were intertwined into a closely unified idiom, he overlooks the fact that Kyōka’s debut *was* originally illustrated. By examining the work’s original material format, we can begin to imagine how its illustrations might have guided its first readers through an occasionally mazelike narrative.

Although *Kanmuri Yazaemon* has often been characterized as an arcane text with little interest for non-specialists, at the time of its debut, it was advertised as a work of popular fiction for consumption by a general audience.¹¹ In 1892, when the text first appeared in a local Kyoto newspaper, periodicals often included illustrations in their serialized fiction, largely as a draw for readers accustomed to consuming *kusazōshi* and other forms of illustrated literature. Following the standard format of the time, Kyōka’s text was illustrated, on a daily basis, by a staff artist associated with the newspaper. As in the other texts serialized in the *Hinode shinbun*, the illustrations in *Kanmuri Yazaemon* stick close to the details of the narrative, while taking every opportunity to highlight scenes of action and violent confrontation as they arise. The prints are dynamic, detailed, and expertly crafted, and likely would have been a major draw for readers. Rather than a hit, however, *Kanmuri Yazaemon* was apparently a monumental clunker.

The circumstances of Kyōka’s literary debut have taken on near-legendary status, as the author later claimed that, counter to expectations, his work was so poorly received that readers sent in no fewer than nineteen letters of complaint demanding its immediate cessation. The reason for their negative reaction, however, was never explained by the author, thus raising the question of whether the work’s historical audience faced similar difficulties in comprehending the narrative as later readers often have. In commentaries on his early writing, Kyōka explained the circumstances under which he wrote the novel by relating that Iwaya Sazanami (1870-1933), a co-member of the Ken’yūsha literary collective, had recently been made editor of the *Hinode shinbun* in Kyoto.¹² Sazanami wrote Kōyō in Tokyo requesting that he pen a new story for serialization. Kōyō was apparently too busy to write anything himself, and so recommended that one of his newest pupils, Kyōka, send a story instead. Kyōka later recalled that he wrote the work with great enthusiasm, imagining the excited reaction of its audience at every step of the way, only to learn many years later of its abysmal reception. According to Kyōka, Kōyō shielded

⁸ Yanagita Izumi, “Kyōka no yomihajime,” 3:239.

⁹ Masatane Koike, “Izumi Kyōka: *Kanmuri Yazaemon* to *Shinkyoku gyokuseki dōjiku*,” *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, 44.13 (1979): 170.

¹⁰ Inouye, *The Similitude of Blossoms*, 60-1.

¹¹ Seki, *Shinbun shōsetsu no jidai*, 177-179.

¹² Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:681-682; 28:708-709.

his protégé from the fierce criticism directed at his work and insisted that Sazanami publish the story in its entirety, thereby allowing him to realize the success of completing his first novel.

Kyōka's personal anecdote about his literary debut has largely been taken as an established fact, and is likely true in part, especially when considering the difficulties that the text continues to present to even to the most dedicated scholars of his fiction today. Still, there is counter-evidence that *Kanmuri Yazaemon* was at least partially successful, particularly in subsequent printings, which suggests that segments of the work's original audience were able to follow the verbal-visual format of the text with minimal confusion. Most convincingly, the story was reprinted the year following its original publication in the *Hokuriku shinbun* in Kanazawa, Kyōka's hometown, to popular acclaim. As Kyōka notes, the text was reprinted with all of its original illustrations intact (*e-goto sokkuri*), thus suggesting that they were considered to be an essential element of the work.¹³ Although critics might point to Kyōka's origins in Kanazawa as a reason for the work's warm reception during its second run, the positive response accorded to *Kanmuri Yazaemon* was not likely the result of any bias by the citizens of Kanazawa towards their hometown hero, as Kyōka was still far from famous in 1893. Moreover, the story was reprinted anonymously and under an alternative title, *A True Account of Self-Sacrifice for the Public Good: The Buddhist Priest Hyōtoku* (*Gimin gitan busshi Hyōtoku*), which would have served to thoroughly disguise the origins of the text, along with its writer's identity.¹⁴

Adding even further evidence in favor of the idea that *Kanmuri Yazaemon* was at least moderately successful is the fact that the work was reprinted once again in 1896, this time by Tanaka Sōeidō in Osaka, four years after its initial appearance in neighboring Kyoto. Unlike earlier versions of the text, however, the Tanaka Sōeidō version of *Kanmuri Yazaemon* featured none of the story's original, black-and-white illustrations. In their place stood a single, multi-color frontispiece (*kuchi-e*) designed by *ukiyo-e* artist Tsutsui Toshimine (1863-1934), a member of the traditional Utagawa school of woodblock printing. The frontispiece depicts a fearsome Buddhist deity chasing a frightened geisha, as described by the narrator in the eleventh chapter of the story. Without a thorough knowledge of the text, however, the meaning of the image is almost impossible to ascertain, as the scene it depicts appears in a comic aside that is entirely unrelated to the main plot. By replacing the work's original forty-two illustrations with this single image, Tanaka Sōeidō effectively destroyed the visual component of the text. The publisher attempted to mitigate the potential for confusion, however, by adding quotation marks throughout the body of the work, which were entirely lacking in either of the earlier versions. Tanaka Sōeidō's decision to painstakingly insert punctuation throughout the story suggests that, when separated from its original illustrations, the text no longer functioned as a legible document. The version of *Kanmuri Yazaemon* that is most likely to be encountered by readers today, found in the *Collected Works of Izumi Kyōka* (*Kyōka zenshū*) and other authoritative volumes, features neither quotation marks nor illustrations, thus making for a particularly difficult reading experience.

One way of interpreting the mixed reception accorded to *Kanmuri Yazaemon* in its original setting is to imagine the different reading strategies that an early audience would have brought to the work. Muramatsu Sadataka argues that *Kanmuri Yazaemon* should be understood in the context of illustrated literature such as Tanehiko's *Stories in Promptbook Form* (*Shōhon jitate*, 1815-1831), a popular Edo-period *gōkan* that foregrounded the influence of theater in the

¹³ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:682.

¹⁴ Tsurumaki Katsuji, "Kanmuri Yazaemon tensai no nazo," *Kōka joshi daigaku kenkyū kiyo*, 22 (1984): 2.

reading experience.¹⁵ Working in close collaboration with star illustrator Kunisada, Tanehiko endeavored to create a simulacrum of the kabuki stage, whose form he suggested with illustrated representations of props, costumes, backstage banter, and even a simulated theatrical audience.¹⁶ Andrew Lawrence Markus, commenting on the overall effect of the work, characterizes *Stories in Promptbook Form* as “an ambitious attempt to translate as accurately as possible the kabuki theatergoer’s experience to a static framework of text and illustration.”¹⁷ During the late Edo period, readers of Tanehiko’s fiction would have recognized the theatrical conventions in his work, thus allowing them to follow the verbal-visual format of his narratives with relative ease. For the modern reader, however, the theatrical cues imbedded in Tanehiko’s fiction are not always quite as clear. If, as Kyōka often suggested, the literary culture in modern Kanazawa resembled that of the Edo period more than in major cities, then it makes sense that readers in his hometown would have reacted differently to his text. Accustomed to the visual and literary culture of an earlier era, they would have been primed to appreciate his anachronistic style of fiction. Moreover, as suggested by Tsurumaki Katsuji, the novel’s rebranding as a story of “self-sacrifice for the public good” (*gimin gitan*) would have resonated particularly with audiences in Kanazawa, where accounts of peasant rebellions and local uprisings had a long history of popular appeal.¹⁸

As first noted by Yanagita Izumi, *Kanmuri Yazaemon* was based on the true account of a peasant rebellion that occurred in the village of Shindo (also known as Mado, in present-day Hiratsuka, Kanagawa) in 1878.¹⁹ In the historical rebellion, provincial official Matsugi Chōemon swindled local farmers out of their ancestral lands by signing their real estate titles in his own name. The peasants sued him in court in Odawara and won, but Matsugi countersued, bringing the case to a judge in Yokohama and eventually to the highest courts in Tokyo, until the peasants finally exhausted their financial resources. After a humiliating legal defeat, local hero Kanmuri Yaemon (later rendered as Yazaemon)²⁰ arranged a revenge attack, in which the peasants killed Matsugi and a number of his family members before burning his estate to the ground. The conspirators were arrested and sentenced to death, but popular support and subsequent public hearings led to their release. The sensational story of revenge immediately attracted the attention of virtually every major newspaper in the Tokyo-Yokohama area, including the *Yomiuri shinbun*, the *Tōkyō eiri shinbun*, and the *Kanayomi shinbun*.²¹ Eventually, the account was published in at least eight different versions,²² which continued to attract audiences with grisly details of vigilante justice and revenge killing (*katakiuchi*)—both themes that would have been familiar to readers of popular fiction throughout the 19th century.

Two years after the first accounts of the Shindo rebellion were published, Takeda Kōrai (1819-1882) adapted the news story as a *gōkan* in *The Pine of Kanmuri, the Storm at Mado Village* (*Kamuri no matsu, Mado no arashi*, 1880), a straightforward retelling of the original accounts, which offered only minor dramatic embellishments on a dry, journalistic narrative.

¹⁵ Muramatsu Sadataka, *Izumi Kyōka*, 79.

¹⁶ As a noted fan of both Tanehiko and Kunisada, whose work is heavily represented in his personal collection of *kusazōshi*, Kyōka was likely familiar with this particular text.

¹⁷ Markus, *The Willow in Autumn*, 72-73.

¹⁸ Tsurumaki Katsuji, “*Kanmuri Yazaemon* tensai no nazo,” 12-13.

¹⁹ Yanagita Izumi, “Kyōka no yomihajime,” 3:240.

²⁰ Akiyama Minoru, “*Kanmuri Yazaemon* kō: Izumi Kyōka no shuppatsu,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, 60.4 (1983):55.

²¹ Akiyama, “*Kanmuri Yazaemon* kō,” 49-62.

²² Akiyama, “*Kanmuri Yazaemon* kō,” 56. Akiyama refers to the work as a “modern *Chūshingura*,” in reference to the seminal popular narrative of the Edo period, which was frequently adapted to stage.

Contrasting with Kōrai's tepid delivery, however, were a new set of dramatic illustrations, provided by veteran *ukiyo-e* artist Yoshitoshi, which highlighted the violent conflict at the center of the story. In an early review of *The Pine of Kanmuri*, Ishikawa Iwao called the work "nothing more than an elaboration on local police news without an iota of literary value," but at the same time referred to Yoshitoshi's woodblock illustrations as "rare masterpieces for fiction of its kind."²³ As has long been acknowledged by scholars, Kyōka's literary debut was based at least in part on Kōrai's text, and yet it departs significantly from the details of the original work, with which it shares only a handful of names and the bare bones of an outline. Rather than a retread of an old news story, I argue that Kyōka's text is better understood as a literary adaptation of Yoshitoshi's *images*, with which it shares a morbid fixation on themes of gore and violence.

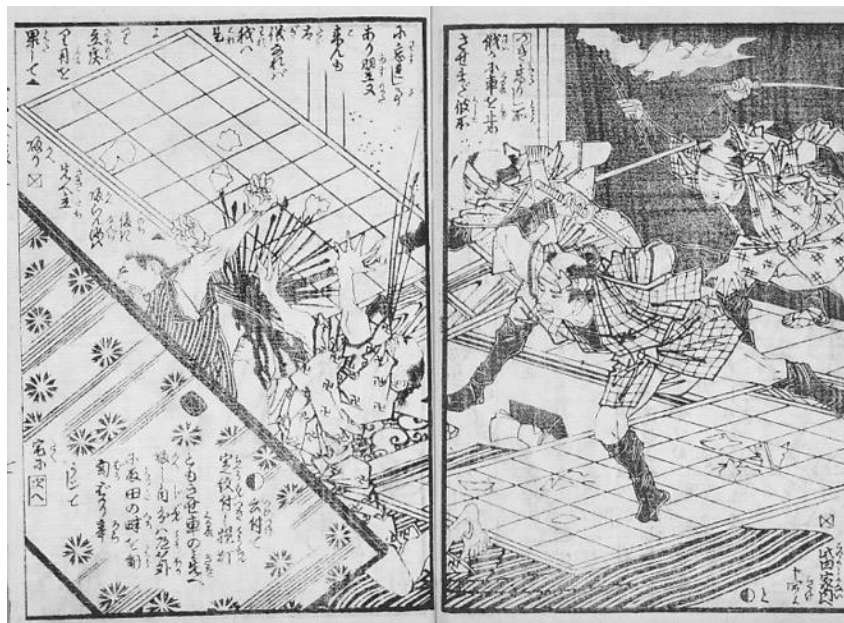


Figure 65 - *The Pine of Kanmuri*, the Storm at Mado Village (1880) by Takeda Kōrai, illustrated by Yoshitoshi

In the original *The Pine of Kanmuri*, Yoshitoshi's illustrations often overwhelm the text with frenetic images of violence that nearly force Kōrai's words off of the page. In the first half of the book, text and image run together at an even pace and are nearly equally matched in size. The opening volume details the series of litigations by the peasants against Chōemon that eventually lead to their bankruptcy and features static images of courtrooms and trial proceedings to accompany a slow-paced narrative. In the second volume of *The Pine of Kanmuri*, however, Yoshitoshi's illustrations suddenly expand in size and overtake the text in order to emphasize the violent details of the peasants' revenge. As the story of the Shindo rebellion comes to a peak, the illustrations begin to take over the entire space of the page, forcing Kōrai's text into the corners and edges of the book. Moreover, the words no longer match the illustrations, which continue to showcase scenes of violence even after the account of the

²³ Ishikawa Iwao, "Meiji shoki no gesaku kara (ni): toku ni nōmin bōdō o atsukatta gesaku ni tsuite," *Meiji bunka kenkyū shinkyū jidai*, 3.6 (1927): 17-23. Quoted in Tsurumaki Katsuji, "Kyōka no shojosaku *Kanmuri Yazaemon*: Kinsei bungaku kara no tenbō," *Kōka joshi daigaku kenkyū kiyō*, 22 (1984): 70.

rebellion in the text has ended. Yoshitoshi's illustrations depict peasants smashing a wooden gate with giant mallets, cutting down servants as they crash into tumbling screens, spearing a man's head as it oozes blood, stabbing Chōemon's wife as she dashes for safety, and rough-handling Chōemon after cutting off his arm. As such, Yoshitoshi's images turn a straightforward adaptation of a newspaper report into a dark vision of social violence. It is this haunting work of illustration, rather than Kōrai's straightforward text, that is most clearly reflected in Kyōka's version of the story.

At its most basic level, Kyōka's version of *Kanmuri Yazaemon* follows the standard literary formula of "rewarding good and punishing evil" (*kanzen chōaku*), which was commonly used in the fiction of the late Edo period. The details of the plot are too complex to relate in full,²⁴ but for the purposes of summary, the story can be framed as a tale of good versus evil, in which a village of oppressed peasants engages in violent confrontation with a clique of aristocratic landowners. The leaders of the oppressed are Unosuke, the handsome adopted son of a priest, Mashira no Denji, a gallant gangster, Kanmuri Yazaemon, a giant monk and master sculptor, Shinjūrō, a minor official, and Onami, a female assassin. On the side of evil are Ishimura Goemon and Iwanaga Musashi, landowners who treat the peasants as personal slaves and who force Shinjūrō's daughter, Kohagi, into an unwanted marriage with Ishimura's son. Towards the beginning of the story, the hungry peasants stage a revolt, but their rebellion fails when they are cornered in a temple by Ishimura's superior military forces. After their surrender, Ishimura further antagonizes the peasants by forcing them to build a moat around his castle and working them ceaselessly without food or pay. Shinjūrō and Onami plot to have Ishimura murdered by their daughter, Kohagi, on his wedding night, which they hope to accomplish by having her sneak a dagger into their marriage bed. The plot fails, however, when Kohagi's dagger is found and she is imprisoned. Following her capture, her father is forced to commit suicide and Onami is brutally tortured to death. At the conclusion of the story, Unosuke and his group take revenge by sneaking into one of Ishimura's dinner parties disguised as geisha and killing their oppressor, along with his entire family, all while the peasants set fire to his estate.²⁵ In the end, police come to arrest the head conspirator of the rebellion, Kanmuri Yazaemon, but find that he has disappeared after retaking the tonsure.

When summarized in this manner, the plot of *Kanmuri Yazaemon* might appear relatively clear, but the original story is often difficult to follow, for reasons including that scenes switch suddenly and without warning, incidents seem to occur spontaneously, relationships between characters are not always explained, and the order of events is murky at best. At times, the novel reads as though the narrator is simply unable to guide the reader through the story's world by words alone. The narrator's difficulty is highlighted late in the novel when he begins to insert asides that explain how the reader should imagine the order of events, often by borrowing metaphors from kabuki. One of the most conspicuous examples occurs in the fortieth chapter, which opens by noting that "the stage revolves to the sound of the percussion section," which stands in as an explanation that the scene has changed from the previous chapter.²⁶ The reference is to the *mawari butai* (turning stage) mechanism in kabuki, in which the entire stage literally

²⁴ Narasaki Hideho goes to great lengths to arrange the plot into chronological order in "*Kanmuri Yazaemon no katari to jikan*," *Nihon bungei kenkyū*, 44.4 (1993): 41.

²⁵ Charles Inouye cites Kyōka's reliance on disguises and hidden identities for his story as clear influences of kabuki, writing that "Tangled *a la* the works of Tsuruya Namboku (1755-1829), the threads connecting the principal characters in Kyōka's story tie themselves into a melodramatic knot." *The Similitude of Blossoms*, 57-9.

²⁶ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 1:133.

revolves when the scene changes from one to the next. Having done little to lead the reader through scene changes thus far, Kyōka finally decides to lend a helping hand by drawing a metaphor from the stage.

Turning towards the original publication of *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, the influence of *kusazōshi* on Kyōka's writing becomes immediately clear. The most obvious connection to Edo period fiction can be found in the form of the text's illustrations, by either Kunimatsu or Kunimine, both of whom were members of the traditional Utagawa school of *ukiyo-e* woodblock printing, which had dominated the illustration of printed fiction throughout the 19th century. Both were also involved in the illustration of newspaper novels in the Kyoto-Osaka area, where the influences of *kusazōshi* and kabuki theater on contemporary literature were especially strong. As professional artists, members of the Utagawa school specialized in illustrating *gōkan* with theatrically-oriented images—a skill that they carried over from their work in *kusazōshi* to the serialized newspaper novels of the late 19th century. As in *kusazōshi*, the illustrations in *Kanmuri Yazaemon* often clarify the setting and action of the narrative, while Kyōka's text combines dialogue, sparse description, and stage-like directions for his "actors." This method appears in a scene from the second chapter, translated here following the original grammar as closely as possible, including a lack of quotation marks, in order to approximate the original reading experience. In the scene, Kohagi comforts Unosuke after his fight with a local gang:

Are you hurt, how terrible, quickly come inside and rest. Oh, look at your clothes, she wipes the dust from his short-sleeved kimono front and back, it's fine, don't bother, it's nothing. Lend me your hand towel a second, I'm sweating, he borrows the cloth tucked into her *obi*, relaxes the neckband of his kimono, wipes his body, I'm in a hurry to get back to the mountain but I'm a bit thirsty, I'll have a quick cup of tea. Well, come here. They leave together, Kohagi goes to meet her mother, fanning him, they praise his great deeds, together, they celebrate his safety.²⁷

Instantly following this segment is an abrupt change in scene that would have benefitted from a note calling for a turning of the stage.

Not a single white sail appears on the open sea, the sun has dipped beneath the mountains as darkness descends, the sky portends late autumn showers. Traffic has ceased on the road by the shore, a black row of pine trees stands by the wayside, water flows faintly white, although the surrounding area is silent, two pairs of footsteps make a headlong dash from the direction of Hase, stopping by the lower flow of the Enma River by the shore.

So far, Kyōka is steady as he sets the scene, but in the next moment he appears to lose his bearing as he describes the ambush that follows.

He'll definitely come back this way, they aim to take revenge for their blunder. Is it the will of heaven, this pure darkness? When did it become so dark, like the chamber on Mt. Kurama, black and white indistinguishable, exactly as though blind. There's no point in killing a sleeping bird. With their footsteps as a sign,

²⁷ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 1:6.

approaching from behind, Steel, Monkey, don't lose heart, alright, got it. The dull blade of a giant sword, *fwhip*, from the sheath's mouth. Hide. Hide!

Now, it is as though the narrator is seeing something that the reader simply cannot, unless, that is, he or she has access to the original illustration for the second installment, which depicts precisely this scene. For a few moments, *Kanmuri Yazaemon* turns literally into a *kusazōshi* as the reader is shown a woodblock illustration of two ruffians hiding with lanterns by a wayside shrine as Unosuke crosses a bridge with an umbrella in hand. There are still problems with connecting the text and its illustration, as the print does not account for the abrupt shift in setting towards the beginning of the chapter, but having access to the image certainly makes the scene easier to imagine. Rather than relying on the descriptive powers of the narrator alone, the text is partially related through its illustration, which provides context by visually depicting the setting of the story and clarifying the position of the characters in relation to one another.

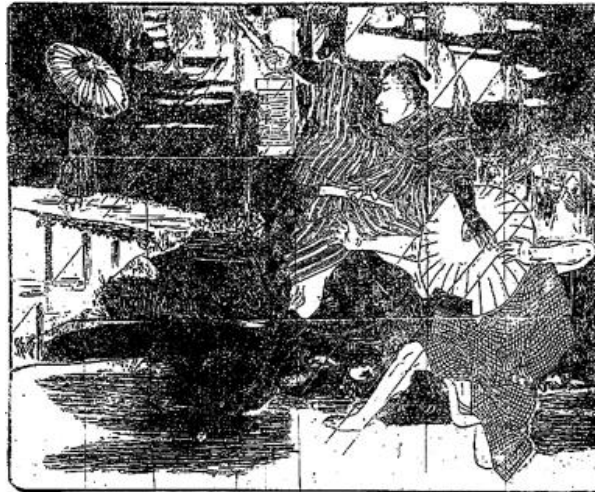


Figure 66 - *Kanmuri Yazaemon* (Hinode shinbun version, 1892), installment #2, illustrated by anonymous Utagawa artist (Kunimatsu or Kunimine)

Much like Yoshitoshi's illustrations in *The Pine of Kanmuri*, the images in *Kanmuri Yazaemon* start out small, almost tentative, as though uncertain of how to best serve the text, but they become larger and more relevant to the narrative during scenes of violence in the second half. In the first few installments of the story, the images are set in small, framed boxes and help give context to scenes that are only barely set up in the text. Because of their small size and limited number, they cannot completely guide the reader through the story, like the illustrations in *kusazōshi* might, but they can help the reader find footholds in the murky narrative, acting like guide markers through a literary maze. The early illustrations adapt to rapid-fire changes in the text and move swiftly through a series of changing settings, which turn suddenly like a revolving kabuki stage, including a shrine, bridge, graveyard, home, and temple in the first nine chapters, before opening in the middle of a rebellion in the tenth. If the reader is unable to ascertain where the action has moved in the fitful narrative, then the illustrations can help visually set the scenes like a kabuki stage.

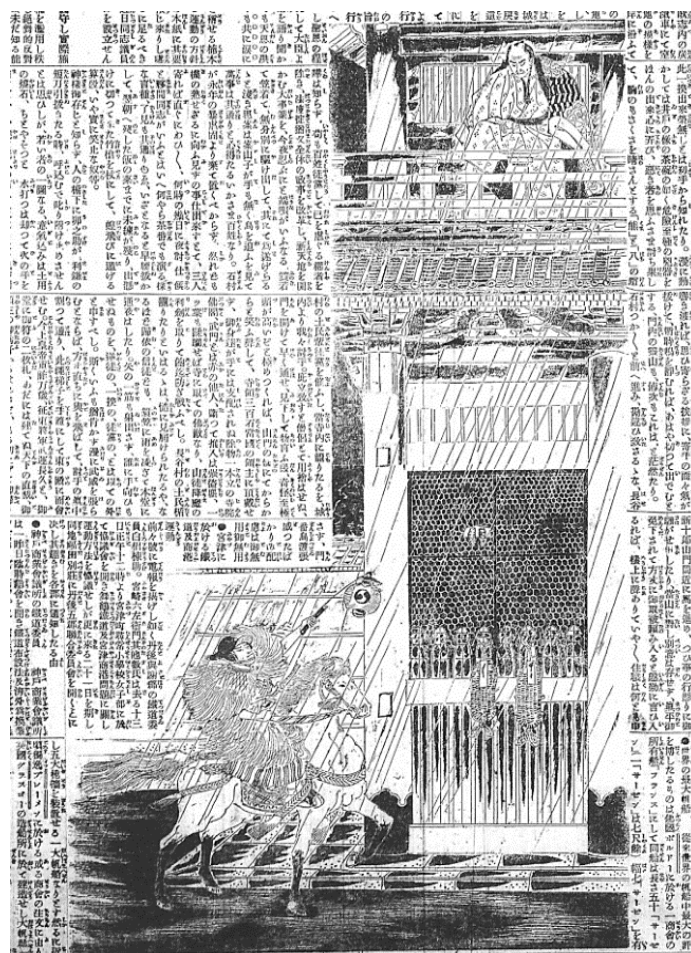


Figure 67 - Kanmuri Yazaemon, installment #14

With the beginning of the peasant rebellion, the images start to come into their own, rivalling the text for primacy on the page. In the fourteenth chapter the peasant faction retreats to the Kōmyō-ji temple and is pursued by Ishimura's military forces. The namesake of the story, Kanmuri Yazaemon, looks out over the attacking forces from the top of the temple gate. With a sense of grandeur appropriate to the occasion, the accompanying illustration in the *Hinode* newspaper is massive and extends vertically over four rows of text, spilling over into the news sections on the same page. In the illustration, Shinjūrō is shown approaching the gate on horse while holding out a lantern. The horse stops before the temple gate, which is fully detailed with ornamental pillars, decorative lintels, tiles, windows, a second story veranda with a railing, and hexagonal wire mesh protecting its Buddhist images. The illustration clearly echoes a famous scene from the kabuki play *The Temple Gate and the Paulownia Crest* (*Sanmon gosan no kiri*), in which rogue priest Ishikawa Goemon sits atop a temple gate that mechanically rises from the stage as his enemy Hisayoshi appears from below.²⁸

²⁸ For a description of the famous scene of the temple gate, see Samuel L. Leiter, *Historical Dictionary of Japanese Traditional Theatre*, 476.



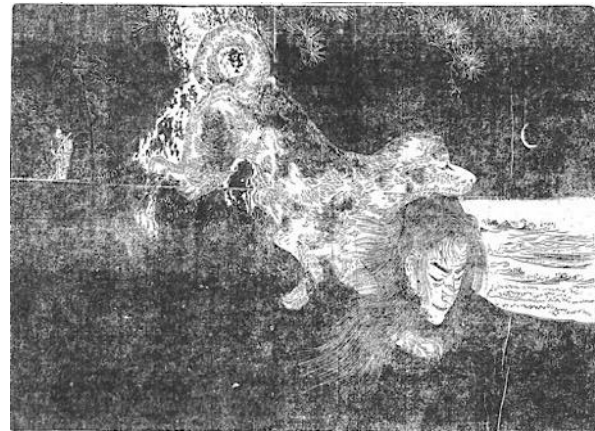
Figure 68 - Kanmuri Yazaemon, installment #26

The illustrations lock into an especially close rhythm with the text in the scenes spanning Onami's escape to her eventual death. The sequence begins with Onami handing a sword through prison gates to her husband, Shinjūrō, for him to commit suicide. Onami escapes the prison and is chased by the villainous Dairoku, leading her to a cliff from which she jumps for safety. In the newspaper installment, three images adorn the full page of text, beginning in the news section above the story, continuing into the body of the text, and ending again in the news section at the bottom of the page. In the text, the narrator describes Dairoku grabbing Onami's outer kimono, which she slips off just as she plunges from the cliff. In the top illustration on the page, Dairoku is shown perched atop a cliff while clutching at the kimono, which pushes out the boundaries of the frame as it flutters in the wind. In the middle image, Onami is depicted in mid-fall, bracing for impact, as her hair flies straight up into the air. At the bottom of the page, the boatman awaits, his face turned away from the viewer. Yoshida Masashi refers to this three-part illustration as a *tobi-e*, or flying picture, that appears to leap out of the page as it brings the action of the story to life.²⁹ It is a technique taken directly from *kusazōshi*, where it was once employed to imitate the spectacular action of the stage.

Following Onami's capture, Kyōka moves into the most violent segment of his narrative, which is matched at every step by the story's illustrations. When describing the torture that is afflicted on Onami, along with the series of revenge attacks that follow, Kyōka's verbal delivery becomes suddenly clear, as though he is especially concerned with emphasizing the violence at

²⁹ Yoshida Masashi, "Izumi Kyōka to sashie gaka: Kaburaki Kiyokata," 198.

the center of his work. In the text, Onami has just been captured after killing a villainous monk, whom she first bound with rope before setting him on fire. Her enemies, thirsting for blood, show her no mercy: “A rain of whips! Beneath the unpitying assault of wild blows, her snow-white skin colors, her pained voice withers, the pain is so unbearable that she cries. From her spine to her hips, swollen purple, her skin tears and her flesh opens, splitting like a pomegranate.”³⁰ The torture continues throughout the following chapter as the henchmen rub sand in her wounds, hang her upside down, submerge her in a well, force her to kneel on a bed of swords, and finally crush her legs under a statue of the Buddhist protector of the innocent, Jizō. The ghastly scene continues when Onami’s faithful companion, the dog Mandara, chews off her head, carries it along a beach, and buries it. Accompanying the textual description of Onami’s torture are a series of illustrations that vie for brutal effect. The first depicts Onami half-naked and bound to a tree as her enemy presses a heavy statue onto her impaled legs. The next scene only deepens the macabre tone of the narrative with a close-up of the dog, Mandara, carrying Onami’s severed head on the beach. While it is difficult to say which is more explicit—the text or the images—both work together to leave a lasting impression of violence that sticks with the reader, even long after the murky details of the narrative have faded away.



Figures 69 and 70 - *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, installments #34 and #35

Kyōka’s focus on violence in *Kanmuri Yazaemon* has previously been noted by scholars, some of whom have come to see the text as a prototype for the author’s entire literary project. Kakuta Ryojin notes that the story shares depictions of torture and bloodshed with many of the author’s other early works and argues that it sets a precedent for later narratives of violence and revenge.³¹ Takada Mizuho writes bluntly, “As they say, ‘It’s all in the first work,’” before going

³⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 1:113.

³¹ Kakuta Ryojin, “*Kanmuri Yazaemon* oboegaki: ‘monogatari no monogatari’ danshō,” *Iwaki meisei daigaku daigakuin jinbungaku kenkyūka kiyō*, 1 (2003): 10-12.

on to describe the various themes that Kyōka establishes in his literary debut, including the conflict of good versus evil, physical torture, and the transitory lives of young, beautiful women (*bijin hakumei*).³² All of these themes appear vividly in *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, through both words and pictures, but the illustrations, in particular, hint at another source of Kyōka's violent imagery: his mother's collection of picture-books. This theme can be seen in two illustrations of Onami's torture. In the first, Onami is tied to a tree as her oppressors crush her legs on a bed of swords. Kyōka's brother, Izumi Toyoharu (penname Izumi Shatei, 1880-1933), once wrote that, as a child, Kyōka found a similar image in his mother's collection of *kusazōshi*, which he traced repeatedly with endless fascination. Toyoharu writes, "he would picture, in incredibly painstaking detail, the scene of a pitiful young maiden, bound to a tree, where she is beaten by her enemies."³³ Another illustration, from a few chapters later, depicts Onami's daughter, Kohagi, bound and hung from the ceiling, as Denji rushes in to save her from her torturer, an *onibaba*, who is crushed under a fallen door.³⁴ Once again, Kyōka draws on the imagery that he found in his mother's *kusazōshi* and woodblock prints, including startling images of demon hags and tortured women, to give visual shape to his literary world.

In addition to brutal violence, the illustrations in *Kanmuri Yazaemon* hint at another topic that appears across Kyōka's vast body of fiction: images that come to life and manifest miraculous power. Immediately following the scene of Onami's murder, the narrator relates how the instrument of her death is recuperated as a sacred image and imbued with the power to heal injuries and disease.

The blood that flowed from Onami's body stained the grass and smeared the ground. It would not wash away under the rain, nor blow away in the wind. On dark, stormy nights, demon fires of resentment smoldered unabated. After the incident, the villagers re-erected the statue of Jizō as an eternal memorial of Onami's sacrifice. They tied a red cloth around Jizō's waist, in imitation of the fearsome heroine's form in death.³⁵

From real blood to the representation of blood, the image visually documents an act of violence that transforms pain into a source of healing.³⁶ The sacred image takes Onami's place to stand as a testament to the brutality of the old feudal lords, at the same time that it offers healing for those who venerate its form.

Another image in *Kanmuri Yazaemon* comes to life only to cause chaos. The image is a statue of a Niō, or a fearsome Buddhist deity and protector of the dharma, as depicted in Toshimine's frontispiece illustration for the Tanaka Sōeidō version of the text. In the narrative, the statue throws a monastery into disarray when it begins to depart nightly for the pleasure quarters in a nearby town. The resident monks attempt to detain the statue, but instead become ensnared in the pleasures of the illusory world into which they wander. Just as they are about to

³² Takada Mizuho, "Kanmuri Yazaemon," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, 14.5 (1949): 49-50.

³³ See Muramatsu Sadataka, *Izumi Kyōka*, 38. Also quoted in Inouye, *Similitude of Blossoms*, 13.

³⁴ See previous chapter for more on Kyōka and images of the *onibaba*.

³⁵ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 116.

³⁶ This construction has clear Christian overtones, the likes of which have been noted by numerous scholars of Kyōka's fiction. Charles Inouye writes that Izumi Kyōka was exposed to Christianity in his hometown of Kanazawa, where he attended an English-language school run by foreign missionaries. Noting that themes of torture and redemption frequently appear in his work, Inouye writes that "a Christian sense of blood sacrifice on Kyōka's romantic formulation is considerable." *The Similitude of Blossoms*, 28.

lose themselves completely, they are visited by an itinerant master sculptor, later revealed to be Kanmuri Yazaemon, who deduces that the figure is simply in need of repair, and that its nightly wanderings are the result of resentment over being ignored. By paying due respect to the image, the monks are able to pacify its anger and return the monastery to a state of equilibrium.



Figure 71 - *Kanmuri Yazaemon* (Tanaka Sōeidō version, 1896), frontispiece illustration by Tsutsui Toshimine

Although the episode of the living Niō is almost entirely unrelated to the main plot of *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, Toshimine (with or without Kyōka's consent) decided to feature the incident as the visual centerpiece of his book design, which appears as the single illustration in the Tanaka Sōeidō edition of the work. It is a puzzling picture to choose for an already puzzling text, but one which hints at the central role played by images throughout the narrative, and, indeed, throughout Kyōka's entire body of fiction. To begin, the illustration depicts a living image, or a Buddhist statue that comes to life by transforming into the deity that it represents. Like the sacred images that Kyōka often narrated in his fiction, the statue appears spontaneously, only to take over the narrative by the sheer force of its visual impact. The statue serves as a forerunner for the story's hero, Kanmuri Yazaemon, who takes a broken rebellion and turns it into a victory for the violently oppressed peasants.³⁷ Kanmuri Yazaemon, himself a maker of images, emerges as the hero of the story, while the image that represents him, that of a living statue, is used as the singular illustration to represent the text. At the story's conclusion, Kanmuri Yazaemon retakes the tonsure, becoming the Buddhist priest Hyōtoku. He leaves behind a note for those who seek to arrest him, claiming to have gone off to paradise (*gokuraku*), where he hopes to repair statues of the Buddha for all eternity. Thus, within the sprawling maze that is *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, Buddhist icons emerge as central, unifying images in the work, thanks

³⁷ Tsurumaki Katsuji calls the appearance of Kanmuri Yazaemon an example of "deus ex machina," which he characterizes as a major feature of Kyōka's narratives. In many of Kyōka's stories, a deific being appears suddenly towards the end of the story to save a character from harm. Such beings are often bodhisattvas, or are otherwise related to Buddhist cosmology and iconography. "Kyōka no shojosaku," 67-68.

largely to illustrations that function like guide markers, leading the reader deep into the heart of the text.

Of the Mountains and the Sea: Behind Closed Doors

A number of Kyōka's novels published in the decades following *Kanmuri Yazaemon* continued to feature large woodblock prints with every installment, including works such as *The Black Cat* (*Kuroneko*, 1895), *The Black Lilly* (*Kuroyuri*, 1899), and *A Woman's Lineage*, but in the two decades that followed, full illustration nearly disappeared from Kyōka's work. During the 1910's and 20's, the visual element of Kyōka's publications was largely restricted to the covers and endpapers of his books, but in 1929, after decades of using only minimal illustration, Kyōka published his most extensively illustrated novel of all, *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, in the *Jiji shinpō* newspaper. The work was serialized in 125 installments and featured nearly 300 black-and-white woodblock prints by Komura Settai. Hinode Yumi writes that *Of the Mountains and the Sea* was published during a new "golden age of illustration," when illustrators moved from simply providing *etoki*, or visual explanation of the narrative, to exploring new ways in which images might resonate with text.³⁸ Artists experimented with European-derived styles, from Art Nouveau to impressionism, as they reconfigured the role of illustration in the novel.³⁹ In *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, Settai's illustrations continue to perform the role of guide marker, by which they lend a sense of coherence to a sprawling and oftentimes confusing narrative, but they go beyond their role as simple reading guides by pointing to that which remains beyond the reach of either text or image. Like guide markers to the invisible, Settai's illustrations point to dead ends, hidden spaces, and closed-off rooms, where goddesses and ghosts hide perpetually from prying eyes.

Like *Kanmuri Yazaemon*, *Of the Mountains and the Sea* has long been noted for its seeming lack of coherence as a text, with scholarship on the novel almost universally reaffirming its difficult reputation. In 1971, Shinoda Hajime set the tone for future reception of the work when he remarked, "I don't read this novel as a novel per se, but rather I listen to it, enraptured, as though it were a piece of music... The plot, however, is so unclear that it lies beyond comment."⁴⁰ In recent years, the text has been positively reevaluated by scholars who acknowledge the importance of its illustrations and affirm their central role in structuring the novel.⁴¹ Focusing closely on Settai's images, Ōkoshi Hisako calls *Of the Mountains and the Sea* "an absorbing grand spectacle" and argues that text and illustration interweave to transform the serialized novel into a visual-literary work like a play or a film.⁴² Rereading *Of the Mountains*

³⁸ Hinode Yumi, "Sashie no kinō: shinbun shōsetsu toshite no *Sankai hyōbanki*," *Ronshū Shōwaki no Izumi Kyōka* (Tokyo: Ōfū, 2002), 79-80.

³⁹ See Ozaki Hotsuki, *Sashie no 50-nen*, 16-28.

⁴⁰ Shinoda Hajime, "Izumi Kyōka no ichi," *Subaru*, 4 (1971): 67.

⁴¹ The use of illustration in the novel has been written about at length in at least four different articles, beginning with the aforementioned article by Hinode Yumi, "Sashie no kinō," in 2002. Articles that followed include Tanaka Reigi's "*Shokō sankai hyōbanki kaidai*" and Ōkoshi Hisako's "Settai to *Sankai hyōbanki* no sashie," both included in *Shokō sankai hyōbanki bessatsu kaisetsu*, edited by Tanaka Reigi (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2014), which is a recent publication of the novel in book form including all of its original illustrations. The most recent article is Tominaga Maki's "Monogatari ga tou mono: Izumi Kyōka *Sankai hyōbanki* to Komura Settai no sashie kara," in *Mita kokubun*, 60 (2015): 52-85.

⁴² Ōkoshi, "Settai to *Sankai hyōbanki* no sashie," 59-65.

and the Sea as a work by both Kyōka and Settai, where the reader must be simultaneously aware of text and image, transforms the novel into a unified work of art.



Figure 72 - *Of the Mountains and the Seas* (1929), part 2.1, illustration by Komura Settai

One of the difficulties that emerges when approaching *Of the Mountains and the Sea* through text alone is an abundance of scene and character changes that occur over the course of a nearly 400-page novel. The narrative meanders and shifts suddenly to different locations, occasionally dropping the reader into new plotlines without warning. At first these shifts appear random, but gradually motifs are reintroduced and the narrative begins to weave together into a complex whole. The problem remains, however, that meaningful connections are scattered across a vast space of text and can only be recognized with concentrated effort. Considering that *Of the Mountains and the Sea* was published in the ephemeral form of a newspaper novel, it is unlikely that readers would have had simultaneous access to the entire text even if they aimed to return and reread earlier passages. Fukunaga Takehiko argues that the structure of *Of the Mountains and the Sea* is ultimately too taxing on the reader's memory to be effective.⁴³ He points out that hints introduced at the beginning of the novel are only picked up hundreds of pages later, such as a hanging scroll of a black cat

whose creator is introduced as a central character towards the end of the story. He suggests that if there is a central theme to *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, then that theme is "darkness" (*yami*), or the vast stretches of obscurity that lie in between scenes. Fukunaga's characterization of the novel is fitting, but it does not take into consideration the illustrations included in the original publication, which help the reader to navigate the work's darkness by relying on visual memory in addition to comprehension of the narrative. For example, the scroll of the black cat mentioned only briefly in the text is featured prominently in Settai's illustration, thus making it more likely that the reader will remember it when it is revisited hundreds of pages later. Just as in many of Kyōka's other works, one function of the illustrations in *Of the Mountains and the Sea* is to work like guide markers, leading the reader along a murky narrative path.

The plot of *Of the Mountains and the Sea* begins with novelist Yano Chikau signing himself into a hotel ledger in the hot springs resort town of Wakura on the remote Noto peninsula (in present-day Ishikawa prefecture, near Kyōka's hometown of Kanazawa). The novel starts off in the vein of travel fiction, with Yano describing his lodging, the view from his window, and the routes and geographic features of the peninsula. The story takes a strange turn, however, when a traveling blind masseuse recites the line "Is Chōta there?" (*Chōta oru ka?*), which reminds Yano of an eerie story that he heard as a youth. The narrator then recounts the legend of a logger named Chōta who killed a sacred *tanuki* (raccoon dog) and was subsequently haunted by its female companion, who would call throughout the night at the logger's hut, "Is Chōta there?" Following the tale, the inn becomes an eerie place; a deranged soldier nearly kills the masseuse when he mistakes him for a monk who ran away with his wife and a ghostly woman appears suddenly in the bathing area of a dark hallway. The setting of the story then switches to Tokyo and focuses on Rie, a young dance instructor and close friend of Yano and his wife. In Tokyo, Rie catches a roadside paper doll play (*kami shibai*) run by Anba Kadenji, a wandering entertainer who claims to be spreading the message of the goddess of Hakusan, a sacred mountain near Kanazawa, via his plays. On stage three women appear staring silently into

⁴³ Fukunaga Takehiko, "Sankai hyōbanki saidoku," in *Shokō sankai hyōbanki bessatsu kaisetsu*, 131-132.



Figure 73 - *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 7.3, Settai

a well. In the following scene, three sparrows fly into the well and a boy appears and chases after them as he tries desperately to save them. An old medium then approaches the boy and admonishes him against saving the sparrows, informing him that they embody the wishes of the three women and that saving the birds will cost them their lives, but the boy ignores her warnings and saves the birds, thus condemning the women to certain death.

Back in Wakura, Yano visits a roadside hut with a local driver, Sagara Yanosuke, who tells him that he saw a dismembered head in the silk trees by the wayside. Yano corrects him; what he really saw was the head of a goddess peeking out from the silk flower branches, or otherwise the head of a goddess perched on a kimono rack. Yano then tells Sagara about the goddess Oshirakami, a deity researched by his friend, the scholar Kunimura Ryūkyō, who is based on Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), the famous ethnographer and a friend of Kyōka's. The narrator draws on Yanagita's actual research on the folk deity Oshira and relates that she was originally the goddess Shirayama-hime from Mt. Hakusan and that her faith was spread by wandering female mediums, or *itako*, throughout Tōhoku (the northeastern region of Japan).⁴⁴ According to Yano, Oshirakami was originally the goddess of secrets and hidden things. Images of the goddess are shrouded in layers of thick, concealing kimono and hoods that cover their faces. She has no major places of worship but is venerated in shrines hidden in forests and among thick grasses far away from main roads. As a goddess of the hidden, she is petitioned in connection with things that are normally concealed, such as silk worms in their cocoons, family fortunes, and conjugal relations. When the Oshirakami faith was first propagated, her diviners would carry images of her in the form of dolls and puppets around the country and would perform plays that later evolved into new forms of song, dance, and theater, such as Anba Kadenji's *kami shibai*. After returning to the hotel, Yano climbs to the third floor of the building and looks out of the window where he sees three women staring into a well. The boy from the paper doll play, it turns out, was actually him, and now the three women from his youth have reappeared to haunt him in Wakura.

In the second half of the novel Rie travels to Wakura to visit Yano. Various new storylines are introduced, including one of an actress who sells Chinese lantern plants from a graveyard and another of a failed novelist who panders his manuscripts in Tokyo, before switching to the story of Himenuma Ayaha, a talented writer from Yano's hometown, who once aroused his envy with her brilliant mind and artistic talent, only to disappear into obscurity as an adult. As a young woman, Ayaha was a prodigious artist skilled in Japanese, *kanbun*, European languages, math, calligraphy, literature, and art. She was also so beautiful that the local boys imagined her to be Cleopatra, whose beauty they had heard of in their world history class. During a party at the school year's end, Ayaha spotted a concealed knife in Yano's pocket, and when the other boys decided to fight him, he was forced to run for safety in the snow. Years later Yano heard that Ayaha had come to Tokyo looking to start a career as a novelist, then an actress, then an artist, before holing up in a Buddhist temple in Fukui and studying philosophy. Finally,

⁴⁴ For in-depth discussions of Yanagita's folkloric research and its adaptation by Kyōka in *Of the Mountains and the Sea* see Kobayashi Teruji, "Sankai hyōbanki seiritsu no haikai: fōkuroa no bigaku," *Fukui daigaku kokugo kokubungaku*, 21 (1979): 43-55; Nakanishi Yukiko, "Sankai hyōbanki o yomu tame ni: fōkuroa no kaitei saikō," *Kindai bungaku ronshū*, 29 (2003): 55-66; Abe Ayumi, "Sankai hyōbanki: Minzokugaku to no kakawari," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, 74.9 (2009): 168-174.

Ayaha ended up the wife of a jealous husband and was rumored to be kept locked away in his manor deep in the mountains of central Japan. When Yano and Kadenji try to visit her, she hides behind her koto and a gunshot scares the would-be intruders away. Returning to the present time, Yano and Rie decide to take a trip up into the mountains by car. On their way to the mountains, they pick up a woman running away from a local factory. Later, they encounter a group of violent local loggers on a narrow mountain path. When the loggers attempt to rape Rie, the runaway woman reveals herself to be a messenger of the goddess and whips them into submission before stealing Rie away and chiding Yano for his weakness. The narrative ends with a series of verses that challenges Yano to write a novel as brilliant as a song.

Responding to the final scene of *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, Takakuwa Noriko characterizes the overall structure of the novel as one of successive metaphorical images that are summoned by a song (“Is Chōta there?”), which gradually exposes the narrator’s hidden feelings of inadequacy as his words fail to transcribe the world around him.⁴⁵ Supporting her claims are a number of scenes in the novel that question the power of words to capture reality, while also problematizing the position of authorship. When Rie first arrives in Wakura, Yano requests that she begin transcribing his words for him, thus positing her as the new “writer” of his story. He goes on to relate that when he was first apprenticing as a novelist, he was charged with transcribing the words of his teacher, but that his mentor often corrected his choice of *kanji* characters, thus exposing a rift between the intentions of his spoken language and the meaning captured in written words. Despite the words of his debut novel not being his own, Yano relates that he was thrilled to see “his” text appear in the newspaper the next day, indicating that he felt ownership over words that flowed from his pen, even if he was not their actual author.

Later, Yano attempts to describe a scene that he witnesses at the inn, but regrets that he is unable to completely express what he sees in words alone. In the narrative, Yano happens upon three women staring into washbasins in front of a mirror by a window and a zelkova tree. The image is a variation of the story’s central motif, of three women staring into a well, that has haunted the narrator throughout the text. While Yano is able to describe the basic elements of the scene that appears before him, such as the window and tree, he laments that he is unable to fully capture the mysterious atmosphere of the sight that unfolds before his eyes. He then likens the act of literary description to a magic spell, suggesting the almost supernatural power necessary to transmit reality through text.

If the roots of the zelkova tree crumbled, and before my very eyes turned again into that old well, taking my brush, in an instant, crushing the worms of a magic curse with mortar and pestle, purifying it with liquid lapis lazuli, still I could not name it, not the white dew of the moonlight nor pure water before a full-length mirror. At least I realized what lay within the power of my profession. Even if I ran back right now to the front room, put a pen in Rie’s hand, and objectively related the scene to her, still I could not describe it.⁴⁶

This and other scenes often make *Of the Mountains and the Sea* read like a statement of failure by a novelist who is unable describe what he sees, while the directionless narrative only provides further proof of his powerlessness as an artist. As such, the work might even appear like a

⁴⁵ Takakuwa Noriko, “Izumi Kyōka *Sankai hyōbanki*: an’yu ni yoru tenkai toshite,” *Nihon kindai bungaku*, 32 (1985): 37-48.

⁴⁶ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 24:328.

sprawling enactment of failure, or a masochistic confession by a novelist who discovers himself to be a fraud. However, positing the narrative as an act of failure while idealizing the power of song ignores the other major artistic element of *Of the Mountains and the Sea*—its illustrations. In the original publication, the episode described above is accompanied by an illustration by Settai, which visualizes the scene that the author attempts to describe in words. Whether the illustration is successful in fully capturing the intended atmosphere of the text is impossible to say, but the setup of the image, with three women standing with their backs turned to the viewer, staring desolately into washbasins as steam rises in the foreground, certainly evokes an atmosphere of mystery, which is only heightened when compared to previous illustrations of similarly enigmatic moments throughout the narrative.



Figure 74 - *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 22.2, Settai

From the beginning, *Of Mountains and the Sea* was billed as an illustrated novel by the *Jiji shinpō*, which advertised the work as a “meeting of text and image... worthy of special attention.”⁴⁷ In separate articles, Kyōka and Settai related that they worked particularly closely over a period of five months as they created the words and images of the novel. In an author’s note, Kyōka wrote that Settai was “expending tremendous energy” on the illustrations, as he accompanied Kyōka on research trips to observe visual materials for the novel’s images.⁴⁸ Settai later noted that Kyōka dragged him all over Tokyo in search of a *kami shibai* so that he could properly illustrate the chapters in which it appeared.⁴⁹ Settai was entirely unfamiliar with *kami shibai*, which was already a dying art form by 1929,⁵⁰ and so was unable to imagine what it was supposed to look like. The pair eventually found an example in Shiba, Tokyo, where Kyōka also had a friend who worked as a dance instructor. During their visit to the instructor’s house, Kyōka and Settai came across a number of other images that that would appear in the novel, such as a miniature box garden and a folding screen pasted with prints of kabuki actors. Settai was unable

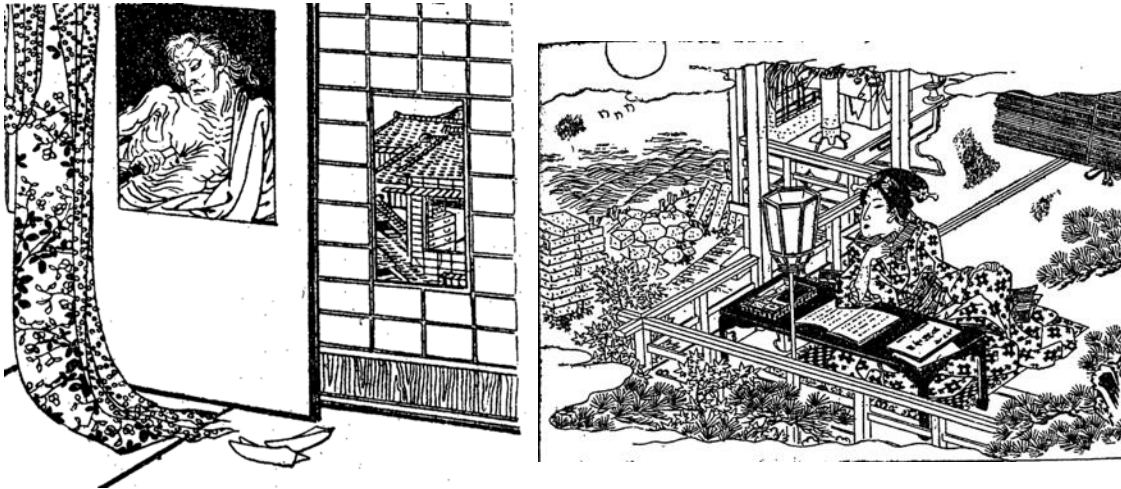
⁴⁷ See Tanaka Reigi, “*Shokō Sankai hyōbanki* kaidai,” 11.

⁴⁸ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:650.

⁴⁹ Komura Settai, “*Sankai hyōbanki* no koto,” *Nihonbashi himonochō* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1990), 88-91. Originally printed in volume three of *Kyōka zenshū geppō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1940-1942).

⁵⁰ The *kami shibai* featured in *Sankai hyōbanki* is not the same as a well-known form that became popular in the Shōwa period, in which performers narrated stories to a series of still images, but was rather an already antiquated medium using paper dolls with articulated heads and hands on portable stages, which possibly included mirrors. See Shimizu Jun, “*Kami shibai ka suru sekai: Sankai hyōbanki ron*” in *Ronshū Shōwaki Izumi Kyōka*, 61-65.

to accompany Kyōka to the inn in Wakura, where the majority of the novel was set, but even then Kyōka provided him with postcards and pamphlets to give him an idea of how the location should visually appear.⁵¹ Looking back on the experience of illustrating *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, Settai wrote that he would meet with Kyōka nearly every day to show him his latest prints and that he was regularly provided with advance manuscripts in order to ensure that he had the maximum amount of time to complete his work. Kyōka, apparently pleased with the results, wrote that it was his “great pleasure, day and night” to look over Settai’s illustrations.⁵² Considering the author’s constant involvement in the illustration of his text, it becomes likely that the images played a key role in his composition of the novel.



Figures 75 and 76 - *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 5.8, 20.3, Settai

In addition to lending a sense of coherence to the narrative, Settai’s illustrations for *Of the Mountains and the Sea* connect Kyōka’s work to a larger pictorial universe, in part by reproducing the kinds of popular images that Kyōka often referenced in his fiction. Most prominently, Settai’s illustrations feature a reproduced image of the *onibaba* of Adachigahara by Yoshitoshi, as well as a reproduction of the opening illustration for *Fake Murasaki, Country Genji*, as originally drawn by Kunisada. The first print, of the *onibaba*, appears in Rie’s home in Karasumori, where it is found pasted onto a folding screen (*byōbu*), in a form of decorative art known as *hari-maze-e* (paste-and-mix pictures). Settai’s illustration is clearly based on a real print by Yoshitoshi, which depicts Onoe Kikugorō V (1844-1903) playing the *onibaba* in the kabuki play *The Lonely House* (*Hitotsuya*).⁵³ In the text, Kyōka goes into a lengthy aside after introducing the image, in a passage that highlights his passion for the visual culture of the Edo period, as well as his collector’s zeal for woodblock-printed art. As the narrator points out, the image pasted onto the screen is not an original woodblock print, but is in fact a lithographic reproduction of an older image by either Yoshitoshi or Chikanobu, likely included as a foldout frontispiece in a picture-book, or as a cheap bonus image in an unrelated publication. The

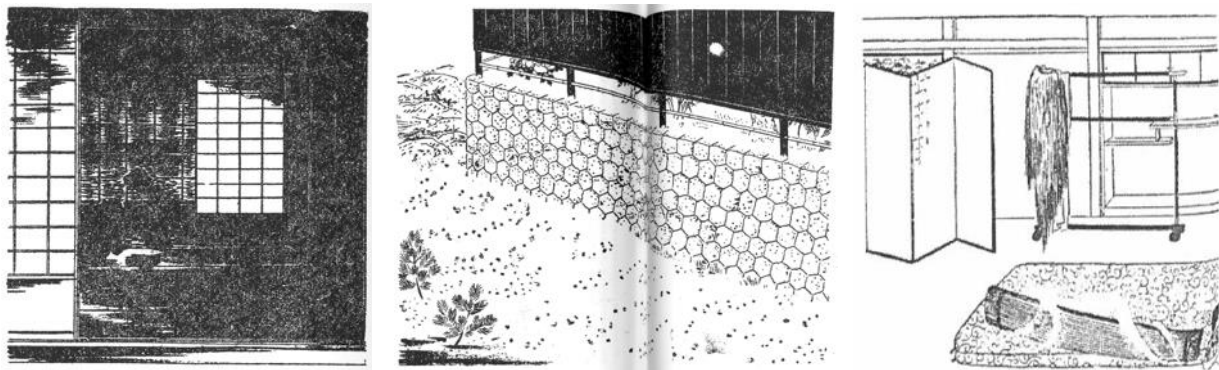
⁵¹ Tanaka Reigi shows that the Kōsenkan in Kyōka’s story was based on the Wakazakikan in Wakura, where the author stayed before writing the novel. He compares photographs from contemporary pamphlets and postcards with Settai’s illustrations and finds striking similarities between the two. See “*Sankai hyōbanki seiritsukō: ryōkan, tetsudō, ido nozoki*,” *Kyōka kenkyū*, 9 (2000): 54-67.

⁵² Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:650.

⁵³ Tominaga, “*Monogatari ga tou mono*,” 82.

original image of the *onibaba* was once owned by Rie's father, an avid collector of picture-books, who made it his goal to acquire one hundred first edition woodblock prints by the end of his lifetime. His print of the *onibaba* was taken by a lover, who used it as a talisman after being chased by a will-o'-wisp into a real "lonely house" in Asakusa, where she spent the night clinging to the image for protection. Another illustration, appearing later in the novel, reproduces a print by Kunisada, the opening scene from *Fake Murasaki, Country Genji*, in which an Edo-period version of Murasaki Shikibu is depicted at her writing desk with pen in hand. In *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, the image is used to represent Ayaha, the female polymath from Kanazawa, whose true form is never visualized in the illustrations. As such, Settai's illustration stands in for the absence of the story's central hidden figure, at the same time that it draws the visual world of Kunisada's prints directly into Kyōka's text.

Following its serialization, Kyōka began editing *Of the Mountains and the Sea* for publication as a standalone volume. Existing manuscripts and advertisements indicate that a collected book was firmly in the works, and yet the final product was never realized.⁵⁴ Hinode Yumi suggests that this is because, without its illustrations, the text-only manuscript could no longer hold the narrative together.⁵⁵ Tominaga Maki similarly argues that Settai's images became an essential part of Kyōka's novel; she finds that they perform a number of important functions, including establishing motifs, helping to navigate scene and time changes, creating atmosphere, and foreshadowing future events.⁵⁶ Tominaga argues that one of the most important functions of the illustrations, however, is their ability to control what is shown and what is hidden from the reader, for by obscuring certain visual details, the images are able to hint at secrets that lie hidden in the narrative. In his prints, Settai never portrays the main characters of the story, as he instead focuses on depicting eerie landscapes, empty rooms, and dark, hidden spaces. While his images can help to clarify the text, they also reinforce the reader's awareness of its hidden elements by focusing on obfuscating structures, such as half-closed doors, overhanging roofs, screens, and fences. Perspectives tend to land on corners and closed passages while views are obscured by swathes of dense black ink.



Figures 77, 78, and 79 - *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 2.2, 15.2, 15.3, Settai

⁵⁴ First pointed out by Fukunaga, "*Sankai hyōbanki saidoku*," 136-138. Later in Tanaka, "*Shokō Sankai hyōbanki kaidai*," 11-12; Hinode, "*Sashie no kinō*," 91-92.

⁵⁵ Hinode, "*Sashie no kinō*," 91-2.

⁵⁶ Tominaga, "*Monogatari ga tou mono*," 62-63.

One of Settai's most effective optical illusions in *Of the Mountains and the Sea* occurs towards the beginning of the novel, in a scene at the Kōsenkan inn in Wakura. In the text, Yano relates an eerie experience that occurred near the hotel's baths to a blind masseuse:

It happened just before dinner when I was heading for the baths. I knew they were around here somewhere, but I had just arrived, so I wasn't ready to get naked quite just yet. In the hallway, I spotted a wash basin and a full-length mirror with steam hovering over it, so I assumed I was close. When I looked up, I saw a pale white figure who looked like hazy snow, with full breasts and hips, standing straight ahead. I happened upon her so suddenly that I blinked my eyes before I could straighten my thoughts, but when I opened them all I could see was a long, soft elbow wrapped around the door as it shut with a bang. The women's bath was in front of me, halfway down the hallway, directly across from the washbasins.⁵⁷

The hazy apparition of a snowy woman disappears in the blink of an eye, in a hallway filled with fog and mirrors, suggesting that her appearance is nothing more than an optical illusion. She is the first of many apparitions to disappear in this manner, vanishing immediately upon being glimpsed, as she flees into a hidden space that remains permanently out of view.

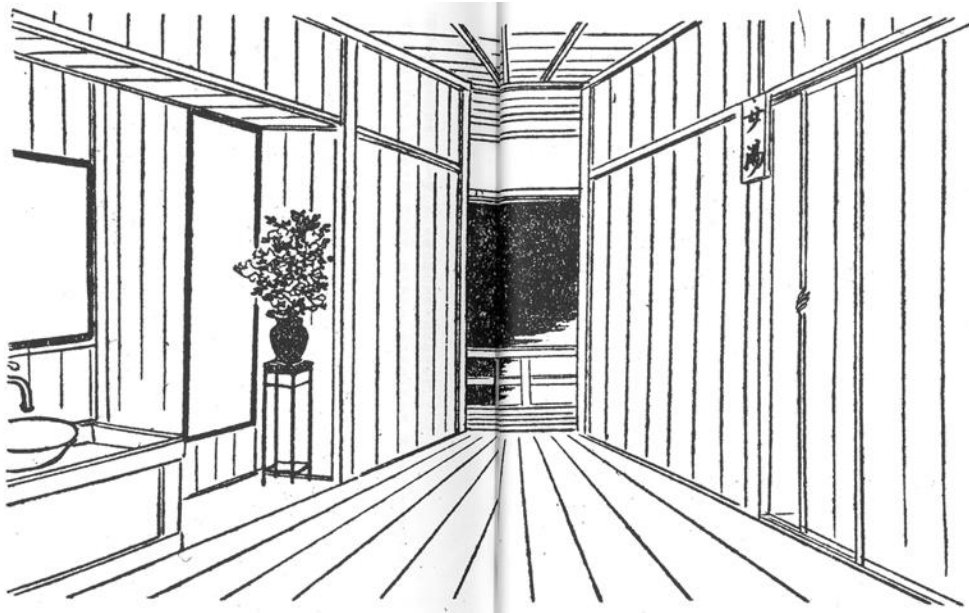
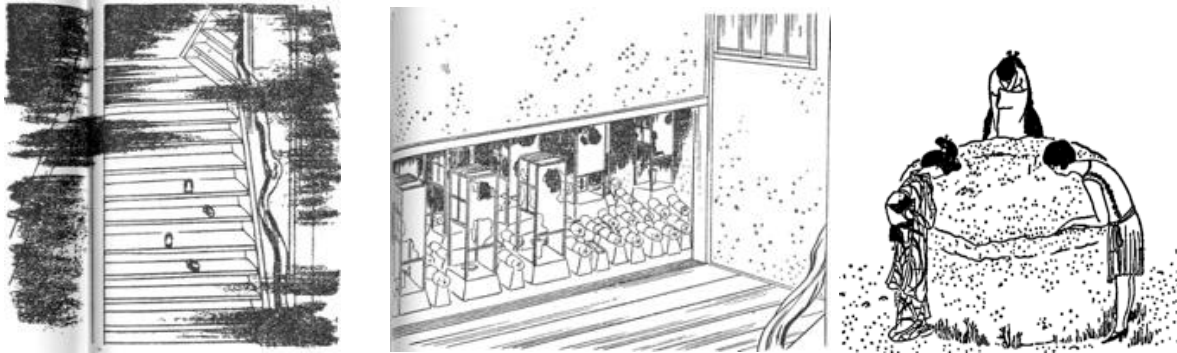


Figure 80 - *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 1.3, Settai

At first sight, Settai's illustration of the scene in the hallway appears to depict only an empty space rendered in linear perspective. On the left side of the hallway are a washbasin, a full-length mirror, and a potted plant. The hallway ends at a veranda leading outside, beyond which are the darkness of night and a swath of white mist. To the right of the hallway is a sign for the women's bath (*onna yu*), and—only when one looks closely—a barely opened door with four tiny fingers wrapped around the edge. The image might initially appear empty as it draws

⁵⁷ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 24:16.

the reader's sight towards the dark abyss at the end of the hallway, but a close inspection reveals that the viewer is not alone. The half-hidden fingers on the wall break up the straight lines of the perspectival arrangement and hint at an unseen presence that lingers over the image. One might imagine that her reflection appears in the mirrors directly across the hallway from the open bath, but the print leaves the mirrors empty, thus preserving the character's invisibility. Hiding in plain sight, the apparition teases the viewer with her presence, but stays permanently and comfortably hidden in a space beyond visual access.



Figures 81, 82, and 83 - *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 1.2, 11.3, 11.5, Settai

Later in the narrative, Yano comes across a series of haunting illusions, whose eerie quality is accentuated by Settai's enigmatic illustrations. Back at the Kōsenkan in Wakura, Yano notices a staircase leading up to the third floor of the inn for the first time. In the illustration of the scene described in the text, Settai depicts an empty staircase swathed in black mist and two pairs of discarded sandals, hinting at a ghostly presence waiting farther up. As he climbs the stairs, Yano passes by a half-opened closet full of old pillows and torn paper lanterns and imagines that he sees a woman sleeping inside. In the illustration, Settai provides a view into the opened space of the closet, but he omits even a hint of the hiding woman as he obscures the space with a clutter of pillows and lanterns. The opened room in the illustration invites the viewer's gaze to search for the hidden figure mentioned in the text, but offers only an obstructed view, with no apparition in sight.⁵⁸ When Yano reaches the top of the staircase, he looks out of the window and spots three women staring into a well, which reminds him of an almost identical scene that he witnessed as a child. Surprised to once again find himself standing before the same view, he feels as though he has entered a dream or a different time, leading him to remark that "human knowledge is like peeking through a tear in a sliding paper door."⁵⁹ Yano wonders what the women are looking at, but his view into the well is obscured by its edge.

Throughout *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, various possibilities of what might lie at the bottom of the well are suggested, including the realm of the dead, ghosts, the womb, the mother as archetype, or the dragon palace at the bottom of the sea (another recurring motif in the novel),

⁵⁸ Tominaga calls this a *damashi-e*, or trick picture. The viewer might stare at it and try to spot the hidden figure, but she never appears. "Monogatari ga tou mono," 62.

⁵⁹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 24:162.

all of which are plausible, even if a definitive answer remains out of reach.⁶⁰ After spotting the trio for a second time, Yano feels compelled to look into the well for himself, but he finds nothing other than rocks and grass scattered on a shallow bottom. He remarks, “What were those three standing here looking at... Ha ha! A view of three women looking into a well, that’s it, that’s what they were showing me!”⁶¹ The tangle of gazes becomes further knotted as Yano realizes that he was not actually looking at the women out of his own volition, but was rather being shown a scene of others looking at something that remained out of his view. The specific contents of the well are less important than his attempt to follow the gaze of others into an inaccessible space. Whatever mystery lies within, whether in connection to the dead, ghosts, or dragon kings, the image becomes a symbol for that which remains hidden from human knowledge.



Figure 84 - *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 21.3, Settai

Hiding at the center of *Of Mountains and the Sea* is Ayaha, a figure who appears and disappears in the space of a single chapter towards the end of the story, but whose memory haunts Yano’s entire existence as a novelist. Kawamura Jirō compares Ayaha to a figure “behind the black curtain of a play,” or one who “everyone is always talking about but who never shows herself.”⁶² Even though Ayaha is briefly featured in the text, she is never directly shown in the illustrations.⁶³ Instead, she is figured as Cleopatra in a mock Egyptian image and hinted at by illustrations of her sleeves and the hem of her kimono. In Yano’s childhood account, Ayaha becomes identified with Oshira, the hidden goddess, when she decides to play a game of *berobero no kami*, in which paper is twisted around a stick and used as a divinatory wand. Afterwards, Ayaha places a white cloth over her face, which gives Yano the impression that she has transformed into a spirit. These images relate directly to Yanagita Kunio’s research into

the goddess Oshira, whose figure he compares to a *berobero no kami* and a wooden figure shrouded in cloth.⁶⁴ In *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, Yano borrows directly from Yanagita’s research to describe Oshira:

She’s wrapped in seven layers, eight layers, ten layers, twelve layers, and on top of that cloth or silk. As for the body of the goddess, I can only relate what scholars have told me of their research. Simply speaking, one takes a piece of wood, shaves it down, draws simple eyes and a nose and, on top of that, just as I was saying before, wraps numerous layers of cloth around the wooden figure. When you look at her, all you see is a hood draped deep over her head, down to

⁶⁰ Takakuwa Noriko suggests the realm of the dead and ghosts, “*Sankai hyōbanki*: ido nozoki ga imi suru mono,” *Bungakkai kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 30.7 (1985): 131-134. Saitō Ai concurs and adds the realm of the mother and the feminine, “Takai no chikara to kotoba no chikara no kikkō: Izumi Kyōka *Sankai hyōbanki* o yomu,” *Today ronkyū*, 31 (1994): 58-59. Hinode suggests that they are looking either at their own fate or into the realm of the dragon king, “Sashie no kinō,” 86.

⁶¹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 24:196.

⁶² Kawamura Jirō, *Hakusan no mizu: Kyōka o meguru* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2000), 285. Quoted in Shimizu Jun, “Shōsetsuka no manazashi no kanata ni: shisen no drama toshite no Izumi Kyōka *Sankai hyōbanki*,” *Monogatari kenkyū*, 10 (2010): 11.

⁶³ The other two figures who are never depicted are Yano and Rie, the main characters, which only reinforces Ayaha’s centrality to the narrative when she is likewise left out of the illustrations.

⁶⁴ See Tanemura Suehiro, “Sannin no onna,” *Izumi Kyōka shūsei* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1996), 10: 473.

her sleeves. A cord of cotton is tied neatly around her neckband so that her face is just slightly visible while still being kept hidden... From the beginning the goddess had a hidden form, so whatever exquisite craft might lie beneath, whether drawn by brush or carved by knife, however majestic or elegant, her mysterious visage remains unknown.⁶⁵



Figures 85, 86, and 87 - *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 10.10, 21.4, Settai

In *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, Oshira and Ayaha never appear directly in the present world of the narrative, but are instead referenced in stories told by other characters. Similarly, in Settai's illustrations they never appear in their true forms, but are rather channeled through proxies or images hidden behind obstructions. When Oshira debuts in the text, she is described as a severed head, then a head in a silk flower tree, then a head on a kimono rack, but all of these forms are only conjectures based on a brief glimpse of her figure in the darkness. In Settai's illustrations, Oshira most often appears as a bundle of cloth, a silhouette, or a crumpled piece of paper flying in the wind, all figures that connect to the image of a goddess whose true form remains covered under layers of kimono. During Yano's tale of his past, Ayaha nearly enters the frame of the illustration, but all that is depicted are her sleeves and the divinatory paper wand, each one resembling the shrouded goddess Oshira in their formlessness. In the illustration that follows, Ayaha's sleeves, sash, and hem are shown swishing backwards as she dashes out of the frame of a sliding paper door, but her figure is eerily devoid of shape, suggesting that nothing actually lies beneath the kimono.

In the final image of Ayaha, the scene is established from Yano's point of view as he looks into the mansion where she is being held captive by a jealous husband. In the illustration, the walls of Ayaha's home have been removed so that the reader can see directly into her room, but now she hides in the middle of the open space behind a standing koto, with only bits of her hands, black hair, and the hem of her kimono hinting at her existence. The image, once again, accentuates the hiddenness of the story's central figure, who can never be seen in the full light of day. It is one more illustration of a hiding place in a novel about hidden spaces, where text and image work together to emphasize the impossibility of a clear view.

⁶⁵ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 143-144.

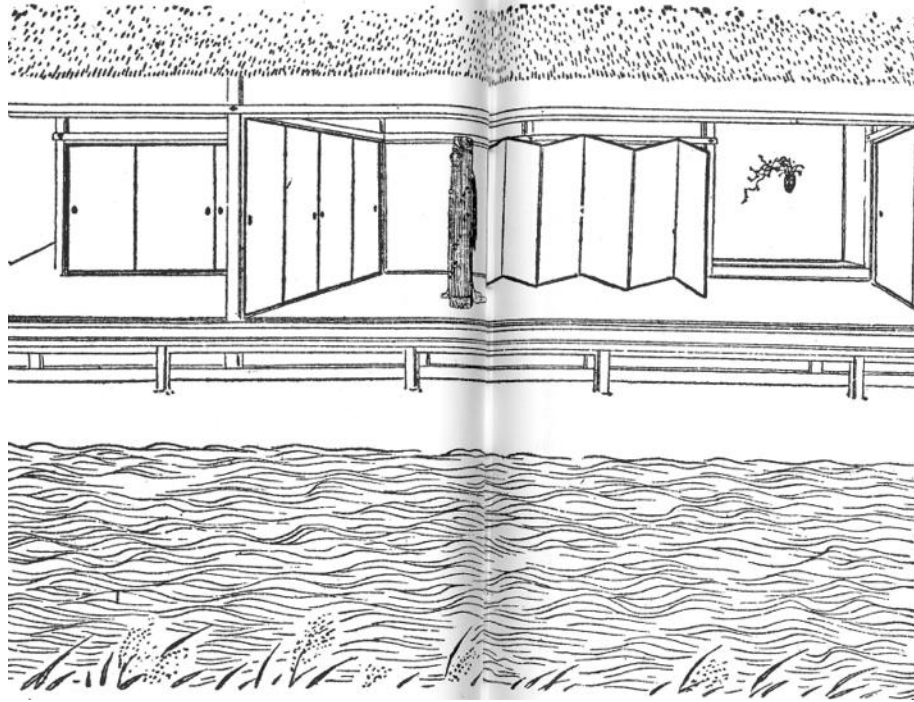


Figure 88 – *Of the Mountains and the Sea*, 21.9, Settai

Fading Out: *Pale Plum Blossoms*

One of Kyōka's final novels, *Pale Plum Blossoms*, was serialized simultaneously in the *Tokyo nichichi shinbun* and *Osaka nichichi shinbun* in forty-one installments in 1937, with each chapter featuring a small black-and-white print by Kaburaki Kiyokata. Kiyokata, a longtime friend of Kyōka's, began his career as an illustrator of popular fiction, but left his work in illustration behind after becoming a respected figure in the world of exhibition painting, beginning in 1907. Thus, when Kiyokata agreed to illustrate *Pale Plum Blossoms*, the *Tokyo nichichi shinbun* ran an advertisement boasting that a hero from the world of *Nihonga* had agreed to illustrate a novel set to appear in their pages. The advertisement claimed that the upcoming work would unite "the mystery of dazzling twill-like prose with clear and exceptionally delicate brushwork," billing the story as a meeting between the text and image of two masters of their art forms.⁶⁶ The resulting work is a frail dance between words and images that suggest the bygone world of Meiji letters. Kyōka's words create poetic resonances that float freely between time and place, but they do little to lead the reader through an oftentimes patchwork story with a vague narrative arc. Kiyokata's matching black-and-white illustrations are airy and understated, full of white space and thin, delicate lines, which often evoke more than they explain. Together, text and image weave a "twill-like" image of ghosts of the Meiji era, summoning their forms from an invisible world, but then leaving them as pale apparitions on the page.

⁶⁶ For a full transcription of the advertisement's text, see Hinode Yumi, "Kiyokata egaku *Usukōbai*: Izumi-san no monogatari," *Bungaku*, 5.4 (2014): 14.

Pale Plum Blossoms relates an account of the early days of the Ken'yūsha and centers on the troubled relationship between Tsujimachi Itoshichi (an alias for Kyōka) and Okyō, who is based on Kitada Usurai, a female member of the Ken'yūsha, who passed away shortly after her literary debut. In the story, Okyō is an aspiring novelist and fan of Itoshichi's fiction, but she is embarrassed by the senior writer when he publishes a mocking rebuttal to her essay on the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters. Another Ken'yūsha member, Yano Genkō, falls in love with Okyō, and so Itoshichi approaches their mutual mentor, Uesugi Eizan (modeled on Ozaki Kōyō), to request that he mediate a marriage proposal between the two. At the climax of the story, Okyō visits Itoshichi to inform him that she has declined the marriage proposal and that, moreover, she is deeply hurt that he would attempt to pass her off to a friend despite her deep feelings of love for him. She has decided to accept another marriage proposal from Nozuchi Seirin (modeled on artist Kajita Hanko), whom she knows that Itoshichi loathes, apparently as part of her revenge. Itoshichi is thunderstruck by the revelation, suggesting that he too secretly loved Okyō, even though their love for each other is concealed by their bitter rivalry until the end of the story.

Much of the prior research on *Pale Plum Blossoms* has focused on the revelation of unrequited love between Itoshichi and Okyō, particularly because of the real-life counterparts on which they are modeled, but as one scholar points out, their hidden feelings are only revealed at the end of a story that consists mostly of anecdotes about the literary environment of Meiji Tokyo.⁶⁷ As with the other works covered in this chapter, *Pale Plum Blossoms*' narrative can be difficult to follow and often reads more like a patchwork of unrelated stories than a narrative sequence. Kawamura Jirō acknowledges the difficulty of the text by remarking that, at first sight, the "connection from scene to scene is uncertain" and "the narrative structure appears incoherent."⁶⁸ He then claims that the sum of the work is greater than its parts by comparing the chapters to a collection of individual stars that eventually reveals a constellation, but the question remains of how closely one must look in order to discern this hidden pattern. Yoshida Seiichi concurs that there appears to be a grand scheme tying the chapters together, but he argues that the overall structure of the novel is simply too complicated and that its finer details are not likely to be grasped upon a single reading.⁶⁹ As such, both scholars posit an overriding visual structure to the text, which must be examined closely in order to coalesce into a recognizable form.

As with a number of Kyōka's other novels, *Pale Plum Blossoms* features illustrations in every chapter, but whereas the prints in earlier works helped to navigate changes in space and time, Kiyokata's images are more likely to accentuate poetic moments. His illustrations are understated and depict characters engaged in simple actions, such as walking, browsing a bookshelf, adjusting a kimono, or simply staring. A few images include enough background detail to create a sense of space, but most of the backgrounds are simply accents, featuring bits of cloud, flowers, rattan blinds, or even nothing at all. Hinode Yumi points out that there are subtle motifs in Kiyokata's images, particularly plum blossoms and maple leaves, both of which are symbols of seasonal ephemerality in traditional Japanese arts.⁷⁰ She shows that maple leaves are connected in both text and image to the characters of Usurai and Higuchi Ichiyō, the latter of whom appears briefly in the text, and that they symbolize the shortness of their lives. In the

⁶⁷ Satō Hiroyuki, "Izumi Kyōka *Usukōbai* ron: Usurai to no kankei o chūshin ni," *Kokubungaku shiron*, 13 (1997): 101.

⁶⁸ Kawamura Jirō, *Ginga to jigoku* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1973), 77-78. Quoted in Shimizu Jun, "Izumi Kyōka *Usukōbai* o yomu," *Ronju*, 15 (2001): 38.

⁶⁹ Yoshida Seiichi, "Saishū sakuhinshū *Usukōbai*," *Bungaku*, 51.6 (1983): 51.

⁷⁰ Hinode Yumi, "Kiyokata egaku *Usukōbai*," 24.

illustrations, Okyō often wears an *obi* sash with a pattern of maple leaves, while in the single image where Ichiyō is shown, she is paired with a sketch of a maple leaf as she emerges from the frame of a door. The plum blossoms, on the other hand, often appear together with one of the story's more conspicuous motifs, or that of a phantom strand of fragrant black hair that brushes



Figure 89 - *Pale Plum Blossoms*, installment #19, illustration by Kiyokata

against various characters' cheeks or wraps around their fingers. In one of Kiyokata's illustrations of such a scene, a curving line representing a strand of hair loops around Okyō's finger, giving the artist an opportunity to emphasize the delicateness of a single, black line. Together, these subtle hints indicate that *Pale Plum Blossoms* is not so much about a structure or a coherent narrative as it is about subtlety and light touches, befitting of its title. The newspaper advertisement proclaiming a meeting of "dazzling twill-like prose" and "exceptionally delicate brushwork" was thus an accurate description of a work held together by thin, twill-like strings of poetic sentiment.

Scholar Hasegawa Izumi suggests that it is not just poetry that holds *Pale Plum Blossoms* together, but that the image of Okyō, featured prominently in the illustrations, is responsible for much of the text's emotional appeal. Hasegawa provides tantalizing evidence of how the novel might have been approached in an earlier time via his personal account of having read the work in its original serialization as a middle school student, long before he knew who Izumi Kyōka even was.⁷¹ Surprisingly, he recalls no difficulty in comprehending the narrative as a young boy, but rather claims that he was deeply moved by the story. As he goes on to describe the work, however, he refers almost exclusively to Kiyokata's illustrations, rather than Kyōka's text, and recalls his eagerness to see the new print in every morning's newspaper. He writes that the illustrations "inlaid [his] youthful mind with dreams of Okyō," and that he became so attached to her black-and-white figure in the newspaper that he was severely disappointed to see her in color in the frontispiece of the book version.⁷² Hasegawa's account points out that even when the text meanders through series of seemingly unrelated stories, the illustrations eventually return to Okyō as a central image that gives order to the work.

When Izumi Kyōka wrote *Pale Plum Blossoms*, many of the figures who appeared in the novel had been dead for nearly four decades, including Usurai, Ichiyō, and Kōyō. Looking to the past, his account recalls their ghosts by mixing the dignified register of *kanbun-chō* (Chinese-esque writing) with Edo style humor, alternating between the feel of an official history and a long inside joke. The novel opens:

Kōjimachi, Kudanshita—Nakazaka... According to *Musashi Stirrups*, *The Sands of Edo*, and *Dappled Fawn*...⁷³ actually no, that doesn't really matter. It was here, the famed birthplace of Meiji era letters, the Ken'yūsha, the Mt. Liang fortress of

⁷¹ Hasegawa Izumi, "Izumi Kyōka chō *Usukōbai* (Kaisō, kono issatsu, 21)," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū*, 17.1 (1972): 160-161.

⁷² Hasegawa, "Izumi Kyōka chō *Usukōbai*," 161.

⁷³ The first three words are toponyms, referring to the northwest area of central Tokyo where the Ken'yūsha was established, while the three titles are references to illustrated topographies of the Edo period.

the literary world,⁷⁴ where individual members of the constellation came together to form a fortified position, and where, from high battlements, the banner of *Rubbish Heap Library*⁷⁵ waved in the wind. A place of editing, of work of the spirit and cultivation of the brush, where flowers were made to blossom and twill-weaving mist wafted through the air.⁷⁶

Okyō enters the narrative of *Pale Plum Blossoms* as a promising member of the Ken'yūsha at a time when Japan was experiencing a renaissance of women's letters. Ichiyō, the main figure associated with this movement, also appears briefly in a flashback as a writer already enjoying critical acclaim, but Okyō is introduced as a struggling talent unable to find her place in the literary establishment. Like Ichiyō, the real-life counterpart of Okyō (Usurai) passed away at a young age after prolonged illness, but unlike the more well-known author, she died before she had a chance to leave a lasting mark on the world of Japanese letters. In *Pale Plum Blossoms*, Okyō stages her act of disappearance by entering the novel as a colorful and vividly described character before fading out, in both text and illustration, by the story's end.

When Okyō is first introduced in the narrative of *Pale Plum Blossoms*, every article of her clothing, hair, and makeup is carefully detailed, recalling the kind of close-up description that was a hallmark of Kōyō and the Ken'yūsha's literary style. The narrator describes the contents of her clothing as follows:

A bunkin takashimada bun,⁷⁷ a flat silver hairpin with a circular ornament in high relief... an oversized striped kimono, another layer of kimono of *yūzen* silk, a wide-length *obi* sash of blue yarn brocade... a light pink silk handkerchief, a decorative collar with bellflowers, violets, and geese woven with silver thread...⁷⁸



Figure 90 - *Pale Plum Blossoms*, #5, Kiyokata

Kyōka's colorful description of Okyō reads like a visual analysis of a *bijinga*, recalling the author's technique for describing geisha in stories written decades earlier. Kiyokata's tiny, black-and-white illustration, on the other hand, is unable to match the color or descriptive density of the text, as the artist appears to struggle to find a visual foothold in the opening scenes of the story. Kiyokata's illustrations draw closer to the text, however, in later scenes, as Kyōka's descriptions of Okyō became more distant and colorless. Okyō reappears in both text and illustration in a later chapter, this time during a visit to Shinobazu in Ueno to pray to Benzaiten, the goddess of

letters and wisdom, to help her establish her career as a novelist. The description of her dress is

⁷⁴ The allusion is a reference to the bandit stronghold of the 108 outlaw heroes in the Ming Dynasty era novel *The Water Margin*.

⁷⁵ *Rubbish Heap Library*, or *Garakuta bunko*, was a literary magazine that served as the flagship publication of the Ken'yūsha in their early years. It was started by Kōyō and others while they were still in college and its title reflects their humorous approach to literature.

⁷⁶ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 24:432.

⁷⁷ The *bunkin takashimada* is a variation of the *takashimada*, itself a variation of the *shimada*. It is the tallest version of an already elaborate bun and conveys the elegance of the wearer. It is today mostly reserved for wedding brides.

⁷⁸ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 24:443.

shortened to a single line of text, “a girl with a *shimada* bun, a purple Japanese umbrella, a black velvet collar worn deep, and the nape of her neck showing white as she bows her head in prayer.”⁷⁹ The narrator then describes white flecks of snow that fall onto her loose strands of hair



Figure 91 - *Pale Plum Blossoms*, #15, Kiyokata

and then fly away in the wind as though with wings. The snow “gathers then disappears, flits softly then disappears, jumps... on her bangs, on her eyebrows.” Drawing on the evanescent quality of Kyōka’s description, Kiyokata uses light brushwork to depict tiny flecks of snow, thin wooden shafts on the underside of the umbrella, loose strands of hair at Okyō’s temples, and her thin fingers brought together in prayer. As Kyōka’s description lightens in tone, Kiyokata’s illustrations of Okyō increasingly emphasize the more delicate qualities of the text.

Okyō returns again towards the end of *Pale Plum Blossoms*, just before the climax of the story, and is given an even more nuanced expression of lightness in the illustration. In the narrative, Itoshichi is late for an appointment in which the marriage arrangement between Okyō and Yano will be decided. He stops on a bridge by the Sumida River and looks up at the second floor of a restaurant where Okyō waves a light blue fan from behind rattan blinds, but as he looks up he notices that she lets the fan slip over the veranda and into the waves of the river. This time the narrator describes Okyō in less than a sentence as wearing a light summer kimono with a pattern of *yūgao* (bottle gourd flowers) and having a white face with eyebrows. As the fan drops, Okyō’s pale face is echoed by the white sails of a boat that passes down the river. The light blue fan is picked up by the wind, turned briefly into the petal of a *yūgao* flower (recalling the pattern of Okyō’s kimono) and then swept away by the waves of the river, where it appears bluer than the water. In the black-and-white illustration of the scene, Kiyokata is naturally unable to replicate the colors described in Kyōka’s text, but he matches the evanescent quality of the description with a delicate composition. The space of the illustration is vague, with veranda, bridge, water, and railing occupying uncertain positions in relation to one another. The

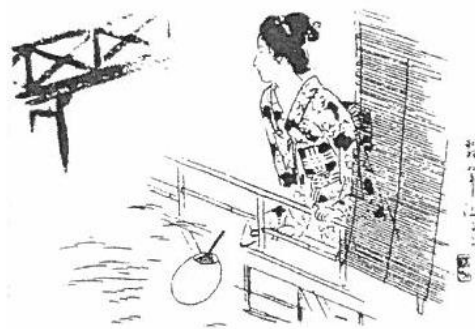


Figure 92 - *Pale Plum Blossoms*, #35, Kiyokata

background is completely white, with a few lines indicating the presence of waves towards the bottom of the image. In the distance is a shadow of a bridge that appears to be floating in empty space. Okyō leans lightly over the veranda as she looks out into the distance. A slightly curved rattan blind, illustrated with dozens of thin lines, covers part of the veranda, through which her sleeve and the bow of her sash can be seen. The fingers of one hand grasp at the veranda’s railing, the others are propped on a lower level, and the fan drops lightly away from her.

⁷⁹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 24:473.



Figure 93 - *Pale Plum Blossoms* (Chūōkōronsha version, 1939), frontispiece by Kiyokata

Kiyokata reimagines the scene of Okyō dropping the fan in a multi-colored woodblock frontispiece for the book version of *Pale Plum Blossoms* (1939), indicating its central position in the visual arc of the story. In the frontispiece, the background is even more washed-out than in the newspaper print and the setting of the scene appears even emptier. This time Okyō is depicted inside of a frame while the bridge and water appear as background on the outside. The river is represented by a handful of curved black lines against white, but no blue, and the ghostly bridge is depicted in what looks like washed-out, grayish water color. Within the frame, the only hint of a background is the rattan blind and a tiny part of the railing, whereas the area behind Okyō is now a swath of gray shadow. Okyō's kimono is now brilliantly blue and shows a clear design of *yūgao* flowers. The layered sashes of her *obi* are bright red and purple and her hair is adorned with a blue string, yellow comb, and white flower. Her face, by contrast, is pallid and eerily expressionless. Her eyes, highlighted by pink rouge, look away at nothing, and her bright red lips are pursed closed. Her hand, having just dropped a bluish-green fan, is poised awkwardly in a half-open gesture. The effect is one of fading, of letting everything drop away into the vacuum of space. As the final illustration of Kyōka's fiction, the effect is chilling. Like an icon to a former age, Okyō's image lingers, fragile as a ghost, while the world around her fades into the gray-white background of the page.

In the middle of *Pale Plum Blossoms*, Kyōka takes a break from his tragic narrative to tell a joke that reveals his insight into the limits of language, as well as his understanding of the difference between text and image. In a playful aside, he suggests that he has always attempted to draw pictures with his words, even while realizing the impossibility of ever capturing the images that elude his text. In the story, the narrator has just finished describing Okyō kneeling in prayer before burning candles in the temple in Ueno. Seemingly unsatisfied with the vivacity of his description, the narrator adds:

We like to joke among us writers. Here it would be interesting to print a in red ink. It looks like a silent petition, the faintly moving lips of a young girl. Black 丷 丷 don't exactly look like quivering eyebrows. Even if they do, a single 丷 is too short and looks wrong. It's a waste of paper, but you could leave a 「 」 in white.⁸⁰

Within a humorous aside, Kyōka reveals the depth of his interest in tracing images through language. As a writer, his text forms itself around pictures, which provide the underlying structure for his narratives, as his words reach perpetually towards images that have disappeared from sight. As demonstrated in the same text, however, Kyōka's journey towards the invisible is not made in words alone. Along the way, the path of his fiction is layered with pictures—illustrations that function like guide markers, pointing towards that which lies beyond the dominion of either text or image. Working together, words and pictures fill the space of Kyōka's fiction with hints of the invisible, as both mediums draw the outlines of an enchanted literary landscape.

⁸⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 24:475.

Chapter 5

Nightmares on the Urban Stage: Izumi Kyōka's Tales of the Pleasure Quarters

Izumi Kyōka's work has long been split by critics into two general categories: stories about ghosts and monsters (*kaiki mono*) and stories about geisha and the pleasure quarters (*fūzoku mono*).¹ Although many works fall into both categories, and others neither, the distinction originated early on in Kyōka's own lifetime and continues to play a major role in evaluations of his writing.² One of the most obvious differences between categories exists in terms of setting: Kyōka's supernatural stories, which include signature pieces like *The Holy Man of Mt. Kōya*, *The Grass Labyrinth*, and *A Day in Spring*, are usually set in the Japanese countryside, in places like the deep mountains of the Hida province, or in the rustic seaside villas of the Miura peninsula, where ghostly apparitions flourish far away from city lights. Kyōka's *fūzoku mono*, on the other hand, are almost always set in Tokyo, in the most densely populated areas of the city, where explicitly supernatural elements are replaced by the horrors of domestic violence, social disparity, and the sex trade. Looking beyond the texts themselves, however, another crucial distinction between genres can be found in the form of their visual expression. Whereas the ghost stories tend to feature little to no illustration, consisting primarily of text, the geisha stories were among Kyōka's most heavily illustrated works, and often reached their widest audience through the visual mediums of theater and film. In a sense, Kyōka's geisha stories consisted essentially of a mix of text and image, as they borrowed from the visual culture of Edo's pleasure quarters, including the visual arts of kabuki, *kusazōshi*, and *ukiyo-e*, for their basic literary expression. In his geisha stories, Kyōka overlaid the theatrical imagery of Edo onto the imagined space of modern Tokyo, thereby rendering the city into a virtual kabuki stage. Combining dramatic dialogue with images of stylish geisha and violent gangsters, Kyōka and his illustrators turned the metropolis into a stage for the enactment of dark social dramas, whose lurid details exposed the dark side of life in the urban center.

During his own lifetime, Kyōka's geisha stories made him a household name in the world of modern Japanese literature, particularly after his fiction was adapted to *shinpa* (new-wave) theater, a form of drama that combined traditional elements of kabuki with a focus on tragic love stories set in modern urban environments.³ His first major breakthrough as an author came with

¹ Many of the sources examined in this chapter begin by outlining the dichotomy between Kyōka's fantasy-oriented fiction and his stories about geisha. The ghost stories are referred to as either *kaiki mono* (stories of the monstrous or grotesque), *kaii mono* (stories of the mysterious or phantasmal), or *gensō bungaku* (fantasy literature, or literature of illusions). The geisha stories are known as either *fūzoku mono* (stories of customs and manners), *karyū shōsetsu* (novels of the pleasure quarters), or simply as *geisha mono*. Tetsuka Masayuki outlines these two broad categories in *Izumi Kyōka to sono shūhen* (Kokubunji-shi, Tokyo: Musashino Shobō, 1989), 174-181. Various additional categories are commonly used to describe Kyōka's fiction, such as stories about the arts (*geinō mono*), romances (*denki mono*), and stories about particular geographical locations (*Fukagawa mono*, *Zushi mono*, *Bōshū mono*, etc.).

² For a history of Kyōka's critical reception, with particular attention paid to the matter of genre, see Suzuki Keiko, "Izumi Kyōka no seiritsu to bungei jiyō: *Yushima mōde*, *Kōya hijiri e no kiseki*," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*, 74.9 (September, 2009): 42-52.

³ *Shinpa* was originally established as a form of populist theater in the 1880's by Sudō Sadanori (1867-1907) and Kawakami Otojirō (1864-1911), who used the stage as a platform for propagating human rights. Featuring energetic performances by political agitators known as *sōshi* (ruffians), the "new-wave" of theater emerged in opposition to traditional forms of Japanese performance art, such as kabuki and Nō. Over time, however, *shinpa* moved closer to the art forms that it initially rejected, as new plays combined the formalism of kabuki with modern topics and acting techniques. Eventually, *shinpa* became a conservative art form, with roots in the popular urban dramas and geisha

an urban tale of revenge and double-suicide, “The Night Patrol” (“Yakō junsu,” 1895), followed by the similarly-themed “The Surgery Room,” (“Gekashitsu,” 1895), both of which thrilled critics and audiences alike with melodramatic depictions of modern urban life. He attracted critical praise with *Worship at Yushima* (*Yushima mōde*, 1899), another story of double-suicide set in modern Tokyo, which was one of his last works to meet with widespread acclaim from the literary establishment (*bundan*). For certain audiences, the author’s name would become most closely associated with *A Woman’s Lineage* (1906), another geisha story packed with romance and melodrama, which became better known as a play, film, and *enka* song than as a serialized newspaper novel. Even if he had never written another story, Kyōka’s name would likely have been remembered for this single work, just like his mentor, Ozaki Kōyō, was remembered especially for *The Gold Demon*, and his contemporary, Tokutomi Roka (1868-1927), was remembered almost exclusively for *The Warbler* (*Hototogisu*, 1898), both works that were similarly popular on stage and in film. Such was not the fate of Kyōka’s work, however, as the tendency that most annoyed critics during his own lifetime—writing about ghosts—became the key to his revival, ultimately securing him a position in the canon of modern Japanese literature.

Following his initial successes with stories about modern city life, Kyōka charted a path into increasingly unorthodox literary territory, in stories filled with ghosts and monsters, eventually alienating critics, who began to routinely ignore his work during the last few decades of his life. Already in 1919, Kawabata Yasunari claimed that Kyōka was completely ignored by the literary establishment (although Kawabata personally considered his work to be “intoxicating,” “beautiful,” and “dreamlike,” calling his writing “a monument to the beauty of Japan” and a “flower garden where only Kyōka’s favorite flowers bloom”).⁴ In the months following Kyōka’s death, in 1939, he was proclaimed separately by Kobayashi Hideo and Tanizaki Jun’ichirō to have been left in the past many decades earlier, having become completely irrelevant to the *bundan* due to his singular obsession with writing ghost stories and the extreme difficulty of his prose (even though both figures also praised him as a genius, with Tanizaki calling him one of the greatest writers to have ever lived, in any time or place).⁵ Kyōka’s reevaluation began in earnest, however, in 1969, when his fiction found a new vocal supporter in Mishima Yukio. Stating an opinion that would soon become the standard view, Mishima charged that it was time to forget Kyōka’s *fūzoku*-style fiction and rediscover his *kaiki shōsetsu* (novels of the bizarre or miraculous). Praising his fantasy stories for their grotesque and erotic elements, Mishima envisioned a clear divide between boorish Kyōka, the author of *A*

stories of figures like Ozaki Kōyō, Izumi Kyōka, and Kawaguchi Matsutarō (1899-1985). See Cody Poulton, *Spirits of Another Sort: The Plays of Izumi Kyōka* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, the University of Michigan, 2001), 21-24.

⁴ Kawabata, “*Kushigeshū nazo*,” *Kyōka zenshū geppō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973-1976), 19:12-16. Originally printed in *Shinshōsetsu* in May, 1925, with reference to earlier comments made in 1919.

⁵ Kobayashi writes, “These days, ghosts are not popular, and so Kyōka leaves this world an unpopular genius.” See Kobayashi, “Kyōka no shi sono ta,” *Izumi Kyōka: bungei dokuhon* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1981), 15. For Tanizaki’s comments, see “Junsui ni ‘Nihonteki’ na ‘Kyōka sekai’” in *Izumi Kyōka*, edited by Tsushima Yūko (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1992), 13-14. Originally published in *Toshō* (March, 1940). Other literary figures who sang Kyōka’s praises, often in superlative terms, included Yanagita Kunio, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, and even Natsume Sōseki, who begrudgingly called him a “genius” (*tensai*) in a short literary review. See Sōseki, “‘Gin tanzaku’—*Kinsaku tanpyō yori*,” *Izumi Kyōka* (1992), 60. Originally published in *Shinchō* (May, 1905). Most astounding is an evaluation by Nakajima Atsushi (1909-1942), who wrote in 1933, “To be born Japanese and understand the Japanese language, and yet not read Izumi Kyōka, is to throw away one’s birthright.” Nakajima, “Kyōka-shi no bungaku,” *Izumi Kyōka* (1992), 62. Originally published in *Gakuen* (July, 1933).

Woman's Lineage, and the undiscovered genius, whose ghost stories he likened to “a flowering peony garden in the meager desert of modern Japanese letters.”⁶

Because of their popular content and familiar themes, Kyōka's urban tales continued to be roundly dismissed by critics in the 1970's, even as his ghost stories found new admirers. The major shift in Kyōka's fortunes came when he was rediscovered by scholars of world literature in Japan, many of whom returned to Kyōka after having spent years immersed in studies of psychology, sexuality, surrealism, and various forms of fantastic literature, including fantasy, sci-fi, and horror, in languages such as German, English, and French. Kyōka's biggest supporters were figures like Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, a horror novelist who translated the Marquis de Sade, Waki Akiko, a scholar of fantasy and translator of Ursula K. Le Guin, Tanemura Suehiro, a translator from German with a scholarly interest in vampires and sadomasochism, and Hinatsu Kōnosuke, a romantic poet influenced by the likes of Oscar Wilde and Edgar Allen Poe.⁷ In Kyōka, these writers found a native genius of fantasy literature, who rivalled authors from any other country in the world. In fact, this rediscovery of Kyōka was instrumental in establishing the category of *gensō bungaku* in Japan, a term that today is used to mean “fantasy literature” in its generic sense, but which literally means “literature of illusions,”⁸ based in part on the illusory quality seen in fiction by Kyōka, Kōda Rohan, and Natsume Sōseki (with a heavy emphasis on his early, British-inspired work).⁹ In the mid-1980's, Kyōka's fiction was printed alongside stories by Poe and H.P. Lovecraft in *Gensō bungaku* magazine, the leading publication on fantasy and sci-fi literature in Japan, thus permanently linking his name to the term.¹⁰ During the *gensō* craze, Kyōka became a native hero, while the matter of his *fūzoku mono* became something of an embarrassment.

Underscoring the displeasure that scholars often felt with Kyōka's geisha stories are two opinions, written decades apart, that pan the author's *fūzoku mono* in the starkest of terms. Yanagita Izumi, writing in 1937, stated without irony: “strangely affected stories like *Tale of the Vigil* and *A Woman's Lineage* are occasionally so annoying that they make me want to vomit.”¹¹ Writing in 1992, Ikushima Ryōichi boasted that he did not even bother to read *A Woman's Lineage* in preparation for his full-length monograph on Kyōka, despite the central position of the work in the author's legacy.¹² Other scholars, however, have attempted to bridge the gap between Kyōka's literature of the fantastic and his geisha stories. Shinoda Hajime, writing

⁶ Mishima, “Izumi Kyōka,” *Izumi Kyōka* (1992), 23. Originally published in *Ozaki Kōyō, Izumi Kyōka: Nihon no Bungaku 4* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1969).

⁷ For a brief history of Kyōka studies, including the role played by comparativists in his reevaluation, see Tōgō Katsumi, “Izumi Kyōka kenkyūshi taigai,” *Izumi Kyōka* (1992), 306-313.

⁸ Sunaga Asahiko points out that the term *gensō* originally appeared in Japan as a translation for the term “hallucination,” in connection with studies of psychology and philosophy, and maintains a connotation of “illusion” or “hallucination,” even though the term covers fiction that is purely fantastic or sci-fi-oriented in nature. Sunaga personally prefers the terms *kaidan* (ghost story), *kaiki shōsetsu* (horror novel), or *kaii shōsetsu* (novel of the bizarre), but concedes that there is a certain felicitous quality to the term *gensō bungaku*, especially when used in relation to fiction that underscores the illusory aspects of fantasy. See *Nihon gensō bungakushi* (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1993), 5-13. Kawabata was already referring to Kyōka's fiction as having qualities of “gensō” in 1925, although the term would only become firmly established in relation to Kyōka's work much later. “*Kushigeshū nazo*,” 13.

⁹ See Ichianagi Hirofumi, *Gensō bungaku, kindai no makai e*, edited by Ichianagi Hirofumi and Yoshida Morio (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2006), 11.

¹⁰ Tanaka Takako, *Kyōka to kaii* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2006), 9.

¹¹ This was in 1937, and is thus a major outlier timewise, but Yanagita's opinion would be repeatedly echoed decades later. Yanagita Izumi, “Kyōka no yomihajime,” 3:236.

¹² Ikushima Ryōichi, *Kyōka mangekyō* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1992), 4.

around the start of the *gensō* craze in 1971, claimed that he was reluctant to even read *A Woman's Lineage* simply because it was *too* popular, particularly after the success of numerous theatrical and filmic adaptations. He adds, however, that when he finally did approach it, he was surprised to find himself absorbed in its frank and audacious style of storytelling, leading him to claim that all of Kyōka's fiction was rooted in the same extremity of expression.¹³ Yomota Inuhiko similarly recalls the time of Kyōka's reevaluation by claiming that the general consensus was that Kyōka's *fūzoku* stories were not even worth reading, but then argues that the fantastic or illusory aspect (*gensō*) of Kyōka's writing is not restricted to works that fit into an illusionistic genre, but is constantly present at the level of his language.¹⁴ Indeed, Kyōka's popular urban fiction contains many elements that overlap with his supernatural stories, including abrupt, dreamlike passages that bend the possibilities of space and time, narratives that focus on obscure phenomena and hidden lives, and the appearance of ghosts and monsters, particularly in his later works.

Chiyoko Kawakami notes that in the 1910's, Kyōka moved the phantoms of his rural fiction into the metropolis in works such as *The White Heron* (*Shirasagi*, 1909) and "Magic" ("Yōjutsu," 1911), which he wrote after claiming that he had become more interested in seeing ghosts in the middle of Tokyo, where one could hear the bells of streetcars ringing, rather than in the depths of a somber mountain landscape.¹⁵ Kawakami argues that Kyōka's portrayal of a haunted Tokyo was created in part as a reaction to the restructuring of city space, which she identifies as occurring in two movements, the first of which was a major demographic shift of people from the provinces to the capital and the second being the implementation of a governmental policy of consolidating urban shrines. After the Meiji Restoration, provincial bureaucrats from former samurai families moved into the neighborhoods of the western hills of Tokyo (*yamanote*), thus creating a center of affluence and a new national culture in the capital, while traditional neighborhoods in the eastern flatlands (*shitamachi*) were neglected and fell into ruin, or were otherwise overtaken by factories and heavy industry.¹⁶ Also during the Meiji period, the government began implementing various policies of consolidating local shrines into larger religious centers, leading to the abolishment of local sites of cultural significance, many of which were densely packed into the back alleys of the *shitamachi* area. In large part, Kyōka's urban fiction centered on the eastern areas of Tokyo that were neglected and negatively impacted by governmental policies, particularly the far eastern marshy lowlands of Fukagawa and Kiba and strongholds of popular culture such as Ueno, Yushima, Asakusa, and Nihonbashi to the east and northeast of the city center. Kyōka himself was not a resident of the *shitamachi*—he was instead a migrant from the provincial capital of Kanazawa who spent most of his adult life in *yamanote*—and yet he attached himself to the eastern neighborhoods in his fiction, in part because they were the source of the visual and literary cultures that had influenced his own writing.

¹³ Shinoda Hajime, "Izumi Kyōka no ichi," 65-66.

¹⁴ Yomota Inuhiko, "Kaisetsu: Kyōka, shinpa, Nihon eiga," *Izumi Kyōka*, edited by Tsubouchi Yūzō (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2001), 401.

¹⁵ Chiyoko Kawakami, "The Metropolitan Uncanny in the Works of Izumi Kyōka: A Counter-Discourse on Japan's Modernization," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 59.2 (1999): 565-566. She references the essay "My Disposition" ("Yo no taido" 1908), found in Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:693-698.

¹⁶ Isoda Kōichi writes extensively on the restructuring of the space of Tokyo. He argues that the *shitamachi* preserved a local Tokyo dialect and the traditional arts and aesthetics of the Edo period, while *yamanote* became a center of modern culture, progressive values, and a new national identity. See *Shisō to shite no Tōkyō* (Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 1978).

Like much of the fiction of the late Edo period, Kyōka's geisha stories maintained a close relationship to the art of the theater. Cementing their reputation as popular fiction, his *fūzoku mono* were frequently adapted to the *shinpa* stage, where they reached their broadest audiences, unlike the *kaiki shōsetsu*, which were consumed primarily as novels, and only made occasional appearances as plays or films.¹⁷ The longstanding association between Kyōka's *fūzoku mono* and *shinpa* theater appears to have contributed to critics' poor evaluation of the author's geisha stories, which they were reluctant to see as anything more than popular entertainment, rather than as works of art with intrinsic literary value.¹⁸ In the view of critics, Kyōka's ghost stories were for reading, in the silence of one's room, thus fitting the definition of proper literature, whereas his geisha stories were for viewing on a stage, together with an audience who cried and applauded as they watched their favorite actors perform familiar narratives. Just because Kyōka's *fūzoku mono* were theatrical, however, does not mean that they lacked entirely in the *gensō* qualities of his other work. In fact, it is the very theatricality of the *fūzoku mono*, I argue, that makes them a prime subject for exploring the relationship between theater and the "literature of illusions" (*gensō bungaku*). Rather than plays in the strictest sense, Kyōka's *fūzoku mono* were instead novels that envisioned life in the city as a form of theater, full of thieves, murderers, and deranged geisha, thus meshing the extravagance of kabuki with the experience of contemporary urban life. The *gensō* quality of Kyōka's geisha stories lies in their treatment of modern Tokyo as an illusory stage, in which all residents are virtual actors, whether they realize it or not. Controlled by fate, his characters all play their given parts, even as they dream of escape from the madness of the city-as-stage.

The specific form of theatricality found in Kyōka's geisha stories closely resembles the kabuki of the late Edo period, from which the author drew a host of familiar settings, plot points, character types, and even lines of dialogue, occasionally quoted word-for-word. For this reason, even by the time that Kyōka started writing his geisha stories in the late 1890's, certain critics already evaluated his work as anachronistic, or as completely out of step with trends in modern literature, as modern writers gravitated towards naturalism (*shizen shugi*) and realism (*shajitsu shugi*) under the influence of European art. For some critics, too little had changed from the beginning of the century, when stages were filled with acts of bloody vengeance and double suicide, and Kyōka's fiction, which repeated these same acts endlessly. At the same time, however, critics often complained that Kyōka's fiction was difficult to understand, due in part to its obscure styling and tricky plot points, thus suggesting that there was something different about Kyōka's writing and the kabuki theater upon which it was supposedly based. Moreover, some of Kyōka's most theatrical works were praised by critics for their supposedly faithful portrayal of modern realities, thus complicating the distinction between notions of theatricality and realism in literary criticism.

¹⁷ Tanizaki referred to *shinpa* versions of *The Holy Man of Mt. Kōya* and *The Elegant Railway* (*Fūryūsen*, 1903-1904) as "a disgrace to the originals." See Tanizaki, "The Present and Future of Moving Pictures," in Thomas LaMarre *Shadows on the Screen: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō on Cinema and "Oriental" Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2005), 67. These works have rarely been staged (the latter almost never), although a recent rendition of *The Holy Man of Mt. Kōya* combined film and theater in an attempt to recreate the work in a manner faithful to the novel.

¹⁸ Yomota Inuhiko argues that the association between *fūzoku mono*, *shinpa* theater, and early Japanese film makes these works particularly valuable to scholars of Japanese media, popular culture, and film today. See "Kaisetsu: Kyōka, shinpa, Nihon eiga," 408-409.

When reading Kyōka's *fūzoku* fiction today, one finds a literature that takes the images and themes of Edo period theater and compounds them for maximum dramatic effect. When looking to the past, Kyōka mined the theater of the Edo period for its most savage imagery, as he filled his fiction with images of bloodshed and revenge. Stories often end in murder, suicide, or double-suicide, all as frequently found on the kabuki stage. Like his plot points, the characters in Kyōka's *fūzoku mono* are almost all remnants of kabuki theater, including classical character types (*kata*) like the brilliant youth (*saishi*), the beautiful lover (*kajin*), and languishing geisha of every disposition and personality. As familiar as his plots and characters might initially appear, however, Kyōka's urban dramas are not just about revisiting stories from the Edo period. Rather, his work is distinguished by its focus on themes of social oppression and inequality, both as it existed in the past and as a contemporary social reality. Just as in the rest of his oeuvre, the social dimension of Kyōka's fiction is buried in his references to traditional forms of art and his preference for popular imagery. As an author, Kyōka strikes a stance of defiance towards the more "sophisticated" members of the literary establishment by turning out endless images of violence and erotic content, as culled from Edo's own history of visual culture, thereby creating a form of literature that lies somewhere in between art and popular entertainment. Rather than simply copying the past, Kyōka projected the popular themes of Edo period art onto the geography of a hybrid city, part-modern Tokyo and part-early modern Edo, which he turned into a virtual stage for stories that revealed the violence at the center of the contemporary social landscape.

Looking beyond their existence as texts, Kyōka's works of urban fiction are distinguished by their extensive visual component, which reveal a further complexity to his art. As stated earlier, a distinguishing factor of Kyōka's geisha stories is the prominence of their visual element, which can be found in the form of newspaper illustrations, book designs, and paintings. Many of Kyōka's urban dramas are among his most extensively illustrated works, including stories like *Tale of the Vigil*, with 32 illustrations, *Three-Page Foldout* (*Sanmai tsuzuki*, 1900), with 50 illustrations, and *A Woman's Lineage*, with 118 illustrations. These stories often function like virtual plays, in which the illustrations set the scene and help guide the reader through the story, while the text itself is focused almost exclusively on dialogue, with only brief forays into narrative prose. Combining text and image, Kyōka's *fūzoku mono* create the illusion of watching theater from an armchair. Using illustrations of stage-like settings, urban architecture, alleyways, and maps, combined with images of geisha and gangsters set in dramatic poses, Kyōka's geisha stories superimpose Edo period theater onto the space of modern Tokyo, using words and pictures to create vivid effects on the page. In the end, they suggest that the entire urban experience is a manner of illusory theater, in which people are thrust into parts that are not of their choosing and are asked to act as though their roles make sense, even while surrounded by the absurdity of the presiding social order. In his later urban fiction, Kyōka worked with Settai to transform the theatrical space of his city into a realm of dreams and nightmares, as will be explored extensively in the following chapter. For now, however, the beginnings of Kyōka's dark vision of Tokyo can be seen even in his early popular fiction, where the theater of illusions was inaugurated.

Setting the Urban Stage: *The Night Patrol* and *The Surgery Room*

In 1895, Kyōka had his first major hit with "The Night Patrol," a short story that impressed the literary establishment with its dramatic treatment of urban life, while cementing

the author's position as one of the most promising young writers in turn-of-the-century Japan.¹⁹ It was followed in the same year by another urban drama, "The Surgery Room," that would only further solidify Kyōka's position as an urban writer with a keen eye for controversial social topics. Singled out as one of the leading figures in the new wave of modern Japanese literature by critics such as Taoka Reiun and Gotō Chūgai (1866-1938), Kyōka was praised for writing daring social narratives about topics such as class oppression and adultery, while using his fiction to explore the friction between individual will and society.²⁰ Such stories were labeled by critics as "idea novels" (*kannen shōsetsu*), or "serious novels" (*shinkoku shōsetsu*), along with the work of fellow Ken'yūsha members Hirotsu Ryūrō (1861-1928) and Kawakami Bizan (1869-1908), who, together, formed the avant-garde of young urban writers in 1890's Tokyo. Despite their aspirations towards literary realism, however, the writers of *kannen shōsetsu* also relied on conventional narrative structures and stylized scenes of violence drawn directly from Edo period fiction, as seen particularly in their tendency to end their stories with scenes of double suicide (*shinjū*), a classic literary trope whose popularization can be traced back to the *jōruri* plays of Chikamatsu Monzaemon. Thus, at the beginning of his career, Kyōka was caught in a space in between urgent social drama and timeless theatrical tradition, in which the problems of modern Tokyo were approached via the classical framework of the *shinjū* narrative.

Kyōka's earliest foray into urban fiction, "The Night Patrol," was also his first major success as a writer. Printed in the literary magazine *Bungei kurabu* in April, 1895, Kyōka's "idea novel" dealt with themes of surveillance, social inequality, and blind adherence to duty by public officials. As Kyōka's first attempt at urban fiction, the story combines real-time observations of urban space, as recorded by the author in his walks around the city, with a melodramatic account of an officer who foolishly sacrifices his life for duty. Featuring no illustrations, the work might be taken as one of Kyōka's most purely "textual" explorations of city life, and yet it sets in place the theatrical tone that would define in his later illustrated novels. In his essay "On My Maiden Work" ("Shojo sakudan," 1907), Kyōka writes that he came up with the idea for "The Night Patrol" while walking around Kōjimachi, in the area around the British embassy, while taking notes on the visual makeup of the city. As a fairly recent migrant himself, Kyōka was drawn by the odd mix of modern lights, Western-style buildings, old shadows, and willow groves that he found in the area. As he personally observed the space of the neighborhood, Kyōka attempted to translate what he saw directly into text, thereby constructing a literary simulacrum of the urban environment. The story that he set in this environment, however, often reads like a script for a play, rather than an objective representation of city space, as it presents an unlikely narrative of double-suicide through a text consisting primarily of dialogue.

The narrative of "The Night Patrol" follows Hatta Yoshinobu, a callous beat officer in Kōjimachi, central Tokyo, as he patrols the city in search of citizens guilty of minor infractions. At the outset of the story, a young rickshaw driver startles an old man who is cowering in the shadows after being reprimanded by the patrolman. His crime: wearing a torn uniform. The old man, trembling from cold and hunger, relates to the younger one how he was forced to take work as a rickshaw driver after his son was conscripted by the military. The young man rants and

¹⁹ In an essay on his early fiction, Kyōka refers to the story as his literary debut, even though he had published over a dozen stories before it, thus indicating his investment in the work as the symbolic beginning of his literary career. See Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 28:674-677.

²⁰ Suzuki Keiko, "Izumi Kyōka no seiritsu to bungei jihyō," 42-48. See also Suzuki Keiko, "Yushima mōde to sono jidai: senryaku toshite no mohō," *Ronshū Izumi Kyōka* 3 (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1999), 61. As a fellow member of the Ken'yūsha group of writers, Gotō Chūgai was not exactly an impartial critic.

curses at the officer's callousness, declaring that he would love to beat the patrolman up, if only he could catch him without his sabre. The officer then reappears on the scene, introduced metonymically by his sinister gaze, which lights up the darkness at the city's center.

Overflowing with indignation, contempt, and loathing, his sight turns towards Ichiban-chō, Kōjimachi, near the wall of the British Embassy and a shadowy stand of willow trees. With box lantern lighting the way, his gaze points southward. The light is like a beast's eyes shining in the dark night... Beneath the visor of his regulation cap, his deeply concealed eyes shine with a terrible glow, quick, sharp, and severe all at once, glimmering with a strange light.²¹

Having already berated an elderly worker, the officer turns his sight towards a homeless woman who hides in the shadows as she tries to warm her newborn baby under a thin layer of kimono. "Hey you! Up! I said up!" he screams, before forcing the woman and her baby out of their hiding place and into the cold of the night.

Referring to "The Night Patrol" as a work of "social reportage" (*shakai reporutāju*), Kitahara Yasukuni characterizes Kyōka's early story as an exposé on unequal access to urban space.²² As Kitahara points out, the story opens in Kōjimachi, then the geographic and political center of modern Tokyo. As host to the British Embassy, Kōjimachi symbolized Japan's new position within a global diplomatic network, which it had joined after over two hundred years of virtual isolation from the rest of the world. The area was also home to numerous manors belonging to aristocrats and politicians, as well as hospitals and military buildings, thus making it a center of economic, scientific, and military power as well.²³ The old rickshaw driver at the beginning of the story, however, is not from Kōjimachi, but is rather from nearby Yotsuya, which was, at the time, a crowded and impoverished neighborhood of central Tokyo that attracted migrant workers from around the country. Due to deplorable living conditions in the area, Yotsuya was also a site of sporadic riots, in which rickshaw drivers often played a major role.²⁴ "The Night Patrol" thus treats Tokyo as a real city with a complex social structure woven into its urban geography. The space of the city is observed by the narrator, who wanders the city's streets and probes its darkest corners in search of a story. What he finds is a stark social contrast: within the very center of the nation, where gas lights mingle with the metaphorical lights of modern civilization, the citizens of Tokyo cower in the shadows, one a rickshaw driver with a torn uniform, and the other a hungry, homeless mother. It is a city with no place for the poor, whose plight is noticed only by the novelist-as-documentarian.

²¹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 1:697-698.

²² Kitahara Yasukuni, "Izumi Kyōka *Yakō junsu*: hokō to manazashi no dorama," *Kokugakuin zasshi*, 109.8 (August, 2008): 24-5. As a form of "social reportage," Kyōka's story might be compared to contemporary works such as Matsubara Iwagorō's (1866-1935) *In Darkest Tokyo* (*Saiankoku no Tōkyō*, 1893), a journalistic account that similarly aimed to uncover the sordid underbelly of life in modern Tokyo, with a focus on exposing the wretched living conditions of the city's lower classes. See Maeda Ai, *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, edited with an introduction by James Fujii (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 21-64. Kyōka most explicitly treats matters of class and social conflict in his early novella *The Poverty Club* (*Hinmin kurabu*, 1895), a work that Tōgō Katsumi argues was directly inspired by Matsubara's essay. *Ikai no hō e: Kyōka no suimyaku* (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1994), 15-21.

²³ Kitahara, "Izumi Kyōka *Yakō junsu*," 18.

²⁴ Kitahara, "Izumi Kyōka *Yakō junsu*," 24.

Despite Kyōka's stated intent of modeling the urban environment of central Tokyo, "The Night Patrol" just as often suggests the space of a stage as that of an actual city. To begin, the story opens with a lengthy stretch of dialogue full of comically exaggerated slang, which recalls the kind of speech found in Edo period *gesaku* and kabuki. Opening in the manner of a play, the story begins with a line of dialogue: "Oi, old man, where ya at?" Mistaking the youth for a police officer, the old man shrinks back, "Please, sir, I beg your pardon. From now on I'll pay more attention. Mhm, mhm." The youth responds with a barrage of slurred language that resembles the *gesaku* style of mimetic dialogue:

"Ei, old man, don't get all tripped up, eh? I ain't a damn cop. I saw that bastard stick it to ya and I jus' couldn' stand it, but then you, you just sat there and took it! It ain't like he was threatening to tie ya up and take ya in or nuthin, so why'd you go all shakin' like that, scared shitless and all. Just hearin' him talk to you like that, damn that really hit a nerve. What was it, old man, something about yer uniform not bein' right? But damn, he really went overboard yellin' at you like that for sumthin so stupid. It's not like you were doin' anything else wrong. Yeah, old man?"²⁵

Following the opening scene, the story is overtaken by a convoluted tale of fate, revenge, and suicide that veers closer to theatrical convention than social reportage. Continuing his beat, Hatta comes across Okō, his former lover, who is returning from a marriage ceremony with her uncle. The uncle reveals to Okō that he intentionally interfered with her relationship with Hatta many years ago as revenge against Okō's mother, who had refused his own marriage proposal decades earlier, after which she married his younger brother instead. Ashamed by her uncle's revelation of his vengeful plan, Okō rushes towards the moat that surrounds the imperial palace with the intention of drowning herself, but her drunken uncle accidentally slips in instead. Moved to action by his sense of duty, Hatta decides to jump in after the uncle and attempt to save him, despite the fact that he is unable to swim. His unthinking devotion to his job only serves to end his life, however, as well as that of the uncle whom he felt compelled to save.

Unlike every other story covered in this chapter, "The Night Patrol" featured no illustrations, which might be attributed to the author's novice status at the time of the story's publication. As an untested writer making his mainstream debut, there was little chance of Kyōka's work being singled out for illustration in the pages of *Bungei kurabu*, where only the most popular writers saw their stories illustrated. The success of the work was such, however, that his next feature, "The Surgery Room," was accompanied by a full-color, foldout frontispiece by star woodblock illustrator Mizuno Toshikata (1866-1908) (a pupil of Yoshitoshi), thus beginning the long association between Kyōka's urban dramas and *ukiyo-e*-style illustration. Published once again in *Bungei kurabu*, just months after "The Night Patrol," "The Surgery Room" echoed Kyōka's earlier "idea novel" with another urban tale of double suicide. The story is set in an affluent part of central Tokyo, this time in a state-of-the art hospital in an unspecified location, as well as in the Koishikawa gardens near the University of Tokyo. Rather than focusing on the plight of the poor, however, "The Surgery Room" exposes the follies of the rich, whose scandalous love affairs are enacted in the manner of a kabuki play, staged in the heart of the modern city. In the short story, Countess Kifune shocks her relatives when she demands that Doctor Takamine operate on her without using anesthetics. The reason for her request is that she

²⁵ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 1:694.

is afraid that the medication will loosen her tongue and cause her to reveal her secret love for the doctor, which she has concealed from her husband for the past decade. Although the action of the final scene is ambiguous, the implication of the ending is that Countess Kifune commits suicide along with her doctor on the operating table, in plain view of a group of gathered dignitaries. Thus, while the title of “The Surgery Room” might appear modern, the story continues Kyōka’s *modus operandi* of treating the city as a virtual kabuki stage, in which all love stories end in death or suicide, exactly as they would in a kabuki play.²⁶



Figure 94 - *The Surgery Room* (1895), frontispiece by Mizuno Toshikata

Toshikata’s frontispiece for “The Surgery Room” visually traces the competing directions of Kyōka’s story, infusing it with a sense of color and drama that veers closer to the traditional visual expression of *ukiyo-e* than the formal experimentations of modern art. The image depicts Countess Kifune languishing on a double-futon while rising plumes of smoke waft over a portrait of a married couple in the background. As Minemura Shizuko points out, the image bears an uncertain relationship to the story, as the setting has been moved from a hospital to a private room and the identities of the figures in the portrait are left open to question (is the man in the picture the surgeon or Count Kifune?).²⁷ Minemura, referring to the image as both an “annotation” (*chūshaku*) and a “prologue” (*joshō*) to the text, remarks that the reader would have encountered the frontispiece before reading the story, and would thus have been led to expect a dramatic tale of illness and lost love, whose visual expression bears an uncertain relationship to

²⁶ As implausible as the story might sound today, it was greeted as a realistic work of fiction by contemporary critics, who praised the story’s sense of urgency, as well as the author’s risqué treatment of the theme of adultery among the educated classes. See Inouye, *The Similitude of Blossoms*, 94-95.

²⁷ Minemura Shizuko, “Izumi Kyōka *Gekashitsu* no kuchi-e: *Gekashitsu chūyaku joshō*,” *Joshidai kokubun*, 155.9 (September, 2014): 1-3.

the hospital-room drama of “The Surgery Room.” In the text, Kyōka describes the setting of the story as follows:

The surgery room itself was bathed in a luminescence so radiant that I could count the particles of dust in the air. It stood somehow apart, stark, and inviolate. And there in the center of the room lay the countess Kifune... wrapped in a spotless white hospital gown, she lay on the operating table as if a corpse...²⁸

Comparing this description to Toshikata’s illustration, it is difficult to imagine how the artist could have ever arrived at his image, that of a pale beauty languishing in colorful kimono on a plush futon. It is almost as though the spotless surgery room in Kyōka’s description was simply too modern a subject to depict in a woodblock print. At the same time, however, Toshikata’s image might be seen as providing necessary background information for Kyōka’s narrative, or the story of Countess Kifune’s love affair with the doctor, which is never explained in the text. As such, Toshikata’s image functions as a visualization of the internal drama of the story, or a visual demonstration of the invisible love affair that remains absent from the narrative. Adding color and a sense of interiority to the story, the image functions as both a “prologue” and an “annotation” by depicting that which occurs outside of and before the text, rather than the events of the story itself. Following “The Surgery Room,” the visual component of Kyōka’s Tokyo tales would sync more closely with his fiction, as intricate woodblock prints transformed his urban dramas into a form of virtual theater, comprised essentially of both text and image.

Rumors from the Southeast Quarter: The Floating World of Fukagawa

In 1898, Kyōka had another hit with the urban drama of *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* (*Tatsumi kōdan*). Replete with geisha, murder, double-suicide, an improbable plotline, and a set of lavish illustrations, the work was perfectly positioned to please an audience that continued to crave the fictional style of the Edo period. Although it is today a largely forgotten work, *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* became one of the most popular stories of Kyōka’s early career, owing in large part to its adaptation as a *shinpa* play in the year following its publication. Ueda Masako finds evidence that the story was staged at least twelve times between 1899 and 1911 and remarks that it is an indispensable work for understanding Kyōka’s early career, despite its relatively unknown status today.²⁹ Given its position as a foundational piece in the *shinpa* repertoire, as well as its early success as a play, the work serves as a useful case study for examining the relationship between Kyōka’s urban fiction and his theatrical writing. *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* is also, however, a work about an actual city (modern Tokyo), which combines *gesaku*-style dialogue and a kabuki-esque plot with elements of social realism. The author’s careful observation of city spaces, along with the living conditions of their inhabitants, punctuates the high melodrama of his main plot, imparting the impression of a living city whose space is an amalgamation of the stage and the real geography of Tokyo. The illustrations that accompany *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, both in its original and subsequent publications, highlight the tension between the space of the stage and that of the city by juxtaposing character-

²⁸ Here I use a translation by Charles Inouye, as found in *Japanese Gothic Tales* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1996), 12. The original text is found in Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 2:13.

²⁹ Ueda Masako, “Kyōka shōsetsu o jōen suru: Meiji sanjūnendai ni okeru *Taki no Shiraito* to *Tatsumi kōdan* jōen o chūshin ni,” *Ronshū Izumi Kyōka* 5 (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 2011), 15.

driven theatrical images (*shibai-e*), empty cityscapes, and, in a later edition, an accurately-rendered map of Fukagawa, the neighborhood in which the story is set.

Like Yoshiwara, Asakusa, Ueno, or Nihonbashi, the very name Fukagawa carries with it a host of cultural signifiers with deep roots in the literature and popular culture of the Edo period. The term *tatsumi*, which appears in the Japanese title (*Tatsumi kōdan*), literally means “southeast,” but in the context of the city of Edo refers specifically to the southeastern neighborhood of Fukagawa, a district built on land reclaimed from the surrounding bay. In the Edo period, Fukagawa was renowned for its pleasure quarters and its geisha, known colloquially as *tatsumi geisha*, who distinguished themselves from other courtesans of Edo by their gallant behavior, as well as their idiosyncratic tradition of wearing men’s overcoats.³⁰ As an area reclaimed from the ocean, Fukagawa symbolized the city’s rapid expansion during the Edo period, as well as the shogunate’s determination to shape the land to fit its needs. Even more important to Kyōka’s fiction, the neighborhood was associated with the “floating world” aesthetic of early modern Japan, both physically and metaphorically, as the reclaimed islands were crisscrossed with bridges and canals, which provided access to pleasure quarters where geisha plied their trade in illusory pleasures. In the late Edo period, Fukagawa was adopted by Tamenaga Shunsui as the setting for his *ninjōbon* series, *Spring Colors* (the second volume of which is subtitled *The Southeast Garden*, or *Tatsumi no sono*), while in the Meiji period, it became a favorite setting for young, urban authors, especially those most influenced by the arts of the Edo period, including Hirotsu Ryūrō and Nagai Kafū.³¹ Kyōka, for one, would eventually write seven stories set in Fukagawa, beginning with *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* in 1898 and ending with *The Peony Song* (*Shakuyaku no uta*) in 1918.³² In his Fukagawa stories, Kyōka combined a romantic view of the neighborhood, as influenced by Edo-period representations focused on the pleasure quarters, with a modern understanding of the area as a crowded, low-income, *shitamachi* neighborhood, where the modernizing lights of central Tokyo had just barely managed to make inroads. In *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, Kyōka occasionally pauses the dialogue to focus on describing the geography of Fukagawa, in dense passages of prose that highlight the narrowness of the city’s alleyways, as well as the poverty of its citizens, who wander half-naked through its streets. His evocation of urban space is reflected in the story’s numerous illustrations, which alternate between realistic cityscapes and stage-like settings, where geisha and gangsters strike dramatic poses, as though acting on a kabuki stage.

Rumors from the Southeast Quarter opens with an exchange between a rickshaw driver and his passenger as they enter into the southeastern reaches of Fukagawa. “How many bridges have we passed so far?” asks the passenger. The driver responds, “Since crossing the big bridge?

³⁰ For a brief history of the Fukagawa pleasure quarters see Matsukawa Jirō, *Zenkoku kagai meguri* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2007), 104-105; 120-123.

³¹ Works set in Fukagawa include Ryūrō’s “Waves in the Shallows” (“Asase no nami,” 1896) and Kafū’s *Woman of the Dream* (*Yume no onna*, 1903).

³² See Kubota Jun, “Akusho to makai: Izumi Kyōka no Fukagawamono o rei to shite,” *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 70.11 (1993): 137-138. Other works set in Fukagawa are “Three Feet of Lumber” (“Sanjakukaku,” 1899), *The Sands of Katsushika* (*Katsushika sunago*, 1900), “Kodama” (“Tree spirit,” 1901), also known as “Gleanings from the Three Feet of Lumber” (“Sanjakukaku shūi”), *Engraving of a Master Poet* (*Kasenbori*, 1912), and *The Seafaring Vessel* (*Godairiki*, 1913). Fukagawa would continue to be a major setting in the *shinpa* theater of the mid-20th century, when it became a favored setting of *shinpa* playwright Kawaguchi Matsutarō, as seen in works such as *Suzu of Fukagawa* (*Fukagawa no Suzu*) and *Elegant Song of Fukagawa* (*Fūryū Fukagawa Uta*).

Hmmm, over ten I think. Just from Hachiman to here it's been five or six.”³³ The succession of bridges indicates the increasing distance of Fukagawa from central Tokyo, while also emphasizing the floating, otherworldly quality of the seaside neighborhood. The passenger of the rickshaw, Kanae, is on his way from *yamanote* to visit his secret lover, a kept geisha named Okimi, in the backstreets of the *shitamachi*. His destination is in an alleyway in the neighborhood of Irifunehō, a place that the narrator describes as being so narrow that not even the rickshaw can pass through, nor can the light of the moon penetrate under its eaves. As Kanae gets closer to the alleyway, he is shocked to find people in various states of undress, including a stark naked woman who nonchalantly gives directions to the rickshaw driver and a red-chested, heavy-headed man who sits cross-legged on the floor while staring with empty eyes at people as they pass by. The free exposure of these characters' bodies stands in sharp contrast to the inhabitants of central Tokyo in “The Night Patrol,” where a torn uniform is deemed an indecent offense by the police. When Kanae arrives at his destination, he barely catches a glimpse of Okimi before she slips back into the shadows of the alleyway, but her jealous lover, Sōhei, learns of his intent and sends a gang to assault him on the Shiomi Bridge, before he can return to the safety of *yamanote*. On the bridge, Kanae is rescued by Okitsu, an older woman who peddles hairpins and makeup in the geisha district of Susaki, an artificial island connected by bridge to Fukagawa.

Okitsu nurses Kanae back to health and treats him as her own son, only to later reveal that she is in fact his long-lost mother. The revelation plays on a classic narrative twist of kabuki and other Edo period fiction, where hidden familial relations often lead to tragic results, and is one of many theatrical conventions that appears throughout the narrative. Okitsu urges Kanae to stay away from Okimi, as she was once a geisha herself and recognizes the difficulty of courting a woman employed in the pleasure quarters. Okimi, in turn, is unable to leave her lover Sōhei, despite his violent behavior towards her, because he has paid the debt that she owed to her employer and thus holds financial power over her. Okitsu later comes to accept her son's love for Okimi and plans to rescue the girl from her prison in the alleyway, but when Sōhei finds out about Okimi's secret plan to elope with Kanae he is enraged and determined to prevent it. At the story's climax, Sōhei confronts Okimi on the Shiomi Bridge with a butcher's blade in hand. Okitsu arrives on the scene in the middle of the confrontation and attempts to shield Okimi from the attack, but she is unable to stop Sōhei from stabbing the young woman to death. Okitsu then wrenches the knife from Sōhei, turns it on herself, and commits suicide out of shame at having been unable to save the young geisha. In the midst of the frenzied murder-suicide, a patrolman rounds the corner with a lantern, but unlike the ever-vigilant Hatta in “The Night Patrol,” the officer is distracted and fails to notice the crime, despite the spectacular nature of the offense. Hoping to divert the officer's attention away from the shameful scene, Okitsu urges Sōhei to sing loudly, to which he responds by belting out, “Once withered and stepped on, the flower on the embankment grass, revived by the dew of pity.”³⁴ As such, the tune wrenches the story from the space of the modern city, where crime is punished by legal procedure, and returns it to the timeless space of the stage, where murder-suicides and spontaneous outbursts of song are all a part of the performance.

³³ The “big bridge” refers to the Eitai Bridge over the Sumida River, a wide river that divides central Tokyo from the eastern districts. Hachiman refers to the large Tomioka Hachiman shrine in Fukagawa, one of the major landmarks of the area. *Kyōka, Kyōka zenshū*, 4: 3-4.

³⁴ *Kyōka, Kyōka zenshū*, 4:104.

Like “The Night Patrol,” *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* is a tale of urban drama in which the details of the setting play a significant role in the shape of the narrative. The story opens as a journey into the geography of Fukagawa, where narrow alleyways give way to marshlands and open ocean at the edge of the city. This transition, from one geographic sphere to the other, is also a social transition, from aristocratic society in the hills to the most plebian districts of Tokyo, in the watery lowlands to the east. The protagonist, Kanae, ventures from *yamanote* to the *shitamachi* to meet with an impoverished geisha, in effect leaving a sphere of privilege in order to “slum it” in the poorer parts of town, but he is also returning to his true home, where his mother once worked as a geisha herself, and where she waits for him in an anonymous back alley of the city. The place where she lives, Fukagawa, is both the setting and the subject of the drama that ensues.

While *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* consists primarily of dramatic dialogue, in common with most of Kyōka’s *fūzoku mono*, the setting of the story is important enough to merit lengthy poetic descriptions throughout the text. At various points in the story, the narrator pauses to describe the cityscape of Fukagawa in minor detail, which he does by combining careful descriptions of urban architecture and geography with theatrical motifs that suggest the space of the stage. In this manner, urban and theatrical space are evoked in a single breath. This effect can be seen most clearly in the narrator’s description of the alleyway in the Tomioka Monzenchō neighborhood of Fukagawa, where Kanae’s mother lives in obscurity. In the passage that follows, subtle details evoke a complex urban setting with a deep cultural history.

It was before seven in the morning. The back door of the *kiyomoto* teacher’s home by the edge of the well was shut tight. A light blue Gifu paper lantern decorated with butterflies hung motionless in front of rattan blinds. It sat behind a bamboo lattice window whose slats looked worn and faded in the light of the dawn. Across from the instructor’s home was a lumber merchant’s store with fifteen or sixteen giant logs, their exposed side wet from the morning dew, piled up so high that they towered over the roof, above which only a hint of the white sky could be glimpsed.³⁵

The description of the alleyway is loaded with symbolic imagery that recalls motifs of the theater, while at the same time suggesting the real space of the contemporary *shitamachi*. Kyōka’s description of the instructor’s home, for example, mentions the art of *kiyomoto*, or a school of *jōruri* dramatic recitation typically associated with *bunraku* puppet theater, but also with the kabuki plays of Kawatake Mokuami. The mention of a *kiyomoto* school in the alleyway thus recalls the traditional style of dramatic recitation, while at the same time evoking the noisy atmosphere of close-quarter living in the city. Adding a further touch of realism to Kyōka’s description of Fukagawa is his mention of piled-up lumber. For the contemporary reader, the logs would recall the adjacent area of Kiba (literally “place of trees”) where lumber was shipped in from forested mountains and valleys throughout the country. Kiba, in turn, was another romanticized area of Edo in the early modern period, when its bridges and lumberyards were featured in plays and *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints.

While details of *kiyomoto* performance and the lumber trade combine the space of the city with that of the stage, the detail of the Gifu lantern imparts the fictional space with a haunting, otherworldly quality, which prefigures the ghostly atmosphere of Kyōka’s later urban

³⁵ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 4:48-49.

fiction. At the center of Kyōka's description of the alleyway in Fukagawa is the soft glow of the Gifu lantern, an artisanal object made in Gifu, central Japan, from bamboo and delicately painted *mino washi* paper. Lanterns typically contain a single candle within a casing of colored paper, which imparts a soft light, particularly when compared to the brighter lights of the gas lanterns that were becoming increasingly common in central Tokyo and spreading to the farther reaches of the city. In the narrator's description, the lantern is hidden between a faded lattice window and rattan blinds, which would only further blunt its light. The image of the lantern is thus one of a barely visible glow in the back alley, where even the sky is hidden from view by a pile of recently cut lumber. The butterflies on the lantern hint at an ephemeral, dreamlike quality of the alleyway, particularly in the context of Kyōka's literature, where butterflies often precede an entrance into dream states or altered realities. The ghostliness of the alleyway is accentuated when it is later visited by Okimi shortly before her death. The narrator describes: "She entered under darkness, but the Gifu paper lantern hanging in the middle of the alleyway suddenly flared up and bathed her in the watery blue color of its light as the sound of her clacking *geta* faded away."³⁶ The watery blue light foreshadows Okimi's death by the edge of the water, the flaring lantern precedes the burning out of her life, and the fading of her footsteps heralds her disappearance into the shadowy realm of the afterlife. It is a trope that Kyōka would pick up again in his later urban fiction, most prominently in *Nihonbashi* (1914), where disembodied footsteps hint at the existence of a ghost in the alleyway.

In addition to being one of Kyōka's earliest dramatic successes, *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* was also one of the most richly illustrated pieces of Kyōka's early fiction, beginning a long association of lavish illustration with his Tokyo stories. The work was published in *Shinshōsetsu* magazine in February, 1898 together with six black-and-white photoplate illustrations, each by a different artist, including a diptych by renowned woodblock print artist Chikanobu and individual prints by veteran illustrators, such as Mizuno Toshikata, Tomioka Eisen, and Suzuki Kason. As Yoshida Masashi points out, the release of *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* marked the first time that such high-profile artists were attached to one of Kyōka's projects, which might be taken as evidence of the author's increasingly secure position in the literary establishment, as well as the publisher's confidence in the success of the work. Commenting on the effect of the illustrations, Yoshida writes, "each artist approached the work with a different style, as informed by their respective artistic lineages, and attempted to recreate a particular scene by grasping its emotive qualities..."³⁷ The results of their efforts differ markedly in emphasis and range from dramatic, kabuki-style images that resemble Edo period *nigao-e* (actor portraits), to quiet urban landscapes that correspond to Kyōka's romantic descriptions of Fukagawa in the text. Taken together, the images highlight the overlapping interests of the text, both as a romantic account of contemporary Fukagawa and its watery geography, and as a melodramatic urban tale laden with theatrical effects.

The opening illustration in *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, by Nakamura Fusetsu (1866-1943), introduces the setting of Fukagawa as a place of poetic interest by combining a romantic depiction of boats on the water with a poem that evokes the classical atmosphere of the neighborhood: "Oyster shells! Plovers scatter to the sound of clacking *geta* clogs."³⁸ The print depicts a group of rowboats floating on a misty, moonlit bay, with a dark grove of pine trees and a cluster of thatch-roofed houses depicted in the distant background. In the text, Kyōka sets the

³⁶ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 4:70.

³⁷ Yoshida Masashi, "Izumi Kyōka to sashie gaka: Kaburaki Kiyokata," 200-201.

³⁸ *Kakigara ya! Geta no ha oto ni tobu chidori*.

scene of the story by describing an urban setting at the edge of the water, where crowded city streets collide with the vastness of the ocean beyond. By mixing details of modern city space with poetic descriptions of the natural world that surrounds it, Kyōka evokes an urban landscape that is both contemporary and timeless:

As they passed over another bridge, a rowboat appeared in the canal, with fourteen or fifteen passengers aboard, moving rapidly downstream. In the light of the moon, one passenger held a fan, another wore a straw hat, and all wore cloudy white kimono, as the boat left a wake like black ink on the surface of the water. Suddenly, the boat disappeared beneath a bridge, a crow cawed, and as it flew away, it entered into the distant mist that hung over the sea. In the faraway white haze, vast and infinite, stood a thin grove of pine trees. The shaft of the rickshaw nearly grazed a boat moored in a sandy landing at the edge of the street, where fourteen or fifteen boats were all lined up in a row, the prow of one framed against the sky like a chimney. Humble roofs like straw matting on tea huts appeared here and there, in between the boats, vividly lit by the light of the moon. Up ahead, at the lower edge of the vast sky, in between the gaps of starry clusters, the pale blue electric lights of Susaki shone like lotus blossoms fluttering in the wind.³⁹



Figure 95 - *Rumors from the Southeast Quarters* (1898), illustration by Nakamura Fusetsu

Nakamura responds to Kyōka's description of the landscape with a watercolor image of the sky, ocean, boats, distant roofs, and a grove of pine trees, all shrouded in shadows. The water colors of Fusetsu's illustration run together, blurring individual elements into a continuum of hazy gray. Dotting the natural scenery are oarsmen, tightly-packed houses, and a towering electric pole, all of which add a sense of crowding and human activity to the image. Like Kyōka's textual description of Fukagawa, Nakamura's illustration of the city melds poetic sensibility with modern techniques of realism. Demonstrating verisimilitude with the real world, Fusetsu's illustration of boats on the water includes a depiction of the vessels' shadowy reflections, which break up realistically on the softly undulating surface of the bay below. Techniques of shading

³⁹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 4:3-4.

and gradation suggest the haziness of a moonlit evening, while fading in the background creates the impression of distance. The atmosphere of the setting, as in Kyōka's text, is one of tranquil melancholy, where a still night on the water is accentuated by languorous plumes of smoke and low-hanging clouds. Before the action of the story even begins, Fukagawa is displayed as a setting with a rich history of poetic associations, worthy of illustration as a subject in its own right, with or without actors to fill its space.

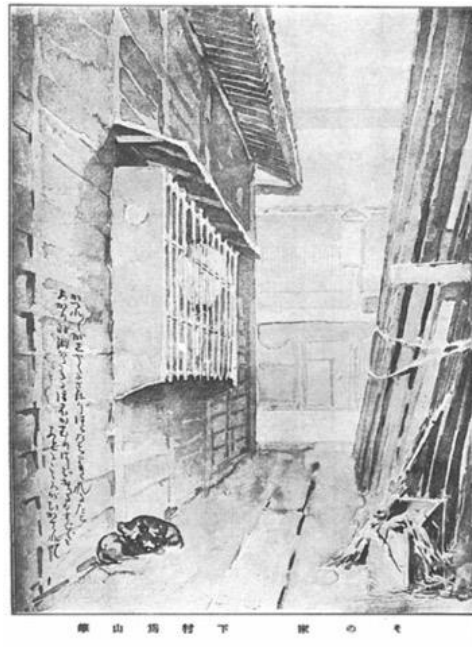


Figure 96 - *Rumors from the Southeast Quarters*, illustration by Shimomura Izan

The other landscape illustration in *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, by Shimomura Izan (1865-1949), depicts the alleyway with the Gifu lantern in the neighborhood of Tomioka Monzenchō. In the text, the location is described only briefly—in the space of a single paragraph—as the focus of the narrative is instead on an extended dialogue that takes place between Okitsu and an old woman washing rice in the alleyway. Their conversation, related over roughly a dozen pages of text, focuses on Okitsu's unusual affection for young Kanae, thus foreshadowing the revelation that she is in fact his long-lost mother. In the illustration, Izan elides the characters and their conversation and focuses instead on depicting the space and setting of the alleyway—its only inhabitant, a single sleeping cat, is not even described in the text. Most of the other details of Izan's illustration, however, correspond precisely to Kyōka's description of the alleyway, including depictions of a Gifu lantern hidden behind a faded lattice window, as well as the stack of lumber piled high over the alley rooftops. Like Fusetsu, Izan uses techniques of shading and gradation to create shadows and a sense of distance in his illustration. The result is a depiction of urban space, from which the actors have been removed. It is a space of pure atmosphere, where the theatricality of the text is replaced by silent buildings, whose quiet façades become the subject of the scene.



Figures 97 and 98 - *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, illustrations by Tomioka Eisen and Suzuki Kason

Other images in *Southeast Quarter* combine characters with landscapes, thereby balancing the intrigue of the plot with poetic evocations of the setting. The story's second illustration, by Tomioka Eisen, depicts Okimi in an alleyway, where she is framed by the doorway of a crudely constructed hut. Eisen takes some liberties with his depiction, for while the text describes the alleyway in Irifunecchō as being so narrow that not even the light of the moon can shine through, in Eisen's illustration, Okimi appears to be living in the middle of a natural landscape, with pine trees and a misty moon dimly visible in the distance. The focus of Eisen's image is on the figure of Okimi, whose pallid skin, thin frame, and vaguely anxious expression all add up to the impression of a wasting beauty. Rather than a faithful depiction of any particular scene from the text, Eisen's illustration functions as a *bijinga* extracted from the narrative, which supplies the reader with a vision of Okimi as a classical beauty hidden in an impoverished urban landscape. The subsequent image, by Suzuki Kason, depicts Okitsu looking over her shoulder as she witnesses Kanae's fight on the Shiomi Bridge. Although the focus of the illustration is on the action of the scene, the image also features background elements that evoke a poetic impression of Fukagawa, such as a willow in the style of a classical *sumi-e* ink-painting and dusky silhouettes of traditional roofs and windows surrounded by the water of the bay. Melding poetry, theatricality, and urban realism, the image combines a view of Shiomi bridge, a familiar pathway in the contemporary urban landscape, with the intrigue of a play.

The final illustrations for *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* turn fully from landscape to human interest as they highlight the violent drama at the center of the story. One image, by Mizuno Toshikata, highlights the emotional charge of Okimi and Sōhei's dysfunctional relationship by putting the characters' feelings on clear display for the reader. In the image, both figures appear on a raised platform backed by a curtain, as though they are actors on a stage, and are dramatically poised in contrasting positions. Sōhei lies drunken on the floor next to an upturned cup. His head is poised on interlaced hands, his kimono is thrown open, revealing his hairy chest down to his waist, and one leg is propped over the other in a carefree manner. His eyes are screwed shut, suggesting both careful attention and a kind of melancholic pain, as he



Figures 99 and 100 - *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, illustrations by Mizuno Toshikata and Toyohara Chikanobu

listens to Okimi play the shamisen. Okimi, who sits with the elegant poise of a practiced performer, shows her emotions even more clearly than Sōhei. She shrinks back from the sight of him, her neck nearly contorted by the effort of turning away in disgust. The final illustration of *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, by Chikanobu, encapsulates the use of image to visually represent the narrative in a theatrical manner. The print depicts the climax of the story, when Okitsu attempts to shield Okimi from Sōhei's knife, in a style that recalls triptych prints of kabuki plays, in which characters are depicted in striking dramatic poses while in the midst of heated confrontations. Chikanobu's print features no background imagery, but rather focuses on the characters' intricate costume and contorted facial and bodily expressions, depicting the characters in the manner of a tableau vivant. Having begun with a quiet landscape image of Fukagawa, the illustrations end with a moment of pure theater, portending the work's eventual success as a spectacle of the stage.

In 1920, Kyōka partnered with Komura Settai to release *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* as a standalone book for the first time (it was originally published in a magazine, *Bungei kurabu*). The result of their collaboration was titled *Ehon tatsumi kōdan*, or literally *Picture-Book Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, and was published by Shun'yōdō in a luxurious volume with multiple, full-color prints. The addition of *ehon* (picture-book) to the title suggested that the work was conceived fundamentally as a combination of text and image, in the manner of Edo period fiction, in which terms such as *ehon* and *kusazōshi* were often used interchangeably to describe texts that featured illustration as an essential component of their form. Bolstering the idea that images played an important role in the original narrative, the new version of *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* featured reproductions of all of the original illustrations, reprinted and rendered in full color by Settai. Further adding to the visual interest of the text was a newly illustrated book cover, which highlighted the setting of the story, Fukagawa, as an element of central interest to the work. The new cover juxtaposes an *ukiyo-e* style image of Okimi over an accurately rendered map of Fukagawa, whose streets and neighborhoods are all carefully labeled in cartographic format. The new image reinforces the connection between the drama of the story, as a *fūzoku mono*, and the atmosphere of the urban setting, which serves as both the subject and the background for the dramatic narrative.



Figure 101 – *Picture-Book Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* (1920), book cover, Settai

The new cover of *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* consists of a title with a vermillion-ink border, a framed image of Okimi, and, in the background, a detailed map of Fukagawa. The image of Okimi is done in the classical *ukiyo-e* style, with traditional facial features, such as rosebud lips and downcast eyes, delineated with a few simple strokes. Okimi's *yukata* is sober yet elegant, in the dark but tasteful *iki* style typical of *shitamachi* geisha, while the individuated hairs of her lacquered coiffure shimmer off of the page. Such an image would hardly have been out of place in a novel published twenty or thirty years earlier, and thus might be taken as a nostalgic tribute to the time period in which the story was originally printed. Sitting squarely on the front cover, the image stands as a symbol of the *fūzoku mono* as a whole, or as a visual marker for a form of fiction that took the suffering of geisha as a central theme. Contrasting with this image, however, is the map of Fukagawa in the background, which highlights the geography of the story as a central component of its aesthetic interest. Using the visual form of the map, Settai contextualizes the setting of the story, Fukagawa, within the larger space of Tokyo, clarifying its position at the very edges of the city, where water overtakes urban space. At the edges of the map, in the neighborhoods where the story takes place, tightly packed streets and alleyways alternate with moats and canals, while square blocks of land provide visual evidence of Fukagawa's origins, as land reclaimed from the ocean, for habitation by the city's poorest citizens. With its visual abstraction of urban space, the map on the book cover underscores the nature of Fukagawa as the "floating world," in both literal and metaphorical senses. As a world of geisha and popular entertainment, Fukagawa is a "floating" island in the illusory stream of life. As a neighborhood at the edges of inhabitable urban space, Fukagawa floats on the ocean, on land that is barely there, in neighborhoods that are equal parts water and narrow alleyways.

Looking closely at Settai's map of Fukagawa, one finds that the locations featured in *Rumors of the Southeast Quarter* are all carefully labeled, including Irifunehō, the Shiomi Bridge, and Tomioka Monezenchō. In the text, these locations all appear like disconnected

stages, as the protagonist, Kanae, wanders through the mazelike backstreets of the *shitamachi* on foot, but on the book cover, they are all contextualized within the larger area of Tokyo as a unified space. Rather than a disconnected stage, Irifunehō becomes a node in a network of urban markers, connected by the Shiomi bridge to Suyachō, and by three other bridges to Hiraichō, Kibachō, and Tajimachō. In the top-left corner of the map (in the southeast direction) lies the most prominently labeled location, the pleasure quarters of Susaki, which appears as an artificial block of land connected by bridge to Nishi Hiraichō. Every canal, waterway, artificial lake, and enclosed body of water in Fukagawa is delineated, giving the reader a clear impression of the neighborhood's aquatic nature, along with an overview of its labyrinthine structure and lack of space to grow.

The back cover of *Picture-Book Rumors from the Southeast Quarters* moves westward, towards the neighborhood of Tomioka Monzenchō (also in Fukagawa) where the alleyway with the Gifu lantern in the text is located. Rather than stop there, however, the map continues into the surrounding areas, almost all of them unrelated to the story. Neighborhoods housing well-known shrines and temples are all labeled, such as Kiyosumi, Fuyuki, and Morishita, as are primarily residential areas, like Etchūjima and Furuishibachō, both of which jut out into the sea. The guide extends beyond the limits of Fukagawa into east-central Tokyo, with the neighborhoods of Kakigarachō and Hakozakichō in the Nihonbashi district labeled at the western edge of the map. Also labeled are famous sights of eastern Tokyo, such as the Fukagawa Fudōson temple,⁴⁰ the Tomioka Hachiman Shrine, the Eitai bridge, and the New Ōhashi bridge, the latter two of which span the Sumida River. Although none of these areas are even mentioned in the story (with the exception of Tomioka Monzenchō), their appearance on the book cover highlights the setting of the work in the center of the *shitamachi*, with reference to popular temples and shrines that draw visitors from all over Tokyo, including from distant *yamanote*.

For readers who first encountered *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter* in “picture-book” form, the central interest of the work's setting would have been immediately clear. Holding a book whose text was ensconced in a carefully detailed map of Fukagawa, the setting of the work would have been at the center of the reading experience every time the story was revisited. In a sense, the reader would have entered the *Southeast Quarter* only after passing through the map, which stood as a visual threshold to the text, time and time and again. Once inside the text, the reader would have encountered the illustrations from the original version of the story, which combined elements of contemporary urban geography with kabuki theater, before ending on Chikanobu's highly theatrical setup, in a classical scene of murder-suicide. Closing the book, the reader would have returned to the map of Fukagawa, once again encountering the city as both a geographic point in the modern urban landscape and as a virtual stage for the enactment of social drama. Together, text and image create the impression of an illusory “floating world,” in which map and stage reveal two sides of the same urban experience.

Tale of the Vigil: From Bright Stage to Dark Night

Following the commercial success of *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, Kyōka continued to produce urban fiction with a pronounced theatrical quality, beginning with his next hit, *Tale of the Vigil* (1899), a serialized newspaper novel that again reached its widest audience as a *shinpa* play. When it was first serialized in the *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun* in 1899, *Tale of the*

⁴⁰ Officially the Narita-san Tōkyō Betsuin Fudō-dō, the branch hall of the Shingon temple in Narita is colloquially known as Fukagawa Fudōson.

Vigil was accompanied by thirty-two illustrations by Sakata Kōsetsu (1871-1935), a staff artist who regularly illustrated transcripts of popular oral narratives (*kōdan*) and adaptations of kabuki plays, which appeared daily in newspapers throughout the Keihan area.⁴¹ Considering the circumstances of his work's publication, it is reasonable to assume that Kyōka tailored *Tale of the Vigil* for an audience based in Osaka, where traditional narrative forms such as *kōdan* and kabuki remained popular well into the 20th century. The text itself reads like a virtual play script, consisting almost entirely of dramatic dialogue, with only occasional passages of descriptive prose to flesh out the background. Sakata's illustrations, which are redolent of the visual culture of kabuki, would have further encouraged the audience to read the work in the manner of a play. Featuring centralized images of the story's characters, who strike dramatic poses against sparsely decorated backgrounds, the illustrations suggest that the narrative takes place on a stage. Beneath the surface of Kyōka's theatrical presentation, however, lies a modern social drama in which theater becomes a metaphor for the contemporary urban experience. Picturing central Tokyo as a stage for the enactment of dark desires and rebellion, the text draws on the visual culture of *shinpa* and kabuki to express a nightmarish vision of life in the city.

Upon first encountering *Tale of the Vigil*, the location of the story might appear like an insignificant afterthought, as the particularities of the setting are hardly described in the text at all. Unlike *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, *Tale of the Vigil* features almost no description of background, as the setting is given only as "the corner of the intersection where the road turns towards Sendagi, on top of Komagome-Hakusan hill,"⁴² in an area that is dark, rainy, and lined with "rows of perfectly square, black houses."⁴³ Rather than setting, the focus of the story is on dialogue and dramatic action, which unfolds within two sparsely described urban environments: one a city corner in north-central Tokyo and another a nondescript home in Ushigome, *yamanote*. The illustrations in later versions of *Tale of the Vigil*, however, highlight precisely that which is ignored by the narrative—a description of the story's setting—despite the paucity of details offered by the text. The first illustration, created by Tomioka Eisen in 1901, takes the form of a map of Komagome-Hakusan hill, while a later illustration, made by Settai in 1915, elaborates on the space of the corner where the story opens. While both images distort the work by emphasizing elements mostly ignored by the text, they also suggest an alternative reading of the story, not as a play, but as a literary transformation of the city into a metaphorical stage.

By the time of *Tale of the Vigil*'s original serialization in 1899, Kyōka had apparently gained a reputation as a difficult writer, as suggested by an advertisement in the *Mainichi shinbun* that claimed that his newest work would be "free of obscure passages" (*kaijūten naku*). The story evidently turned out to be less clear than promised, however, as a staff reviewer later felt it necessary to apologize for the "vague and obscure" (*mōrō kaijū*) work that was featured in the newspaper's pages—although he also implicitly chided the audience for not having the sophistication to read literature from Tokyo. He suggests that the publication of Kyōka's story in Osaka was part of a drive to introduce the literature of the capital to a regional audience, whom he writes were more accustomed to transcriptions of plays and oral performances than to the new format of serious literature produced in the capital.⁴⁴ He adds that the story of the previous

⁴¹ The area around Kyoto and Osaka, in Western Japan.

⁴² Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 4:436.

⁴³ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 4:440.

⁴⁴ Seki Hajime points out that Kyōka's debut, *Kanmuri Yazaemon* in Kyōto's *Hinode shinbun*, was similarly billed as a work by a major author from Tokyo as part of a drive for the newspaper to create a more modern and sophisticated image, but that the resulting story was too little differentiated from the rest of the *kōdan*-esque, historical fiction that already filled the newspaper's pages. See *Shinbun shōsetsu no jidai*, 177-188.

months, Hirotsu Ryūrō's "Twin Eddies, Double Suicide" ("Shinjū futatsu domoe," 1899) was meant as a warm up to the greater difficulty of Kyōka's writing, but laments that the Keihan audience was not yet ready for the challenge. On a positive note, he praises *Tale of the Vigil* for its vivid scenes and dramatic quality and suggests that it might have worked better as a play, which implies that, rather than a piece of "serious" naturalistic fiction, Kyōka's story was already written in a theatrical register that the regional audience would have been familiar with.

Despite its difficulty, *Tale of the Vigil* was successful enough for the *Osaka mainichi shinbun* to invite Kyōka to serialize another urban drama, *Three Page Foldout*, the following year; as further evidence of its success, it went on to be printed in Tokyo as a standalone book by major publishing house Shun'yōdō in 1901. The publication of *Tale of the Vigil* in book form made it widely available to an audience in Tokyo for the first time, but in its new setting it was immediately condemned by a literary establishment who found it to be hackneyed, old-fashioned, and excessively theatrical.⁴⁵ In a review in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, Masamune Hakuchō complained that the novel was full of character types (*kata*) drawn straight from Tokugawa period drama, while Chikamatsu Shūkō (1876-1944) wrote that the novel was little more than theater (*shibaimono*) and that it must have been written half in jest.⁴⁶ Similarly, an anonymous reviewer in *Teikoku bungaku* criticized the work for carrying on the old-fashioned style of *kusazōshi* writer Santō Kyōden and compared the book to a *shiranami* play, or a variety of kabuki play about chivalrous thieves made popular by Mokuami in the late 19th century.⁴⁷ Despite critical resistance, the work eventually became a popular success, especially after it was adapted as a *shinpa* play in the years following its original publication, when it went on to pack theaters in Osaka, Tokyo, and Yokohama.⁴⁸ Ironically, however, after its success on stage, numerous reviewers began to assert that the original text was a solid literary work as they derided the theatrical version for pandering to a popular audience. A common complaint by critics was that the play oversimplified the plot and characters of the story and rearranged the narrative into an easy scheme of good versus evil, with one writer from the *Tokyo nichichi shinbun* claiming that the clarifications of the narrative on stage "vulgarized" (*zokka*) the text in order to make it presentable to a wider audience.⁴⁹ Thus, while the text was originally criticized for its excessive theatricality, it was later praised for its literariness, especially when compared to the actual staged versions.⁵⁰ The original publication of *Tale of the Vigil* might have borrowed themes and motifs from kabuki, but it twisted them into a form that was not as easy to represent on the stage as the original reviewers had imagined.

In its narrative, *Tale of the Vigil* tells a sensational story of extortion, murder, and suicide involving a failed painter and a beautiful geisha. Kiyoshi is an artist from a well-off, aristocratic family but has fallen into disgrace due to a failed career and a scandalous relationship with Chōzan, a famous geisha from the Yoshiwara district. The pair has run out of money and decides to extort Kiyoshi's family by having Chōzan seduce Kiyoshi's uncle, but they are also prepared

⁴⁵ Iizuka Erito, "Tsuya monogatari jōen o megutte: Meiji yonjū nen zengo no Kyōka hyōka," *Kōhon kindai bungaku*, 15 (1990): 13-30.

Abe Ayumi, "Izumi Kyōka to kabuki: Tsuya monogatari o chūshin ni," *Bungaku*, 5.4 (2004): 56-65.

⁴⁶ See Abe, "Izumi Kyōka to kabuki," 57. Shūkō's criticism of the novel's theatricality is particularly ironic, considering that the author borrowed part of his penname from playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon in honor of his work.

⁴⁷ See Abe, "Izumi Kyōka to kabuki," 57.

⁴⁸ Iizuka, "Tsuya monogatari jōen o megutte," 17; 28.

⁴⁹ Iizuka, "Tsuya monogatari jōen o megutte," 24-25.

⁵⁰ Iizuka, "Tsuya monogatari jōen o megutte," 27.

to rob the family at knifepoint in case the extortion scheme goes wrong. In their poverty, Kiyoshi and Chōzan have become brazen criminals, yet they are still portrayed in a favorable light when compared to Kiyoshi's aristocratic family, who are guilty of the greater crimes of arrogance and condescension. Due to their behavior, Kiyoshi and Chōzan are indeed like characters from Mokaumi's *shiranami* plays of the late 1800's, who were often thieves and murderers but who were also romanticized for their uncompromising bravery. Reviewers of the play version of *Tale of the Vigil* recognized the importance of the pair's ambiguous moral nature and complained that the stage writers had reimagined Kiyoshi and Chōzan as rightful avengers who only settle on extortion after having been cheated themselves, thus making them more palatable to a popular audience accustomed to moralizing drama, but ruining the darker ending of the original text.

The narrative of *Tale of the Vigil* opens in front of an udon noodle stand on a hill in Hakusan-Komagome, north-central Tokyo, on a dark night. An old udon vendor tells a young man about a recent knife attack that convinced him to set up shop in a visible and permanent location, rather than risk wandering around the backstreets to sell food. The pair cowers in fear behind the stand when they see two shadows emerging from a dimly lit street, but the shadows turn out to belong to Kiyoshi and Chōzan, who are hardly sinister looking characters. Chōzan and Kiyoshi are both soaked from the rain and splattered in mud as they lament their pitiful situation. They are approached by a haggard old beggar who turns out to be Chōzan's father, and when he wrestles with her to try and find money in her pocket, she accidentally drops a butcher's blade, thus startling the onlookers who had just been discussing the recent stabbing.

The next chapter of the story opens in the residence of Kiyoshi's uncle in the upscale neighborhood of Ushigome in *yamanote*. Kiyoshi's aunt is furious and complains to her daughter, Osumi, that Kiyoshi recently showed up with a geisha to his grandfather's vigil. She remarks that the young man is an animal not fit for human company and that he is a disgrace to the family. In the middle of her tirade, Kiyoshi appears suddenly with Chōzan at his uncle's front door. The pair is drunk and visibly nervous, which leads Osumi to suspect the sinister intentions of their visit. Kiyoshi's uncle is not at home and so Chōzan attempts to seduce his cousin instead, but her antics arouse the wrath of the family and expose the couple's scheme. Chōzan and Kiyoshi are then terrified to find that Osumi's husband, a military officer named Shinoyama Rokuheida, has come home early. Kiyoshi's aunt berates the pair for their inhuman behavior and vows to teach them shame. The family rickshaw driver, Heisuke, begins to chant a crazed tune in imitation of a kabuki rhythm section as Rokuheida laughs uncontrollably. Rokuheida then forces Kiyoshi to drink a cup of sake as a symbol of submission, and at first it appears as though Kiyoshi will acquiesce, but then he bites the cup of sake so hard that it cuts his mouth and he spits bloody fragments of the vessel back into Rokuheida's face. In the final scene, Chōzan stabs Rokuheida to death with the butcher's blade then stabs herself in the chest, spurting blood all over the room, and then hands her soaking kimono to Kiyoshi, who uses the blood to paint an exact likeness of her on the wall. The image, a bloody silhouette, is the final masterpiece of a failed artist.

The structure, characters, and motifs of *Tale of the Vigil* all draw on kabuki to a degree that makes the story seem as though it was originally written for the stage. As contemporary reviewers pointed out, Chōzan and Kiyoshi are familiar character types from Edo period drama—a haughty and short-tempered geisha and a talented but dissolute youth (a pair known traditionally as *saishi kajin*, or “genius boy and beautiful woman”).⁵¹ Their similarity to character types was so strong that two separate reviewers suggested the same kabuki actors who

⁵¹ Iizuka, “*Tsuya monogatari jōen o megutte*,” 14-16.

would be suited for playing their parts, Onoe Kikugorō V for Kiyoshi and Sawamura Gennosuke IV (1859-1936) for Chōzan, the latter of whom would in fact go on to play Chōzan in 1909 in a critically acclaimed performance that reviewers claimed was made for him.⁵² Abe Ayumi points out that the opening scene of the work at an udon vendor is a variation of standard kabuki narratives that open at soba shops, such as Mokuami's *Island Plovers and Moonlit Waves* (*Shima chidori tsuki no shiranami*), a *shiranami* play starring Kikugorō first staged in 1881.⁵³ Abe also points out that extortion plots are particularly common in kabuki, especially those in which a male and female pair attempt to draw a figure into a compromising sexual liaison, only to be judged for their schemes in the final scene.⁵⁴ Apart from its structural similarities to kabuki, *Tale of the Vigil* also explicitly references the theater throughout its pages. When Chōzan's father first runs into the couple on a dark and rainy night, he says they must be out on their *michiyuki*, or a theatrical scene in which ill-fated lovers proceed to the location of their double suicide. Later, when Chōzan and Kiyoshi arrive at his uncle's home, Kiyoshi scolds his cousin Osumi for treating him like Tamate Gozen, a character who is refused entrance to her father's home in the *jōruri* and kabuki play *Gappō and his Daughter Tsuji in Sesshū* (*Sesshū gappō ga tsuji*). Chōzan then appears from behind him and shouts a drawn out "Yamatoya," which is the *yagō*, or stage name, of Bandō Shūchō II (1848-1901), who played Tamate Gozen in *Gappō and his Daughter*.⁵⁵ In kabuki theaters, *yagō* are shouted out by the audience upon the appearance of favorite actors or as cheers for a skillful performance, and Chōzan's use of the *yagō* at this point draws a parallel between Kiyoshi's arrival at his uncle's home and the appearance of an actor onstage. These theatrical moments are so pronounced that it is not difficult to see why reviewers immediately drew connections between *Tale of the Vigil* and Edo period drama.

Once again, it is ironic that reviewers of the theatrical version of *Tale of the Vigil* found the original text to be more convincing than the play, especially when earlier reviewers found the text to be too theatrical to be convincing as proper literature. What both sides overlooked, however, is that despite all of its theatrical references, *Tale of the Vigil* was not originally a play, but rather represented elements of theater in textual form, thus turning them into uncanny semblances of the stage. One of the strongest examples of the text's meta-theatrical method can be found in the final scene, when Kiyoshi's aunt suddenly takes over the role of the narrator and Heisuke, the rickshaw driver, starts to mimic kabuki rhythms, which, when transcribed into text, become unintelligible gibberish. At the beginning of the penultimate chapter, Kiyoshi's aunt suddenly addresses all onlookers of the scene as though they were the audience of a play:

“Ladies and gentleman!⁵⁶ Please direct your attention here. To the right stands the lustful artist, yes, yes, him indeed, the performer known as Tamagawa Kiyoshi! His accomplice is Chōzan.” Osumi's mother was pleased with the fluency of her own delivery and pressed on excitedly.⁵⁷

⁵² Abe, “Izumi Kyōka to kabuki,” 56. The actors are suggested by the original reviewer in the May 9, 1899 issue of *Osaka mainichi shinbun* and later by Masamune Hakuchō in the May 13, 1901 issue of *Yomiuri shinbun*.

⁵³ Abe, “Izumi Kyōka to kabuki,” 59.

⁵⁴ Abe, “Izumi Kyōka to kabuki,” 60.

⁵⁵ In the text Kyōka adds “shodai,” or first generation, in parenthesis, apparently referencing Bandō Shūchō I (dates unknown), but he more likely means to refer to Bandō Shūchō II, who was famous for his role as Tamate Gozen.

⁵⁶ Literally *tōzai*, or “East and West,” a phrase with a similar function as “Ladies and gentleman” in addressing a crowd.

⁵⁷ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 4:538.

The end of the last sentence is delivered as *togaki*, or stage direction, preceded by the *katakana* syllable *to* (ト) as an indicator that the sentence that follows (“pressed on excitedly”) functions like a direction for a stage actor. Thus, although the aunt turns suddenly into the “narrator” of the story, she is still being narrated by another voice who continues to direct her movements via the use of *togaki*. She continues, “Look here! His companion is known as Chōzan,” after which the narrator describes the audience’s reaction: “The crowd gathered before her suddenly burst into laughter and her delivery grew more and more fluid.” The audience of this “play,” then, consists simultaneously of the characters within the text and the readers who follow the scene.

After naming the performers, the aunt goes on to describe their reactions with a mix of narrative description and theatrical punctuation:

“Ladies and gentlemen, even as I introduce them, look! The man’s face is drained of color, he trembles as he shuts his eyes. Oh, that’s it! A natural, uncontrollable tremor. And the woman! She bites her loose hair and clenches her teeth as she suffers. It’s just like Dōjōji’s hate for the morning bell after his night of love-making.⁵⁸ That’s it, that’s it!”

The text then takes an even stranger turn when Heisuke begins to imitate a theatrical percussion section, “*Chi, chi, tekere, tekere, don, don*” and then “*Te, te, te, tekere, tekere don, don*” and so on intermittently until the conclusion. Rokuheida adds his blithe laughter into the mix, “Aa, haha, aa, haha,” as the textual representation of narration, percussion, and the audience’s reaction builds into a nearly unintelligible frenzy. When Rokuheida presses Kiyoshi to submit and drink a cup of sake, the aunt’s words turn passionately violent: “Ladies and gentlemen, if he says drink then fucking drink, right? Oh boy, oh boy, he’ll split his fucking mouth and make him drink if he refuses, *ah, ah*.” Heiseuke adds one more beat, “*Te te te, tekere don don*,” and then the narrative tension suddenly explodes as Kiyoshi revolts:

Kiyoshi’s lip trembled as he clenched his eyes shut, but when Rokuheida pushed the cup to his mouth, he grabbed it with his front teeth and bit into it with a crunch. Sake spilled on the tatami floor and the cup cracked into pieces. Kiyoshi cut his lip on the broken cup, causing crimson blood to pour from his mouth. As Rokuheida stared on in disbelief, Kiyoshi suddenly spit blood red saliva mixed with fragments of the cup full into his face.

The bloody scene never made it into the theatrical version of *Tale of the Vigil* and the critics took notice, citing its omission as one of the more unfortunate aspects of the play. They would have to take into consideration, however, the difficulty of showing such action on stage. Scenes of spitting in anger are common in kabuki, but they are also largely symbolic, consisting of codified gestures and not the actual act. The text’s specific description of Kiyoshi chewing the cup, cutting his lip, and spitting saliva mixed with blood and sharp fragments appears much clearer in the mind’s eye than it can from the distance of a theater seat. It is an example of where Kyōka’s *fūzoku mono* reached beyond traditional theatrical expression, and towards a surreal exhibition of symbolic violence.

⁵⁸ The reference is to the famous Nō play *Dōjōji*, which was also frequently staged as a kabuki play.



Figure 102 - *Tale of the Vigil*, Osaka mainichi shinbun, installment #31, illustration by Sakata Kōsetsu

While much of the theatrical audience of the *Tale of the Vigil* would have had a distant view of the action on stage, the original readers of the newspaper serialization were provided with close-up images of the entire story in the form of thirty-two illustrations by Sakata Kōsetsu, which would have encouraged them to imagine the text as a virtual play. In the illustration of the sake cup incident, Kiyoshi clenches his jaw and turns away from the brutish Rokuheida, who grasps his shoulder with hairy knuckles as he pushes the cup towards his mouth. Chōzan looks on with an expression of disgust, her eyebrows knit and mouth upturned, as she reaches into her kimono for the knife. The stabbing does not occur until the following installment, but observant readers might recall from an earlier scene that Chōzan had a blade tucked into the inner pocket of her kimono and would be held in suspense as they imagined the impending confrontation. The background of the scene is completely blank as the image focuses instead on the placement of the three characters in relation to one another and details their facial expressions and gestures, highlighting the physical tension between them. In the final installment of the story, the illustration depicts what would become the most iconic scene of *Tale of the Vigil*, or the painting of Chōzan's image in blood. An exact likeness of her figure adorns the wall and drips blood onto a floor where a butcher's blade and kimono lie in a gory puddle. A similar image would later adorn the cover of the book version of *Tale of the Vigil* before becoming one of the most celebrated scenes of the play. Reviews of the staged version recorded that actors actually performed a lightning-fast painting in blood-red ink and that they were trained by famous artists to pull off the sleight-of-hand.⁵⁹ An *ebanzuke* (illustrated playbill) from 1906 also shows the scene in the center of the page, with Kiyoshi painting the geisha's image on the screen as Rokuheida lies covered in blood on the floor. As improbable as the scene might have sounded when described in text alone, when illustrated or reenacted on stage, it left a visual impression that turned the audacious act into one of the most memorable moments of the work.

Another famous scene from the novel hints at the central role that illustration played in the original publication, for while it is barely mentioned in the text, it is prominently illustrated on the page of the newspaper; it was pointed out by a staff reviewer as one of the most

⁵⁹ Iizuka Erito, "Tsuya monogatari jōen o megutte," 26.

memorable moments of the story, before going on to be featured as the frontispiece of the book version of the text. In the scene, Chōzan tosses a coral hairpin from a second-floor balcony to her maid, Omatsu, just to grab her attention. The moment is narrated in a flashback by Omatsu as she recalls her former employer's uncommon generosity, but it is related in a jumble of voices that hardly gives a clear image of the action that takes place.

“Once she was standing on the second floor by the railing in her red under-kimono. I was about to take the backstreet to Sumichō by the rainwater tank when she called, ‘Macchan, hold on a minute,’ and I answered, ‘Ah, later,’ because I was in a hurry. ‘Oh come on, let’s go play,’ ‘Later,’ ‘You’re stubborn,’ ‘I’m in a hurry,’ ‘Oh come on,’ ‘Can’t do it,’ ‘Not at all?’ ‘Ah!’ I said annoyed and got on my way. ‘Well take this then. How about it? Will that stop your feet?’ she said just as I was covering my face with my sleeve and hurrying away. Can you believe it? A coral hairpin, or something like that, who would throw that just to stop someone from leaving?”⁶⁰

In contrast to the tangled delivery of the text, the original newspaper illustration captures the scene with a clear and spectacular setup. The moment of the toss is depicted with a vertical, double-framed print that places Chōzan in the top frame behind a balcony and Omatsu on the bottom frame as she looks back over her shoulder at a coral hairpin that floats between the edges of both images. A line of dialogue in *kagikakkō* (quotation marks) appears above Chōzan’s head and clarifies the subject of the image: “Well, take this then. How about it? Will that stop your feet?” The double-framed image is a *tobi-e* (flying picture) of the kind that was commonly used in Edo period illustrated fiction to approximate the live action of the stage.



Figure 103 – Tale of the Vigil, installment #16

⁶⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 4:490.



Figures 104, 105, 106, and 107 - *Tale of the Vigil*, installments #6, #17, #8, and #23

As with Chikanobu's print in *Rumors from the Southeast Quarter*, *Tale of the Vigil's* illustrations emphasize the work's theatrical mode by focusing on drama and the emotive expression of character while using backdrops in a manner that suggests the space of a stage. When depicting outdoor scenes, Sakata uses almost no background details, but rather fills in the empty space of his illustrations with swathes of black ink that represent the darkness of night. When representing inner chambers, Sakata includes more details than in his city views, but they are still the bare minimum required to evoke the space of a room, such as a sliding door, a charcoal brazier, or a dresser. Much like the decoration of a stage, the background details imply a setting rather than fully describe its every corner. Sakata's illustrations again recall the setup of a stage in their prominent use of motifs of lighting, both in the form of paper lanterns and a gas lamp. His depiction of the lamp is often massive—much too large to exist within the mimetic

space of the scene—and hangs ominously in the picture with no clear connection to the structure of the room. Like the lighting of a stage, it serves to draw the viewer’s attention to the locus of action while exposing the scandalous moments of the story for the entire audience to see.



Figures 108 and 109 - *Tale of the Vigil* (*Ōsaka mainichi shinbun*, 1900), installment #32, by Sakata Kōsetsu and *Tale of the Vigil* (Shun’yōdō version, 1901) cover art by Tomioka Eisen

In 1901, Tomioka Eisen designed the sleeve, book cover, and frontispiece for the Shun’yōdō edition of *Tale of the Vigil* with new illustrations, thereby replacing dozens of pictures with a handful of images that were tasked with capturing the central visual interest of the work. For the cover and the frontispiece, he depicted two of the most famous scenes from the story, or Kiyoshi’s painting in blood and Chōzan’s tossing of the coral hairpin. For the cover illustration, Eisen depicted Chōzan’s bloody portrait in red next to a line of cursive text reading “pure heart” (*kiyoraka na kokoro*). Eisen’s image of the bloody painting resembles the version that first appeared in the *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun*, as it shows Chōzan from a rear three-quarter angle (even if from the opposite side) while emphasizing the folds in her kimono and the towering structure of her *taka-shimada* bun. On the other hand, Eisen’s image is harder to read than the earlier print, as it lacks the context of the knife and the puddle of blood that appear in the newspaper illustration, as well as the telltale quotation from the text printed onto the wall (“taking the dripping, blood-drenched kimono in hand, he painted with a single brushstroke on the four-paneled folding screen...”). In fact, unless the reader is thoroughly familiar with the content of the story, it would be difficult to notice any meaning in the image at all.

Like the cover, Eisen’s frontispiece for *Tale of the Vigil* highlights the action of the story while eliding content that might have given a clearer meaning to the image. The frontispiece depicts the scene in which Chōzan tosses the coral hairpin to Omatsu, with both characters appearing in separate frames, but unlike in the newspaper illustration, the hairpin is tucked into



Figure 110 - *Tale of the Vigil* (Shun'yōdō version), frontispiece, Tomioka Eisen

the bottom of Omatsu's frame and is easily overlooked. Moreover, the structure of the balcony is entirely missing, thus making it difficult to imagine the space in which the action takes place. Rather than a clear narrative moment, the image focuses on color, design, and the technique of woodblock printing. Looking closely at the image, one notices that Chōzan's towering bun is painted with black lacquer, which reflects brightly off of the page, while her decorative collar (*han'eri*) includes waves painted in glittering silver mica. Her clothing makes full use of the technology of color printing and features a purple kimono printed with vines of blue flowers and red, brown, and green leaves and an orange-red under-kimono that shows around her neck and the hems of her sleeves. Omatsu, though less colorful than Chōzan, is similarly printed with a number of tiny details, including red, blue, and white birds against a light purple background on her decorative collar and a twisting streak of blue along the outer edges of her black *obi*. In contrast to the skill shown in the coloring, the poses of the characters are stiff and the action is awkward, especially when compared to Eisen's more polished images. The richness of the colors and materials used in the frontispiece indicate that the focus of the image was more on flash and design than on representation of the narrative. Together, the cover and the frontispiece do little to hint at the content of the story, for which the reader must refer to the text.

While images on the cover and frontispiece of *Tale of the Vigil* adopt the theatrical perspective used in the original illustration of the work, the book sleeve opens a new view onto the story by providing a map of its setting. During the Meiji period, books were sold in illustrated paper casings known as a *fukuro* (literally "bag"), which often sported lavishly printed pictures that served to introduce the work to a buying audience.⁶¹ As the first element of a text encountered by the reader at the bookstand, the *fukuro* hinted at the aesthetic interest of the work within, and likely colored the reader's subsequent experience of the story. By visually representing *Tale of the Vigil* with a map, then, the book sleeve suggests that the setting of the

⁶¹ Because *fukuro* were made of especially fragile paper, most have been lost or destroyed. Books with preserved illustrated casings are especially rare items, which are prized by book collectors.

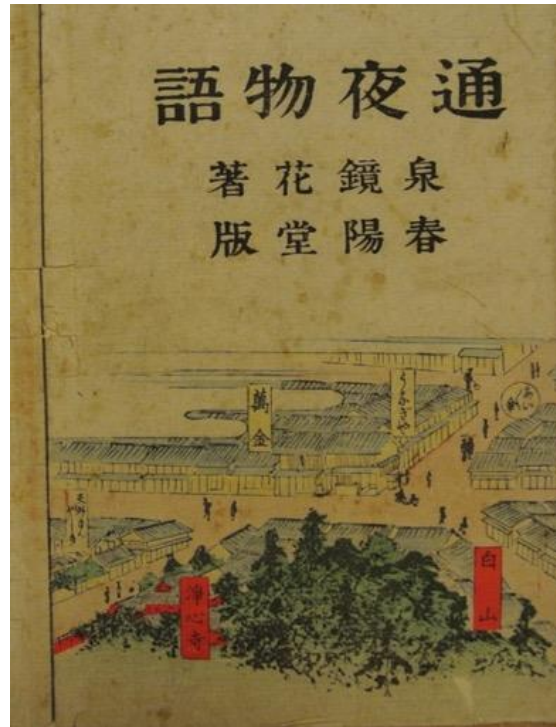


Figure 111 - *Tale of the Vigil* (Shun'yōdō version), sleeve

work is a more important element of the narrative than the text might lead one to believe. From the sleeve, the reader is able to gather that the work takes place in Hakusan (whose eponymous shrine is prominently labeled in the image), while further inspection reveals an even more precise location: the corner at the top of Komagome-Hakusan hill.

As a prominent part of the contemporary cityscape, the setting of *Tale of the Vigil* in Komagome-Hakusan was loaded with social significance, which would have been readily understood by a Tokyo-based audience. The hilly area of Komagome-Hakusan depicted in the map lies in the northeastern reaches of central Tokyo, near the University of Tokyo,⁶² as well as several famous gardens, temples, and estates. It also sits, however, at the very *edge* of *yamanote*, not far from *shitamachi* neighborhoods such as Yanaka, Nezu, and Sendagi. In the Meiji period, it was home to shops, restaurants, drinking establishments, and an unlicensed geisha district that served as the setting for Higuchi Ichiyō's "Troubled Waters" ("Nigorie," 1895),⁶³ an iconic short story about a courtesan forced into a double suicide. The map on the sleeve of *Tale of the Vigil* centers on a major intersection at the top of Hakusan hill, where the road from *yamanote* leads to the flatlands of the *shitamachi* below. Duplicating the road's physical trajectory, the intersection at the top of the hill marks the outer edges of upper-class society in central Tokyo, before the road descends to the working-class spaces of the city's peripheral areas below. As a center of commerce and entertainment, Hakusan was frequented by a constantly shifting crowd, whose need for trade and desire for leisure would have drawn them in from both lower and higher lands

⁶² Formerly Tokyo Imperial University.

⁶³ Ichiyō's story is set in the marshy lowlands at the foot of Hakusan hill, in an area known historically as the Meishuya District of Maruyama Fukuyama-chō. See Maeda Ai, *Text and the City*, 332.

in the bordering areas. As a center of religious devotion, it was also home to numerous temples and shrines, which, during the day, would have attracted throngs of devotees from around the city. Komagome-Hakusan was thus a liminal area, neither *yamanote* nor *shitamachi*, both sophisticated and popular, equally near and far from the heart of political power situated at the city center. Rather than a randomly chosen corner, equal to any other corner in the city, it was a poignant location for a story of social decline, from high society to low, which used the road to Sendagi as a metaphor for the two-way direction of social mobility.

Eisen's map of Hakusan hill highlights the mixed religious and commercial nature of the neighborhood by depicting a combination of religious complexes, restaurants, and places of entertainment, most of them absent from Kyōka's narrative. Religious structures are labeled with red cartouches and include the Jōshinji Pure Land Buddhist Temple and Hakusan Shrine.⁶⁴ The places marked in yellow include a residence, a restaurant called Mankin,⁶⁵ and an eel restaurant (*unagiya*). In addition to real place names and geographical features, the map on the sleeve includes details that correspond to the narrative of *Tale of the Vigil*. The eel restaurant shown on the sleeve is the location where the udon vendor decides to set up shop, as described at the outset of the story. In line with the text, the location is depicted at the top of a hill, on the corner of a busy intersection. Beneath the eaves of the eel restaurant stand two tiny human figures, who represent the young man and the old noodle vendor who take cover behind the udon stand. Around the corner is a circular cartouche containing the poetic expression *aiaigasa*, or "meeting under the same umbrella," which appears next to two small figures, who represent Kiyoshi and Chōzan as they wander down the road to Sendagi. Despite Eisen's attention to detail, however, the map also departs significantly from Kyōka's description of Komagome-Hakusan in its tone. For one, the city is printed in bright colors, including vibrant yellows, reds, and blues, which hardly gives the impression of a dark and rainy night. Moreover, the map depicts a crowd of pedestrians, including a few who appear to be young children playing with toys, which clearly departs from Kyōka's description of an eerie and semi-deserted nighttime scene.

A more faithful depiction of the opening scene of *Tale of the Vigil* would only appear some fourteen years later, in the endpapers of *Kyōka's Collected Works* (*Kyōka senshū*, 1915), a luxury volume of the author's signature geisha stories. Featuring illustrations by Settai, the volume included *Tale of the Vigil*, *Worship at Yushima*, and *A Woman's Lineage* in a pocket-sized book, with minutely detailed woodblock images included on the front and back endpapers. Settai's single illustration for *Tale of the Vigil* depicts the opening scene of the narrative, in which the artist visualizes the handful of details used to describe the setting in the text (including the aforementioned "rows of perfectly square, black houses"). At the same time, Settai's image clearly references earlier illustrations of the road to Sendagi, as found in the *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun* and Shun'yōdō versions of the text, both of which depict the same nighttime scene in front of the udon vendor's stand. Settai's image might even be read as a close-up of Eisen's map, as some of the buildings that appear in his illustration are strikingly similar to corresponding structures found in the earlier publication. Like many of Settai's illustrations, the endpaper image for *Tale of the Vigil* goes beyond the text in creating an atmosphere of mystery and foreboding at

⁶⁴ The Hakusan Shrine in Tokyo is a subsidiary of the main shrine located near Kanazawa. The head shrine and surrounding mountainous area are often featured in Kyōka's Kanazawa stories.

⁶⁵ Matsukawa Jirō records much later, in 1932, that there was a famous restaurant in Hakusan called Mankin. He also points out that there are many restaurants and tea houses in Hakusan with the character "kin" (gold) in their name, making it likely that this particular establishment would fall into the same category, even if it is not the same Mankin as before. See *Zenkoku kagai meguri*, 85.

the center of the story. With its muted color palette, unnaturally sharp angles, rigid line work, and inaccessible spaces, the image twists the city into something that is neither stage nor real urban geography. It is, instead, an image of the city as dream, and, depending on the perspective of the viewer, a nightmare of oppressive geometry.

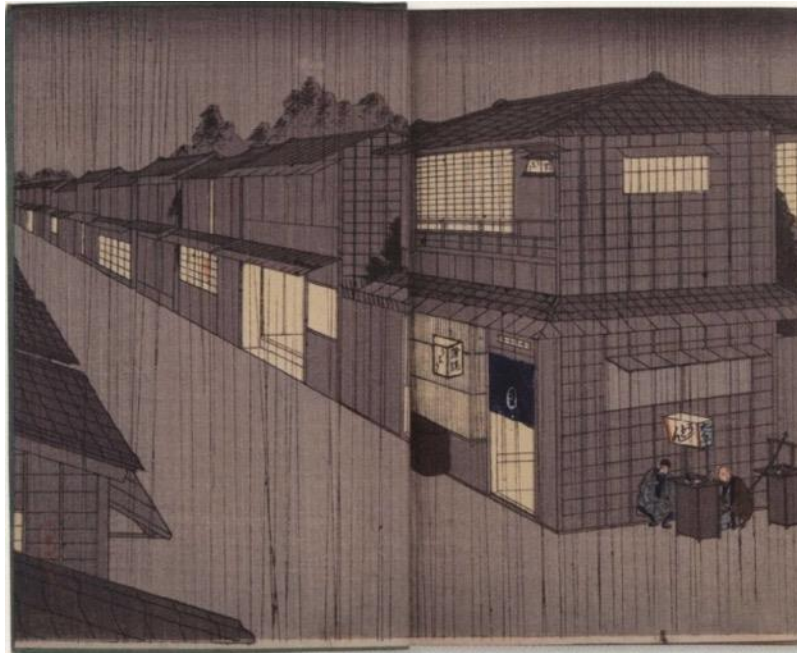


Figure 112 - *Tale of the Vigil* (from *Kyōka's Selected Works*, 1915), back endpapers, by Settai

Rather than the clear overhead vista provided by Eisen's map, Settai opts for a claustrophobic perspective of the road to Sendagi with a street-level view. His cityscape emphasizes the eerie atmosphere of Kyōka's text by restoring its nighttime setting and including an all-encompassing cover of rain. His palette consists primarily of grays, from light gray to dark gray, which color almost every element of the image, including streets, roofs, walls, guard spikes, trees, and an overcast sky. His buildings are box-like, mechanical façades, constructed by networks of linear grids that outline tiles, wooden panels, and lattice slats. The angularity of his buildings is compounded by an exaggerated linear perspective, which distorts the space of the physical world by stretching out its lateral dimensions. The street, set along rigidly-defined, converging lines, appears to recede into an infinite distance, whose endpoint lies permanently out of sight. Looking closer, one notices that Settai's depiction of the city is full of dead ends, closed doors, impossible structures, and other geometric abstractions, all of which symbolize exclusion or lack of access. The two human figures in the image—the *udon* vendor and the boy—are dwarfed by the alien world that surrounds them. They duck for cover behind the noodle stand, beneath overhanging eaves, as the heavy atmosphere of the city engulfs them. They, too, however, are not entirely human, as their perfectly blank faces lack eyes with which to behold the world around them. Together, the dark tone and inhuman quality of Settai's cityscape complement the nightmarish elements of the story within. Like Kyōka's text, Settai's image transforms the familiar setting of Komagome-Hakusan into an uncanny reflection of modern Tokyo. Full of dead ends and optical illusions, the cityscape threatens to trap the viewer's gaze within a dreamlike maze of urban space.

Chapter 6
Dreaming in the Alleyway:
Urban Perspective in the Work of Izumi Kyōka and Komura Settai



Figure 113 - *Nihonbashi* (1914), frontispiece, by Settai

Kyōka and Settai: The Dream Team

The sound of clacking wooden sandals resounds in a haunted alleyway in Kyōka's 1914 novel *Nihonbashi*. In a restaurant tucked deep into the shadows of the alleyway, Okō, a geisha, turns out the lights and tells medical student Katsuragi Shinzō to imagine her in whatever form he desires—as his older sister, younger sister, cousin, fiancée, wife, lover, a demon, a spirit, or even a giant snake. By turning out the lights, she is able to transform instantly into any of the beings that haunts his dreams, both human and otherwise. In the front endpapers of *Nihonbashi*, a woodblock illustration by artist Komura Settai depicts a woman staring down an alleyway at three dark figures in the distance. The scene is rendered in linear perspective and focuses the eye of the viewer on a narrow space at the far end of the alleyway, where the vanishing point lies. The identities of any of the women are impossible to ascertain, as one has her face turned away from the viewer and the other three appear only as ghostly silhouettes. Settai's artwork for *Nihonbashi*, as in many of Kyōka's later books, echoes the author's description of Tokyo as a tangled maze of dark streets and haunted alleyways. Rather than simply following along with the text, however, Settai makes use of the specific properties of his visual medium, especially line and perspective, to accentuate elements of depth, narrowness, and obscurity in a shared imaginary space. In *Nihonbashi*, Kyōka and Settai work together to create a virtual city that takes shape at the intersection of literature and visual media. Through a combination of text and illustration, they simultaneously reveal and conceal Tokyo as a city of dark secrets and haunted corners, where sex, violence, and scandal lie hidden in the shadows. At the locus of their urban universe lies the topos of the alleyway, a place that traps its inhabitants in a prison of black fences and high walls, even while providing an embryonic space in which to dream of other worlds.

Following the publication of *Nihonbashi*, Settai would illustrate the boxes, covers, endpapers, and title pages of almost all of Kyōka's books from 1914 onward. His designs continued to feature variations on themes established in *Nihonbashi*, particularly images of dark alleyways and haunted cities, occasionally inhabited by a single faceless figure, and sometimes

by no one at all. Looking back at the results of their collaboration, scholars and essayists have repeatedly expressed the idea that Kyōka and Settai created an almost perfectly synchronized aesthetic across both text and image. Muramatsu Sadataka, for example, writes that Settai's designs were like the "realization of a long-cherished dream by the hand of the one who best understood Kyōka,"¹ while Yanaga Toshiko claims that Settai's art "captured the fundamental mystique" of Kyōka's writing,² and Ōkoshi Hisako declares that it is as though Settai "absorbed Kyōka's finely polished words, one by one, and visually expressed their aesthetic sentiment."³ Ōkoshi emphasizes the likeness of their personalities and points to similar family histories, tastes, and sensibilities as a reason for their intimate connection, writing that "they both cherished the aesthetics of the pleasure quarters and the *shitamachi* and shared the same source of creativity in their longing for mothers whom they lost at a young age."⁴ Beyond the shared content of their work, however, Settai and Kyōka's art also resonated at the level of its spatial construction, particularly in its emphasis on hidden corners and shadowy depths, where text and image work together to hint at the existence of a world that lies just beyond the extremities of sight. Settai's book covers and endpapers are more than mere packaging for Kyōka's novels, but are rather a visual elaboration on the space of his fiction.

Settai first made Kyōka's acquaintance at some point between 1907 and 1909 in a meeting that has come to be described as an almost fated occurrence by critics, partly because of the seemingly arbitrary events that led up to it, but also because of the artistic importance of the relationship that followed.⁵ Settai writes that he was commissioned by Kubo Inokichi (1874-1939), a doctor and pioneer of otorhinolaryngology, to recreate a woodblock print by *ukiyo-e* artist Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769-1825) of the first person in Japan to receive nasal polyp surgery.⁶ Kubo normally practiced medicine in Kyūshū, but he happened to be visiting a friend in Tokyo when he called upon Settai. When Settai came to deliver the print, he met Kyōka's wife, Suzu, who happened to be visiting with Inokichi's wife, Kubo Yorie (1884-1941), a well-known *haikai* poet. Settai was already an avid fan of Kyōka's fiction before the chance encounter with his wife, and so he seized upon the opportunity to arrange a meeting with the famous author as well. Even after they met, Settai would not begin working with Kyōka until 1913, but once he started designing Kyōka's books, he would remain a constant artistic collaborator, working with the author until his death in 1939, only to die the following year. The closeness of their relationship led Kyōka's friend Horio Seishō to claim, "It's no exaggeration to say that, for the greater part of his life, Komura Settai's fate was set in place by his relationship with Kyōka."⁷

¹ Muramatsu Sadataka, *Ajisai kuyōshō: waga Izumi Kyōka* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1988), 165.

² Yanaga Toshiko, *Saisei suru jumoku* (Tokyo: Asahi Shuppansha, 1988), 117.

³ Ōkoshi Hisako and Saitama Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, *Komura Settai: monogataru ishō* (Tokyo: Tōkyōbijutsu, 2014), 14-15.

⁴ Ōkoshi, *Komura Settai: Monogataru ishō*, 15.

⁵ Sanada Kōji has pointed out that Settai's own writings offer conflicting accounts of the year of their meeting, which might have occurred in 1907, 1908, or 1909. "Izumi Kyōka to Komura Settai no deai no toshi: sono baikaisha, Kubo Yorie," presented at the 65th Izumi Kyōka Kenkyūkai at Shōwa Joshi Daigaku on July 16, 2016.

⁶ Settai recounts the meeting in "Izumi Kyōka Sensei no koto," *Hōmuraifu*, November, 1939, and "Hajimete Kyōka Sensei ni ome ni kakatta toki," *Toshō*, March, 1940, among other articles. The former is included in his collection of essays *Nihonbashi Himonochō* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron, 1990), 75-83, originally published by Takamizawa Mokuhansha in 1942. The latter can be found in Harada Osamu, Hirata Masaki, et. al., *Ishō no tensai Komura Settai* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2016), 26.

⁷ Quoted in Hoshikawa Seiji, *Komura Settai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1996), 34. The line is misquoted and incorrectly attributed to Teraki Teihō, who earlier attributed a similar quote to Horio Seishō. See Teraki Teihō, Muramatsu Sadataka, *Hito Izumi Kyōka* (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentā, 1983), 86.

Following Settai's death, author Satomi Ton (1888-1983) remarked, "one constant feature of [his] life was his steadfast adherence to his role as *waki*, which he performed with such resolute spirit that it was pitiful to behold."⁸ By *waki*, Ton meant the supporting role in Nō plays, and as might be expected, he figured Kyōka as the *shite*, or lead role. Kyōka's family friend and biographer, Teraki Teihō, also characterized Settai as Kyōka's pupil, calling him "a pupil who didn't write in prose, but rather used pictures to illustrate Kyōka's novels."⁹ Teraki aimed to close the gap between their art, however, by stating outright that "Komura Settai's images were Kyōka's literature."

Turning towards the shared content of their work, one finds that Kyōka and Settai's art intersected most intimately in their representations of Tokyo, which both figures rendered as a dreamlike world of labyrinths and empty stages—Kyōka through words and Settai through pictures. Settai's illustrations for Kyōka's fiction focus largely on representations of the city, with which he decorated the book covers and endpapers of Kyōka's Tokyo stories (otherwise known as his *geisha mono* or *fūzoku mono*). Like Kyōka's literary constructions of urban space, Settai's vision of Tokyo drew heavily on classical representations of Edo, in images filled with alleyways, moats, rivers, bridges, and traditional Japanese architecture, which recalled the appearance of the city in former times. In Settai's art, as in Kyōka's writing, the details of Edo period architecture become a poetic language, in which features such as black fences (*kuro-itabei*), guard spikes (*shinobigaeshi*), and service entrances (*katteguchi*) work together to evoke the romantic and melancholy mood of the pleasure quarters. At the center of their urban universe lies the topos of the alleyway, which functions as a prison for the melancholic urban dweller, who is trapped by the high walls and narrow spaces of the city's most claustrophobic corners. At the same time, the alleyway provides the necessary cover for romantic reveries of escape, as well as mystical dreams of transformation and sexual liaisons that avoid social censure by virtue of taking place in the shadows. In the context of the *geisha mono*, the alleyway is the abode of courtesans and prostitutes, who are depicted as wretched prisoners of their surroundings. In Kyōka's fiction, such women are frequently described as faceless, thus underscoring the anonymity of their existence. In Settai's art, they are literally depicted without faces, thereby imparting a surreal quality to largely classical depictions of the pleasure quarters.

In several essays on his artistic interests, Settai expressed his fascination with Tokyo, and especially the *shitamachi*, by combining detailed descriptions of urban architecture and geography with a romantic portrayal of the city's darkest corners. In "Iriya, Ryūsenji," Settai describes the urban landscape of two *shitamachi* neighborhoods that were frequently depicted in the popular fiction of Edo (and later Tokyo), from the *kiyomoto* songs of the Edo period to Higuchi Ichiyō's Meiji period masterpiece, *Child's Play* (*Takekurabe*, 1895-1896). Taking a line straight out of Ichiyō's story, Settai describes the area's filthy moats as being "dark as black tooth dye"—a quality that only serves to endear them to the narrator.¹⁰ He writes, "the roofs are

⁸ Quoted in Muramatsu, *Ajisai kuyōshō*, 165. Satomi Ton, *Satomi zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1977-1979), 10:329. Originally published in *Kyōka zenshū geppō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1940).

⁹ Loosely quoted by Hoshikawa, *Komura Settai*, 34. Original in Teraki, *Hito Izumi Kyōka*, 85-86.

¹⁰ The phrase is "Ohaguro Dobu," literally "ditch of black tooth dye" or "ditch of black teeth," which refers to a moat of dark water that surrounded the walled Yoshiwara pleasure district. The Yoshiwara was the largest and most famous geisha district in the city of Edo. Although the phrase "Ohaguro Dobu" is not Ichiyō's own, it was made famous by her use of the term in the opening paragraph of *Child's Play*. Ichiyō was temporarily a resident of Ryūsenji, a neighborhood on the edges of the Yoshiwara, which she also used as the setting for *Child's Play*. See Yukiko Tanaka, *Women Writers of Meiji and Taishō Japan: Their Lives, Works and Critical Reception, 1868-1926* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2000), 81; 173-174; Roman Adrian Cybriwsky, *Historical Dictionary of Tokyo*

low, the houses are damp, and, right in the middle of the alleyway, water from the moats flows freely, spreading a melancholy gloom over the place, and yet, it's all so interesting that no matter how many times I visit, I can never get enough."¹¹ As he moves into a discussion of old houses, Settai remarks that some kind of "meaning" (*imi*) appears to reside in the buildings themselves, which he examines obsessively, "looking almost too closely," as he probes their every hidden corner and minor architectural feature in search of some hidden truth.¹² As he looks around the *shitamachi*, he observes black fences, lattice windows, urban gardens, dilapidated shrines, abandoned wells, and vacant lots, all features that are frequently found in Kyōka's fiction as well. In fact, the boundaries between Settai's "real-time" observations of the city and Kyōka's literary depictions of Tokyo are often blurred in Settai's essays, as the artist describes what he "sees" in the exact same manner as Kyōka's texts, at times by borrowing phrases from his fiction almost verbatim (just as he does with Ichiyō). Rather than relying entirely on either personal experience or literary precedent, Settai combines his first-hand observation of places with what he knows of their historical associations.

As an illustrator, Settai was known to personally visit the places that he was expected to depict, thus giving him the opportunity to observe their details closely before creating his visual representations. When illustrating Yada Sōun's (1882-1961) *Chūshingura* (1935-1940) for the *Hōchi shinbun*, for example, Settai traveled to Akō in Hyōgo prefecture to observe the remains of the former domain of the forty-seven *ronin* warriors, made famous by the story.¹³ Around the same time, when designing the film set for an adaptation of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *A Portrait of Shunkin* (*Shunkinshō*, 1933),¹⁴ he traveled to Osaka to examine a historical merchant's house. He describes falling into ecstasy as he pored over every detail of the structure, including lattice windows, pillars, *tatami* mats, carved railings, side entrances (*kugurido*), and even the grooves (*shikii*) and lintels (*kamoi*) of sliding paper doors (*shōji*).¹⁵ He clarifies, however, that rather than exacting verisimilitude, his aim as a set designer was to recreate the spirit of the place, in part by drawing on its history of aesthetic associations. "It is needless to say," he writes, "that truth in art is not truth itself, but rather its appearance."¹⁶ In his fetishism of space, Settai was especially interested in the atmosphere that was created by combining all elements of a place's existence. Thus, when he writes of his first experience of visiting the Sensōji temple in Asakusa, he describes a feeling of awe that emanated from a combination of the architecture, sculpture, and even people who filled the temple. He writes, "Beginning, naturally, with the central image of veneration [*honzon*], I felt a desire to worship everything, including all of the other Buddhas in the building, the worshippers who came to pay their respects, the building itself, and even the sky above."¹⁷

(Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 274-275. Higuchi Ichiyō, *Higuchi Ichiyō zenshū*, edited by Shioda Ryōhei and Wada Yoshie (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1974-1994), 1:402.

¹¹ "Iriya, Ryūsenji" was originally published in *Tōkyō asahi shinbun*, March, 1940. Settai, *Nihonbashi himonochō*, 11.

¹² Settai, *Nihonbashi himonochō*, 12-13.

¹³ From the essay "Shinbun shōsetsu no sashie: *Chūshingura* o shiraberu," originally printed in *Hōmu raifu*, February, 1937. Settai, *Nihonbashi himonochō*, 67-68.

¹⁴ The film is known as *Shunkinshō: Okoto to Sasuke* (1935) and was directed by Shimazu Yasujirō (1897-1945).

¹⁵ From the essay, "Ōsaka no shōka," originally published in *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun*, February 1935. Settai, *Nihonbashi himonochō*, 145-148.

¹⁶ From the essay "*Shunkinshō* no setto," originally published in *Sandē mainichi: haru no eiga gō*, March, 1935. Settai, *Nihonbashi himonochō*, 152.

¹⁷ From the essay "Kannondō," originally published in *Chūō kōron*, June, 1939. Settai, *Nihonbashi himonochō*, 31.

In his veneration of space, Settai was most attracted not to pure landscapes, but rather to a combination of setting and human inhabitants. In an essay on Kiba, a neighborhood located at the eastern edges of the *shitamachi*, he describes the lumber yards, nearby forests, and dark, watery ditches that characterize the area, before ending with the observation of a young girl who perfectly complements the scenery before him.¹⁸ In his essay on Sensōji, he begins by describing the throngs of worshippers who crowd the urban temple, but ends by focusing on a single human figure hidden in a dark corner of the main hall. The woman bows before a statue whose identity is obscured by shadows; as she finishes her prayers, Settai approaches the corner of the temple and recognizes that the statue is of Kokū Bosatsu (Ākāśa-garbha), a bodhisattva associated with the empty vacuum of space.¹⁹ Upon first observing the woman, Settai proclaims that she resembles a photograph of Mary Pickford, then a print by Kunisada (thus recalling Kyōka's obsession with the artist), and finally associates her with the statue of the bodhisattva, as both merge in their appearance as decorative fixtures in the temple grounds. Taking this scene as a cue, one finds that the humans in Settai's art are oftentimes not quite human, as he frequently takes the tranquil expressions of Buddhist statues as models for his human figures. In fact, Settai makes his interest in non-human expression explicit throughout his essays, where he repeatedly writes that he is most interested in drawing figures whose faces are almost totally expressionless, in the manner of dolls or Buddhist statues, with only the faintest of smiles to betray any hint of human sentiment. For this reason, he writes that he was stunned to find a woman who looked like the famous Ashura of Nara, an 8th century statue of a wrathful Buddhist deity, whose vaguely empty expression strikes him as the most beautiful face that he has ever seen (he insists that he intends the comparison as a complement).²⁰ In another essay, he goes on at length about his particular interest in human figures who lack human expression:

Since I use dolls and buddhas as models for my artwork, my characters have no personality... When drawing women, I have never used a real model for my work. I have no interest in sketching from real life, or in reality, whatsoever. When drawing characters with no personality, my interest lies in replicating the powerful expressions of Nō masks. The Nō mask has a single expression. However, according to the actor's technique, the mask can be made to look like it is crying, or otherwise like it is laughing. In other words, from within the expressionless face, I aim to project the faintest hint of an expression. I do not mean that I wish to create a laughing or crying human, but rather to create dolls or buddhas, whose faces give the vague impression of laughing or crying.²¹

Drawing on his interest in faces without expressions, Settai created the figure of the faceless woman, who frequently appeared in his artwork for Kyōka's fiction. Comparing Settai's essays to Kyōka's writing, one finds an array of overlapping interests, from alleyways to lattice

¹⁸ From the essay "Kiba," originally published in *Kaizō*, April, 1940. Settai, *Nihonbashi himonochō*, 20-22.

¹⁹ Settai, *Nihonbashi himonochō*, 32-33.

²⁰ From the essay "Ashura Ō ni nita onna," originally published in *Ōru yomimono*, January, 1933. Included in *Nihonbashi Himonochō*, 43-56.

²¹ From the essay "Sashie no moderu: kosei naki josei o egaite," originally published in *Hōmu raifu*, September, 1935. Included in *Nihonbashi Himonochō*, 57-60. Quote is found on pages 59-60.

windows, and from bodhisattvas to faceless geisha, all of which appear frequently in their collaborative work.²²

Like Kyōka, Settai's artistic vision was informed by his early exposure to the arts of the Edo period. From an early age, Settai was trained in a variety of traditional Japanese arts, including calligraphy, *Nihonga*, and *ukiyo-e* woodblock printing. Born in Kawagoe, Saitama in 1887, Settai moved to Nihonbashi, Tokyo in 1900 to begin his artistic education under calligrapher Yasunami Kensuke, before moving to Shitaya to study Bird-and-Flower Painting (*kachōga*) with Araki Kanpo (1872-1944). He later enrolled in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (*Tōkyō bijutsu gakkō*) where he majored in *Nihonga* and studied under painters Shimomura Kanzan (1873-1930) and Matsuoka Eikyū (1881-1938),²³ both of whom were major figures in the modernization of Japanese painting. Kanzan and Eikyū worked with traditional Japanese art forms, such as gold-leaf screens (*kin byōbu*) and illustrated scrolls (*emakimono*), but incorporated new techniques of shading and perspective as they aimed to modernize the visual arts of Japan. Following graduation, Settai went on to work for the fine arts journal *Kokka* (*Flower of the Nation*), during which time his duties consisted of copying Buddhist images, *emakimono*, and *ukiyo-e* and recreating them as multi-color woodblock prints for publication in the magazine—a practice that left him with an intimate knowledge of classical artistic form.

One of the most recognizable techniques that Settai picked up while copying *ukiyo-e* was the use of linear perspective, which he would go on to use extensively in his illustrations for Kyōka. During the Edo period, linear perspective was used especially in a subgenre of *ukiyo-e* known as *uki-e* (“floating images”),²⁴ or woodblock prints in which the artist simulated spectacular views of the city's most famous places, such as packed theaters and busy streets, by manipulating the viewer's perspective. As scholars such as Timon Screech and Kishi Fumikazu have demonstrated, linear perspective was widely introduced to Edo period Japan via *vedute*, or prints of cityscapes, imported by Dutch merchants in the mid-18th century, and became a major element in the *uki-e* prints of artists such as Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764) and Utagawa Toyoharu (1735-1814) between the Kanpō and Tenmei eras (or roughly the 1740's to the 1770's).²⁵ As a visual technique, linear perspective relies on the presence of parallel lines in the environment represented in the image, all of which are directed towards a common vanishing point in order to create an impression of depth. As such, the streets and theaters of Edo offered artists the perfect opportunity in which to create perspectival views, as the city was packed with angular structures, such as eaves, tiles, lattices, and beams, whose abundance of parallel lines could be directed towards a shared vanishing point. The variety of linear perspective used in *uki-*

²² Kyōka's literary references to faceless humans often include an element of the supernatural, as he frequently compares such figures to *nopperabō*, or faceless monsters from traditional Japanese folklore.

²³ For Settai's artistic training see Hoshikawa, *Komura Settai*, 14-15; Saitama Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, *Komura settai to sono jidai: iki de modan de sensai de* (Saitama: Saitama Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 2009), 18; Ōkoshi *Komura Settai: Monogatari ishō*, 14-15.

²⁴ *Uki-e* (“floating images”) are a distinct subgenre of *ukiyo-e* (“images of the floating world”), both of which share similar names but have different meanings. *Uki-e* refers to the idea that perspective causes the image to “float up” (or conversely “sink in”) before the eyes of the viewer, while *ukiyo* originally refers to the Buddhist conception of the world of human pleasures as illusory, and by extension refers to Edo period art that celebrated the delights of the pleasure quarters, fashion, travel, and other human concerns.

²⁵ For the history of *uki-e* and linear perspective in Japanese art, see Kishi Fumikazu, *Edo no enkinhō: uki-e no shikaku* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1994) and Timon Screech, “The Meaning of Western Perspective in Edo Popular Culture,” *Archives of Asian Art*, 47 (1994): 58-69, as well as *The Lens within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

e was often extremely pronounced, as it was employed to emphasize the sheer spectacle of the urban view.

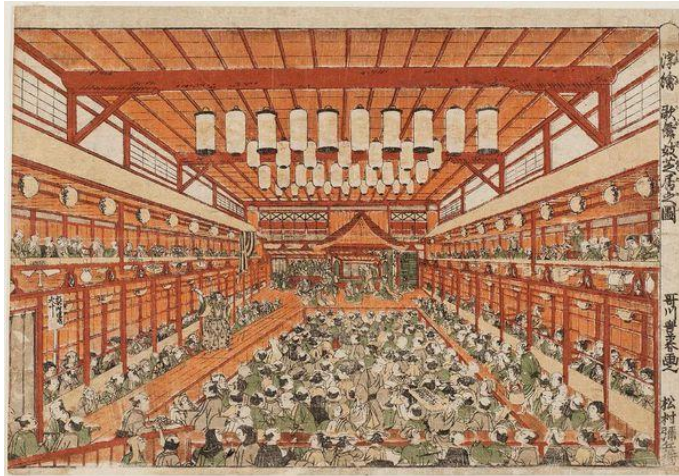


Figure 114 – Uki-e image of a kabuki theater, Utagawa Toyoharu, late 18th century

As much as Settai's images resemble Edo period *uki-e* in structure, however, they differ drastically by shifting the focus of the print from crowded urban spaces to deserted alleyways and empty corners of the city. The pull of hundreds of lines towards a distant horizon still draws in the gaze of the viewer, but only to direct it towards shadows of uncertain significance. In one of his essays, Settai claimed that he never applied "rigidly theoretical perspective" (*rizume no enkinhō*) to his prints, which seems surprising when considering the tightly mechanical appearance of his perspectival images. At the same time, however, his statement can be taken to show his understanding of perspective not as a mechanical operation, but rather as a lyrical device. In Settai's prints, perspective does not offer a clear, unobstructed view of the city, but rather provides a view into a labyrinthine landscape of sheer walls, guard spikes, sliding doors, and latticed windows, where distant streets and alleyways taper off into nothingness. The vanishing point sucks the viewer's gaze into the depths of the image, only to trap it in a space of claustrophobic city architecture.

In addition to *Nihonga*, Settai also studied elements of Art Nouveau and modern graphic design during his time at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.²⁶ The influence of modern decorative styles can be seen in his book designs, where he emphasizes the material surface of covers with features such as flat planes of color and ornamental line work. In his later pieces, the influence of Art Nouveau becomes apparent in designs that include formal elements such as floral arabesques, curvilinear patterns, and geometric friezes of plant and animal life.²⁷ His urban

²⁶ Art Nouveau and related styles of modern European art were taught at the school and came to pervade print publication, advertising, and design from the late Meiji period to the early Shōwa period. For information on the instruction of Art Nouveau at the school, see Iwakiri Shin'ichirō, Nishiyama Junko, et. al., *Seitan 130-nen, Hashiguchi Goyō ten* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Shinbunsha, 2011), 27.

²⁷ In 1918, Settai was hired by the design department (*ishōbu*) of the newly opened Shiseidō cosmetics company. Shiseidō was in Ginza, which was already the district at the leading edge of fashion and consumer goods. Company president Fukuhara Shinzō (1883-1948) placed emphasis on the design department and procured the newest fashion magazines from Western countries for his designers to study. The head of the design department, Yabe Sue (1893-1978), was influenced by Art Nouveau and Aubrey Beardsley. Settai emphasized a hybrid modern/classical *Nihonga*

images, however, take the opposite direction of the typical Art Nouveau curve, with designs that emphasize rigid line work and grid-like patterns. Settai's images of tiles, lattices, and walls explore the graphic qualities of the line as a basic element of design, at the same time that they invite the viewer to look deeply into a cityscape of tightly arranged, carefully constructed architecture. A close look at his work reveals playful patterns and tiny details packed into the small spaces of ridge tiles, eaves, fences, and verandas. A closer look reveals puzzling architectural lacunae, such as hidden rooms and impossible corners. These details combine with the pull of linear perspective to draw the eyes of the viewer down streets lined by endless rows of walls, windows, and doors and into distant corners boxed in by towering buildings. Mixing classical *ukiyo-e*-style expressions with Art Nouveau formalism, Settai created images that were at once timeless and cutting-edge.

Dark Alleyways: *Nihonbashi* and *The Order Book*

The resonance between Kyōka's writing and Settai's visual art can be seen in their first collaborative effort, *Nihonbashi*. Kyōka began writing *Nihonbashi* in 1913 and released the novel in complete form in September of the following year. The work was published by Senshōkan, an independent house run by Kyōka's friend, lawyer and translator Horio Seishō. The choice of a small publishing house offered Kyōka the opportunity to select Settai, a relative newcomer, as his book designer. Settai recounts that Kyōka was tight-lipped about the content of the work and revealed little to him beyond its title, *Nihonbashi*.²⁸ The resultant design, however, resonated aesthetically with Kyōka's text to a degree that seems to have greatly pleased the author, as he continued to work with Settai for the rest of his life. Taking the name *Nihonbashi* as a clue, Settai created a book cover for Kyōka's novel that depicted the eponymous neighborhood in central Tokyo, which had been a frequent subject of *ukiyo-e* prints during the Edo period, but radically altered its appearance with an Art Nouveau makeover. On the endpapers of *Nihonbashi*, Settai included four woodblock illustrations of alternate views of the neighborhood, each with a different seasonal motif. Drawing on a mix of traditional expressions and stylized innovation, and focusing on images of geisha, alleyways, and classical urban architecture, Settai's design was perfectly tuned to the tone and themes of Kyōka's fiction.

For Settai, who was thoroughly trained in the art of *ukiyo-e*, the title *Nihonbashi* would have evoked a deep history of visual associations, as the iconic neighborhood was one of the most frequently depicted parts of the city in Edo period art. Throughout the 19th century, artists had depicted the neighborhood, bridge, and river of the same name (*Nihonbashi* literally means "bridge of Japan") using a number of different viewpoints to capture various aspects of the surrounding environment. *Nihonbashi* was the subject of prints by some of the most famous artists of the Edo period, including Hiroshige, Hokusai, Eisen, and Kunisada. The bridge, built by the order of the first Tokugawa shogun in 1603, was situated east of the city center, where it spanned over a busy river and connected banks lined with whitewashed earthen warehouses.²⁹ The bridge became an iconic sight of central Edo (later Tokyo) and was depicted most famously by Hiroshige in sun, rain, and snow, usually with a large crowd jostling back and forth along its

style, but with a touch of Art Nouveau aesthetics and modern graphic design. See Saitama Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, *Komura Settai to sono jidai*, 19.

²⁸ From the essay "Sangū nikki to *Nihonbashi* no koto," originally published in *Kyōka zenshū geppō* (1973-1976), 15:9. Included in *Nihonbashi Himonochō*, 92-95.

²⁹ Aramata Hiroshi, *Nihonbashi ibun: Tōkyō no konjaku machiannai* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 2008), 40.

length, and with the river, warehouses, and Mt. Fuji appearing in the background. The neighborhood also provided the perfect subject in which to employ linear perspective, as the parallel lines of the bridge, river, and warehouse architecture, together with distant views of Mt. Fuji, allowed the artist to create the convincing appearance of a deeply recessed view. For Kyōka's book cover, Settai took many of the iconic elements of earlier *ukiyo-e*, but remade them into a stylized pattern that pitted classical motifs with modern graphic design. Most curiously, he decided to forgo the use of linear perspective, which would later become a mainstay of his collaborative work with Kyōka, as he instead made his mainstream debut with a radically flattened cityscape.



Figures 115 and 116— *Nihonbashi in Edo* by Hokusai and *Morning View of Nihonbashi* by Hiroshige (both 1830's)



Figures 117 and 118 - *Nihonbashi* (1914) cover and cover detail, Settai

Settai's image for the cover of Kyōka's book abstracts the famous warehouses and docks of Nihonbashi and turns them into a pattern of simple lines and flat shapes with playful variations. The warehouses are nearly identical, but two have lower windows than the others, one has a shorter door, and two have entrances offset respectively to the right and to the left. The docks below the warehouses alternate in shape and size as their legs draw different patterns over the river. Some docks have four legs, some have five, and some draw "x" patterns, but they are

all equally flat and realistically non-functional as supports. The docks and warehouses are instead pure facades, neatly assembled for the pleasure of the spectator who takes time to linger over the picture—looking closely, one finds that their blank doors and windows lead nowhere. The river in Settai's cover is filled with *chokibune*, or long, thin boats that transported people and light wares down Edo's waterways. Each *chokibune* in Settai's depiction is unique, as are their passengers, and though they are minuscule in size, each character is distinctively rendered in a lifelike pose. Some characters reach their sculling oars far out into the water, some nearly bend over backwards as they row their boats forward, and others stand by idly observing the river traffic. The water on which they row is a completely still, light blue surface with no hint of ripples, waves, or motion of any kind. Overlaying the entire front and back cover of the book are clusters of small red, yellow, blue, and white butterflies, which appear as though they are stamped directly onto the surface of the book. The butterflies do not exist within any clear plane of the image but rather overrun all of its elements, adding their colorful wings to its design. The one iconic element missing from the cover of *Nihonbashi*, of course, is the bridge itself, but in its place stands the spine of the book, which carries the bridge's name on its surface as it spans across the river and its banks. The title *Nihonbashi*, in turn, leads from image to text and towards the contents of the book within.



Figure 119 - *Nihonbashi* (1914), front endpapers, Settai

Inside of *Nihonbashi*, Settai moves away from the flatness of the cover with four endpaper prints that deepen the space of the city by combining carefully manipulated perspectives with dense architectural detail. The images are arranged according to seasonal motifs, which have no particular connection to the narrative of the text. Rather than plot or characters, the images echo *Kyōka*'s literary descriptions of urban space, and particularly the narrow alleyways and tight living spaces of the *shitamachi*, as well as his interest in experimenting with different points-of-view, which present the city variously as a stage, a peepshow, and a labyrinth. Settai's first print on the front endpapers features an empty entertaining room, or *zashiki*, with a small drum (*kotsuzumi*) wrapped in orange cords lying next to a *shamisen* on a green tatami floor. The foreground is covered by overhanging willow branches (a symbol of summer), but these do little to obscure the view into the room. The closeness of the willow branches to the surface of the image creates the illusion of a middle space that lies in between the viewer and the empty room in the distance. At the same time, its semi-transparency suggests a view through a thin veil into a normally hidden world. The point-of-view of the image places the observer at an uncertain angle—seemingly somewhere above a roof, or perhaps on a second-floor veranda in a neighboring *zashiki*. Even though the room

across the way is fully visible, it remains a mysterious space due to its emptiness and unaccountable exposure. Why have the doors been left open and where are the participants? The orderly placement of the instruments on the floor suggests a show that is about to begin, which might be interpreted as the set-up of the novel itself.

The following print establishes a recurring motif in Settai's illustrations for Kyōka's fiction, with the view of a woman in a dark alleyway rendered in deep linear perspective. In *Nihonbashi*, the woman turns her back to the viewer as she stares down the alleyway at three shadowy figures in the distance. The image juxtaposes the lines and sharp angles of buildings, *shōji* paper screens, and windows with the curvy shapes of the woman in the foreground and the indistinct characters at the end of the alleyway. The rigid construction of the houses makes them appear like a stage set or an exercise in architectural drawing, rather than real living spaces. At the same time, the houses are adorned with numerous miniscule details that add touches of warmth to the dark landscape, such as overhanging willow branches and a four-legged, box-shaped lamp hanging in the top window of a nearby building. The dramatic linear perspective of the image draws the reader's eyes past the shoulder of the woman in the foreground and towards the narrow passage at the far end of the alleyway, where three mysterious figures converse in darkness. The gray silhouettes in the distance are so faint that they would easily escape the viewer's gaze if not for the perspectival setup. The relationship between the woman in the foreground and those in the distance is impossible to know. The dark figures might be friends, strangers, or ghosts. Stars and a full moon add a hint of openness to the narrow alleyway, but the city's heavy wooden architecture sets the center of gravity in the urban maze below.



Figure 120 - *Nihonbashi* (1914), back endpapers, Settai

On the back endpapers of *Nihonbashi* are two images of city rooftops, one in autumn (the season can be recognized by a tiny patch of red maple leaves) and the other in winter, under heavy snowfall. The autumnal city is devoid of human characters and focuses instead on the structures of buildings, including their tiles, ridges, eaves, windows, and verandas. As with the empty *zashiki* in the front endpapers, the print uses a slightly overhead angle that positions the viewer in the upper levels of the city, but without offering the clear perspective of a bird's-eye-view. Rather than opening up onto a wide cityscape, the viewer's gaze meets almost immediately with a clutter of rooftops and semi-circular ridge tiles. The only hint of human warmth in the city is a pair of potted plants on a high veranda, which suggest the presence of a caretaker behind the balcony's rattan blinds and sliding doors. In the distant sky, a pair of birds is depicted in flight,

as though to prompt the viewer to imagine a freedom beyond the maze of buildings. The winter image of the city features a single, faceless woman peering out from behind slightly open *shōji* into a seemingly endless landscape of snow-covered rooftops. As in the image of the alleyway, the slender human figure contrasts with dozens of straight lines, particularly the wooden frame of the *shōji* and nearby windows. The solitary woman and desolate winter landscape evoke a melancholy mood while the pure white of the snow-laden rooftops contrast with black walls to create a simple yet balanced color scheme. The meaning of any of the four prints is never explained in the narrative, as the book was apparently designed by the artist before he had any access to the story, and yet together they manage to capture the mood of Kyōka's writing as though they had been created in sync with the text.

Like Settai's images, Kyōka's text in *Nihonbashi* focuses on the dark, hidden corners of the city, particularly on the narrow alleyways of the backstreet geisha district of Himonochō. *Nihonbashi* tells the story of two rival geisha, Kiyoha and Okō, who fight for the love of the same man, Katsuragi Shinzō, a famous medical researcher with a proclivity for dating women who remind him of his older sister. At the outset of the story, Katsuragi has decided to become a monk, which he sees as a means of extricating himself from his troubled love affairs, as well as a means of avoiding conflict with Okō's former lover, Igarashi Denji. The story opens in an anonymous back alley of Nihonbashi, not far from the eponymous bridge. Although most of the story takes place in the very center of Tokyo, the alleyway functions as a world apart from the ordinary space of the city. The particular neighborhood in which the story is set, Himonochō, is a well-known geisha district located in proximity to the seat of political power in central Tokyo, and yet the women who occupy the geisha houses in its backstreets are largely isolated from the life of the modern city. Their isolation is underscored in the novel by the narrowness of the story's setting, which unfolds almost entirely within a single alleyway, including the restaurants, tea houses, and geisha houses that line its street, as well as on a nearby bridge, Ikkokubashi. Despite being set in Nihonbashi, the namesake bridge never makes a direct appearance in the story, and is only briefly mentioned by the narrator, who at one point compares the modern neighborhood to Hiroshige's prints.³⁰ Describing *ukiyo-e* that depict the bridge in full sunshine, with Mt. Fuji in the distance, or otherwise under overcast skies, the narrator acknowledges the history of the neighborhood's representation in visual art, but only mentions the connection in passing.

At the outset of *Nihonbashi*, an apprentice geisha named Ochise wanders briefly outside of the alleyway to buy candy for her "older sister," the geisha Okō, who has fallen ill after Katsuragi left her to become a monk. Out in the light of day, the heavily made-up Ochise is accosted by a group of malicious children, who call her a prostitute and force her back into the shadows. Emphasizing the pitiful nature of her existence, the narrator remarks: "As one employed by the trade, she was fully aware that she could never walk down the middle of the street, and that she must always yield the path to others, whether in the full sunshine of the summer, or in the shadows of the winter."³¹ Ochise's suffering does not go unnoticed, however, as an anonymous monk (later revealed to be Katsuragi) suddenly appears to rescue her from the children, whom he distracts with an impromptu performance of *Chūshingura*, before jumping onto a moving train and disappearing into the distance. After Ochise is left alone, a geisha from a rival house, Kiyoha, emerges from the shadows and apologizes for standing by idly, instead of

³⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 15:607.

³¹ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 15:571.

helping her to fend off her attackers. Kiyoha then takes Ochise to a fruit stand and gives her money to buy candy for her colleague, Okō.

Having opened towards the final scene of the novel, the narrative then proceeds to unfold via an extended flashback, which relates the history of Katsuragi's love affairs with Kiyoha and Okō, as well as his conflict with Igarashi Denji. Katsuragi first met Okō when she rescued him from a meddlesome police officer, who caught the medical student throwing live shellfish into the Nihonbashi river. As is later revealed, Katsuragi was in the habit of releasing one turban shell (*sazae*) and one clam shell (*hamaguri*) every year, in memory of his older sister, who had sacrificed her happiness so that he might prosper. Katsuragi originally came from a poor family from the *shitamachi*, who were once forced to consider eating the *hamaguri* and *sazae* shells that they had set before their doll stand on *hina matsuri* (doll festival) as mock offerings. His older sister, however, stopped them from eating the shellfish, and suggested that they sacrifice a doll instead, so that the living creatures might be released. This episode foreshadowed the older sister's own sacrifice, as she later married a rich suitor for whom she felt no attraction, in exchange for his financial support of her family. Following her marriage arrangement, the older sister disappeared completely from Katsuragi's life, which left him yearning for her ever since. Katsuragi eventually finds a replacement for his older sister in Okō, who reluctantly agrees to play the part of his elder sibling, as she becomes the living sacrifice that his sister once was. Later in the narrative, Katsuragi's relationship with Okō incites the jealousy of her former lover, Igarashi, a brutish merchant from Hokkaidō, who once bought the geisha's affection with fortunes made on trading fur-seals and herring roe. Igarashi is portrayed by the narrator as a wild beast, who is in the habit of wearing bear furs and eating maggots, and who always keeps a sword by his side. Fearful of engaging in violent conflict with such a dangerous character, Katsuragi decides that he must leave Tokyo on a pilgrimage.

At the end of the novel, the story switches back to the present time, refocusing on Katsuragi as he rides the train out of Tokyo. Before he can leave the borders of the city, however, a fire breaks out in Nihonbashi, and so he rushes back to help. Back in Himenochō, Igarashi decides that the fire will provide the perfect cover for him to murder Okō unnoticed, and so he proceeds to the Inabaya to kill her. At the geisha house, he accidentally stabs Ochise to death instead, after mistaking her for Okō due to her outfit. Okō then descends the stairs and asks for Igarashi's sword, which he hands to her respectfully, as though making an offering to a goddess. Okō then proceeds to slash his face open and shove the sword down his throat. When a group of police officers arrives to arrest Okō for murder, she drinks a cup of nitric acid, thus putting an end to her own life. At the end of the story, Katsuragi decides to move to Germany to study medicine, Kiyoha takes over the Inabaya, and the ghostly sound of clacking *geta* sandals echoes in the alleyway.

Considering the melodramatic tone and gratuitous violence of *Nihonbashi*'s narrative, the reader might wonder how exactly Kyōka's writing and Settai's art are supposed to have intersected. Like Kyōka's other *fūzoku mono*, much of *Nihonbashi* is related in dialogue, and much of the narrative focuses on dramatic exchanges between characters, or otherwise spectacular acts of violence, all of which differ markedly from the quiet cityscapes found in Settai's prints. Rather than the plot itself, however, Settai's images resonate more closely with the atmosphere of the story, and particularly its moments of wistful beauty, as well as its setting, or the narrow alleyways of Nihonbashi, which are tightly packed with the traditional architectural features of the *shitamachi*. Comparing text to image in *Nihonbashi*, Muramatsu Sadataka explains the appeal of Settai's book design as residing in his visual expression of the

story's cityscape. He writes, "certainly, the book is a masterpiece of superb craftsmanship... neither the cover nor the endpapers refer to any particular scene in *Nihonbashi*, and yet, when immersed in the book... one is captured by the mood of the place, which is expressed in the deep hues of dawn and dusk dyed into the landscape, and with delighted eyes, one is never tired of being absorbed in Settai's artistic style."³² After offering his praise, Muramatsu goes on to suggest the formal level on which Settai's art operates: "The poetic sentiment of [his] visual style arises from its arrangement, which is constructed along geometric lines and set at a distance from which one can view miniscule characters who appear like background decoration—the method leaves an exquisite impression that is unforgettable."³³ In his evaluation, Muramatsu traces the "poetry" of Settai's art to his use of perspective, line, and depth, which together have the effect of drawing the viewer into the image. When he speaks of being "captured" by the mood of the print, he literally writes that one is "made prisoner by the scenery" (*fūkei no toriko ni natte*), suggesting an ability of lines and perspective to trap the viewer inside of a virtual artistic space. He also points out that Settai's images are not pure landscapes, but often feature tiny human figures, who, though appearing simply like "background decoration" (*tenkei jinbutsu*), are central to the mood of the desolate urban scenes. By focusing on tiny characters at a distance, Settai turns the cityscape into a melancholy dreamscape, where empty streets and towering structures envelop miniature inhabitants in a geometric maze.

The meeting of text and image in *Nihonbashi* is encountered as soon as one opens the cover of the book. Taking the novel in hand, the reader first meets with the abstracted cityscape of Nihonbashi on the cover, before turning directly to Kyōka's opening paragraph. The cover of the book, which is decorated with dozens of butterflies, leads directly to a literary description of butterflies in the text.

"They say she makes her customers lick it."

"Lick what?"

"That candy."

Little rascals of nine or ten-years-old, an eleven or twelve-year-old at the head of seven or eight, they pucker their lips as they yawn restlessly in the long spring sun. They grumble and push at each other in a steamed-bun circle at the intersection by the candy vendor. One holds a red spiral-shell top, one a light green one, and another a purple one, as they play by the Nihonbashi bridge. Along the main stretch of the backstreet district, traces of sprinkled water begin to dry, translucent as a dream, and in the calm of the rising heat haze, colorful shells spin off one-by-one, turning into sweet bees and fragrant butterflies as they dance off into the air...³⁴

As the image of butterflies on the cover leads to a description of butterflies in the text, words and pictures come together to draw the reader into a dreamlike vision of Nihonbashi, where spinning tops transform into living creatures and take flight.³⁵

³² Muramatsu, *Ajisai kuyōshō*, 162-163.

³³ Muramatsu, *Ajisai kuyōshō*, 164.

³⁴ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 15:555.

³⁵ Writing on Kyōka's style, Mishima Yukio chose the introduction of *Nihonbashi* as an example of the intoxicating power of his language. He writes, "The eye overflows with variegated colors as the reader embarks on a sincere journey in pursuit of the senses, and rather than indicating any fixed, single point, the text absorbs and invites the reader to sustain a kind of pure and pleasurable reading experience. The reader, enveloped in the author's literary

As the narrative of *Nihonbashi* continues, the story grows darker in tone, bringing the atmosphere of the text closer to the mood of Settai's endpaper prints. After introducing the Inabaya at the outset of the story, the narrator gives a brief history of the troubled geisha house. Long before it was managed by Okō, the Inabaya was the property of Owaka, a former geisha and proprietress who went mad and died a violent death, before coming back to haunt the alleyway as a ghost. Describing the alleyway in which the Inabaya is found, Kyōka draws on his knowledge of classical Edo architecture to craft a poetic space for his story.

The Inabaya was located in a narrow alleyway directly across from a drainage ditch. It was the fourth building on one side and the farthest back. Across from the geisha house was the wooden fence of a massive three-story *machiai*³⁶ that continued from around the corner. Through a gap in the fence, directly across from the Inabaya's lattice windows, one could see a small Inari shrine. Next to the shrine was a buried-in communal well and next to that was an empty lot with a tiny grass lawn, the size of a folding fan, while at the far boundary of the alley was the inner courtyard of the neighboring town. The alleyway ended on a black wooden fence topped with guard spikes. There were no plum blossom trees there, but there was a single willow that could be seen by the geisha in their full-length mirrors, from behind *Eichiya*-style lattice windows.³⁷

In a manner analogous to Settai's perspectival illustrations, Kyōka creates the illusion of a recessed space by treating the geisha house at the end of the alleyway as a kind of vanishing point, towards which the reader's attention is directed. He then fills the space in between with architectural structures typical of the *shitamachi*, such as lattice windows and spike-topped fences, which symbolize the elegance of the old city, as well as the power of the pleasure quarters to confine its workers in a virtual prison. Here, as in many of Kyōka's Tokyo stories, his description of the urban environment is exceptionally specific. His attention to detail can be seen in his reference to the exact type of window found in the alleyway: the *Eichiya* variety of lattice window.³⁸ It is a level of attention that is matched, if not surpassed, by Settai in his own depictions of *Nihonbashi*, which outline every beam, lattice, and tile of the urban environment.

One more image associated with *Nihonbashi* moves fully from urban to oneiric space, with the depiction of a dream passage from the narrative. The image appears on the cover of *The Dyed in Love Collection* (*Aizenshū*, 1916), a pairing of *Nihonbashi* (published once again after only two years) with *The Order Book* (*Chūmonchō*, 1901), an early ghost story set in Tokyo. For the new volume, Settai designed the box and endpapers of the book with images corresponding to *The Order Book*, while reserving the cover for an image representing a scene from

style, sees objects appear one-by-one in their uttermost clarity, but just as the reader is taken by the hand, he or she is immediately tossed about in the colorful text and thrown into an intoxication of reason..." See Mishima Yukio, *Bunshō dokuhon* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1959), 44; 49-50. Discussed in Asada Shōjirō, "Kōsetsu," *Chūkai kōsetsu Nihonbashi* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1974), 23.

³⁶ Literally a meeting place, but colloquially a drinking establishment where geisha would entertain guests.

³⁷ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 15:586-587.

³⁸ *Eichiya*-style lattice windows incorporated triangular horizontal slats that allowed residents to look outside easily while blocking the view from the outside-in. They were created by Eichiya Sōsuke in the mid-Edo period and became closely associated with geisha establishments and the pleasure quarters. See Asada, *Chūkai kōsetsu Nihonbashi*, 77.

Nihonbashi.³⁹ Without an intimate knowledge of the text, however, the scene's connection to the narrative can be difficult to decipher. It thus might be viewed as a close reading of the text, which visualizes a hidden space buried deep in the work. Settai's book cover draws on a description by Katsuragi of a recurring daydream about his older sister, a woman whom he imagines as "standing in the mist of the Sumida River, watching over him from a veranda wrapped in flowers."

Somewhere... Facing the second floor of my dormitory, a building of the same height lies across a single river... A single river... Perhaps it's a dream? The water flows steadily like the Edogawa River below our window. On the opposite bank stands a two-story building. I can only see the front of the building and a railing that traverses from left to right... Right in the middle is a giant *enoki* tree that blocks my view onto the second floor. It also seems like there's a lower floor facing the flowing river and a tall *zashiki* towards the back. I guess because it's a dream, right? Well, listen... Yes, please listen.

Behind that railing, somewhere towards the right, I can see a beautiful sleeve, lithely draped. Propping her chin on her sleeves, or with some other forlorn expression, a woman appears to be staring right back at me. I catch a glance of her wrists, white as snow, but her face remains obscured by the *enoki*. That *enoki* from somewhere—perhaps from a cliff deep in the mountains or from the border of a distant horse path—a giant, ancient tree dense with branches.⁴⁰



Figure 121 - *Dyed in Love Collection* (1916), cover, Settai

³⁹ In addition, the collection features a frontispiece depicting Okō by Ikeda Shōen, which differs markedly in tone and style from Settai's illustrations. Shōen's image is a woodblock print depicting a portrait-view of Okō as she stares into space with a sullen gaze. Following her passing at the age of 31, Shōen would become the subject of a series of Kyōka's stories, including *The Peony Song* (1918), "The Silver Vessel" ("Gin kanae"/"Zoku gin kanae," 1921), and "The Maple Leaf and the Dove" ("Kaede to shirahato," 1922).

⁴⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 15:679; 681.

In response to Katsuragi's description of his dream, Settai designed the cover of *Dyed in Love* with the image of an immense *enoki* tree whose leaves obscure the view onto a distant veranda, where the miniscule figure of a woman is partially hidden behind its branches. The tree branches spread across the entirety of the book's cover, from its front to its back, and even extend beyond its edges, as though continuing into eternity. Beneath the tree, on the lower third of the book, lies a band of darkly shaded blue, which might be interpreted as the waters of the Sumida River. Decorating the entire surface of the cover are dozens of tiny blue and red birds, some perched on branches and others flying through the air. The design clearly recalls the decorative layer of butterflies on the cover of *Nihonbashi*, which was published by the same press (Senshokan) just two years prior, and thus imparts a sense of continuity to Kyōka and Settai's shared artistic vision. In the background of the image, behind the veil of trees, is a distant veranda, where a woman stands behind rails and under eaves. The woman is either faceless or so distant that no details of her countenance can be made out, thus matching the description in the narrative of an older sister who is permanently out of view. In contrast to the other images in *Dyed in Love*, her dwelling place appears to be far removed from the city. In fact, there is barely even a hint of the city to be found anywhere in the print, as the entirety of Tokyo is obscured by an impossibly vast sea of leaves. If the image depicts Tokyo at all, it is Tokyo as seen through the lens of Katsuragi's dreams.

The two other prints by Settai included in *The Dyed in Love Collection* represent a single scene from *The Order Book*, in part by building on the visual syntax established in *Nihonbashi*. Originally published in 1901, *The Order Book* combined Kyōka's interest in ghosts and geisha into a narrative about a haunted brothel, in which detailed descriptions of dark alleyways and urban mazes foreshadowed his later representations of urban space. As one of his most explicitly supernatural stories set in Tokyo, *The Order Book* replaced the vaguely haunting elements of Kyōka's earlier urban fiction with a sinister spirit who thirsts for human blood. The story opens in a narrow backstreet in Tamachi, a traditional district in southwest Tokyo, where two veteran residents ply old-fashioned trades. One man, Gosuke, is a blade sharpener, and the other, Sakubei, is a mirror polisher. At the outset of the story, a young man named Sutekichi drops by Gosuke's shop to pick up an order of three razor blades for a group of courtesans. Gosuke goes to the shelf and immediately spots the order among hundreds of other blades, although he worries for a moment as he recalls that it is currently the 19th of the month. As he relates to Sutekichi, he invariably loses an order on the 19th of every month, no matter how diligently he attempts to avoid it. He later explains to Sakubei, the mirror polisher, that he was once brought a blade on the 19th that had a tragic history. According to the customer, it had been used by a geisha, Onui, in an attempt to murder her lover, Matsushima Chikara, which failed when he deflected her attack with a mirror. In desperation, she used the blade to slit her own throat. When Sakubei leaves the shop that evening, Gosuke hears rustling in the back room. In the darkness, he spots a pale beauty with disheveled hair and an open kimono, who looks vaguely like a living corpse. The woman smiles at him and asks in an otherworldly voice if he is looking for a blade, which she holds out in her hand. Gosuke responds by cowering in terror and covering his eyes.

The second half of the story opens in Yoshiwara, the most famous geisha district in Tokyo, located in the far northeastern reaches of the city. Wakiya Kinnosuke, the nephew of Matsushima, wanders through snow-covered streets after celebrating his imminent departure to Germany, where he plans to study abroad. In the middle of the night, after failing to catch a rickshaw back home, he spots a pale woman wandering barefoot in the snow. The woman leads

him to the Kōbai Yashiki, a nearby brothel, and leaves him with an object wrapped in cloth to deliver to one of the resident geisha, Owaka. After entering the brothel, Wakiya finds that the package has mysteriously disappeared. Although he is embarrassed and eager to return home, the resident geisha insist that he spend the night, as it is far too late to summon a ride. While he sleeps, Owaka folds Wakiya's clothes and begins to put them away, when, suddenly, a blade falls out of the pocket of his coat. In the middle of the night, the ghost of Onui appears in the brothel, possesses Owaka, and causes her to stab Wakiya to death, before forcing her to turn the blade on herself.

In his illustrations for *The Order Book*, Settai once again sidesteps the more dramatic elements of Kyōka's narrative and instead focuses on his atmospheric descriptions of the city as the basis for his prints. In his images, he provides two radically different perspectives of the same neighborhood, one which transforms the iconic architecture of the pleasure quarters into an abstract design of black walls and snow-covered rooftops, and another which uses linear perspective to craft a deep urban landscape of black fences, guard spikes, and gray walls. It is a dual-layered design that replicates his artwork for the original *Nihonbashi*, which similarly combined a flattened depiction of the city on its cover with a deeply recessed view of an alleyway in the endpapers. Settai's designs for *The Order Book* draw on a passage towards the middle of the novel, where Kinnosuke becomes lost in the backstreets of the Yoshiwara. In the text, before the bloody climax of the work, the narrator pauses the action of the story to describe a quiet scene of snow falling on the eaves of old buildings in the geisha district:

From the early evening hours, the lightly falling snow started to cling to the joints of the wooden fences, the edges of the rain doors, and the eaves of the houses. In the streets beyond the fence, it touched the cheeks of those passing by. It clung to their hair, and to the brims of their hats. What once came down with a rustle, eventually lost its voice, no longer falling from the sky but filling it with white—the tops of the trees, the crests of the tile roofs, the paving stones below, and the boards over the gutters. Around anything that emitted light—the flame in the tobacconist's shop, the lanterns of the street vendors and rickshaw men—the flakes gathered like tatters of cotton, or fire-stealing bugs of purest white, bearing their wings against the brightness.⁴¹



In his illustrations for *Dyed in Love*, Settai twice depicts the urban space described above, first as an abstracted pattern of shapes and colors, and then as a perspectival cityscape of nightmarish dimensions. On the outer packaging, he portrays the snow-covered Yoshiwara as a flattened band of black squares and white triangles that wraps around the center of the box. The city floats against a solid gray background dotted by hundreds of white spots of snow and is paralleled by a narrow, dark blue band representing a river. When read together with the story within, the blue band might be interpreted as the Sumida River, in eastern Tokyo, and the city as the Yoshiwara. Such information is not necessary, however, to appreciate the cover as a work of minimalist graphic design.

Figure 122 - *Dyed in Love*
Collection, box, Settai

⁴¹ As translated by Inouye in *Similitude of Blossoms*, 160-161.

On the endpapers of *Dyed in Love*, Settai represents the snowy scene from *The Order Book* in a more figural manner, while continuing to explore the graphic qualities of line, shape, and color. In his print, Settai depicts a narrow city street covered in snow and hemmed in by a moat and towering walls of gray and black. The image is rendered in deep linear perspective and leads towards a distant area where the moat bends around a corner crowded in by white, snowy rooftops. In the middle space of the street stands a single, faceless woman wearing a heavy layer of kimono over a willowy, almost non-existent body. The woman, just like Onui in the story, remains permanently out-of-focus and out-of-reach, as she stalks the strangely empty backstreets of the city. Rather than a real location in modern Tokyo, the image suggests a strange dream of cyclopean architecture.



Figure 123 - *Dyed in Love Collection*, endpapers, Settai

The image of the backstreet in Settai's endpaper print is colder, starker, and more abstract than his previous prints of alleyways for Kyōka's fiction. In contrast to his print for *Tale of the Vigil*, the walls have no openings—neither windows nor doors—and despite the description of lighting in Kyōka's text, there are no lanterns or other sources of illumination depicted in the print. The facades of his buildings have been reduced to flat surfaces of solid black or gray, some decorated with rows of boxes representing closed shutters and sliding screens, and others with no visible apertures at all. The black fences of the cityscape are monolithic and menacing; their broad surfaces are topped with rows of gray spikes that symbolize both exclusion, from an apparently prevalent criminal element, and entrapment, for resident geisha who reside behind sheer gray walls. A tiny drawbridge spans across the moat in the distance, but in the foreground the bridges are drawn up, as guard spikes lean ominously overhead. In the distance, buildings dissolve into patterns of gray walls topped by white triangles and squares, which echo the graphic design on the outer box. Covering the entire surface of the endpaper print, as with the box, are hundreds of white dots representing snow. The sky in the distance is leaden gray—the same color as the walls—and adds to a pervasive sense of gloom that hangs over the entire

image. Apart from a single, unmoving ghost, there are no people or hints of human warmth to disturb the sleeping town. One might imagine, at the most, the inaudible sound of snowflakes falling on walls and water. Settai's use of linear perspective draws the viewer's gaze past the ghost in the middle of the alleyway and on towards an indistinct landscape of abstract shapes and colors in the distance. The image accentuates the eerie atmosphere of Kyōka's story, first by reflecting his literary description of a snowy nighttime scene, and then by distorting the view with an impossibly deep perspective. Observing the print at length, one's gaze is imprisoned by the maze-like city, where no clear entrance or exit are offered.

Worship at Yushima: The City as Dream

Following the release of *Nihonbashi*, Kyōka and Settai collaborated once again almost immediately, this time for the publication of *Kyōka's Selected Works* (1915), a compilation of Kyōka's *fūzoku mono*, including his widely-acclaimed urban tale, *Worship at Yushima*.⁴² On the front endpapers of the book, Settai included a woodblock print of the neighborhood of Yushima, together with its namesake shrine, as described in Kyōka's novel. First published in 1899 in a single volume, the original *Worship at Yushima* was designed by Kajita Hanko with a sleeve in the form of a postmarked envelope and a cover depicting a branch of plum blossoms as the symbol of Tenjin,⁴³ the deity worshipped at the shrine. The contrasting images exemplify the competing directions of the text within, for while the verisimilitude of the envelope suggests a real account delivered directly to the hands of the reader, the plum blossoms hint at a work of poetic truth that transcends the particularities of time. In *Kyōka's Selected Works*, Settai created a new image for the novel that moved beyond the dichotomy of realism and poetic tradition and instead delved into the space of the story. Settai's print visualizes Kyōka's extended description of the neighborhood of Yushima in the text, which he portrays as a hidden world of winding streets and Edo period architecture. Settai captures the dreamlike quality of Kyōka's vision of Yushima with a view of empty second-floor verandas, wafting mist, and a tiny faceless character who climbs down the steps of the shrine to the hidden neighborhood below. Together, Kyōka and Settai combine text and image to transform Yushima from a familiar public space into a personal realm of dreams.

Upon its original release in 1899, *Worship at Yushima* was praised by critics as a return to the "correct path" by an author who had lost himself in a realm of fantasy.⁴⁴ After having wooed critics with gritty tales of urban life towards the beginning of his career, in stories such as *The Night Patrol* and *The Surgery Room*, Kyōka began to indulge in his passion for ghost stories, which were evaluated as being completely out of step with the times. Deeming "reality" as the only subject worthy of literary representation, critics attacked Kyōka's turn to the supernatural as an aberration of proper literary form. Thus, when he returned to the theme of urban life in *Worship at Yushima*, critics took notice, accepting him once again as a serious writer. Rather than monsters or supernatural beings, *Worship at Yushima* represented figures from the modern city of Tokyo, such as students, entertainers, and prostitutes, all of whom were viewed as natural elements of society, rather than emanations of the author's disordered psyche. The year

⁴² This title is first introduced in the previous chapter, which includes a discussion of the illustration of *Tale of the Vigil*.

⁴³ The deified form of scholar-poet Sugawara-no-Michizane (845-903).

⁴⁴ Suzuki Keiko, "Izumi Kyōka no seiritsu to bungei jihyō: *Yushima mōde*, *Kōya hijiri* e no kiseki," 47-49; Suzuki "Yushima mōde to sono jidai: senryaku toshite no mohō," 57-78.

following the work's original release, a reviewer in *Teikoku bungaku* claimed, "*Worship at Yushima* is Kyōka's recent masterpiece... although he was once astray on an evil path, he has rediscovered the correct road..."⁴⁵ Another reviewer in the same journal declared, "Recently Kyōka has shown himself to be a sick writer whose descriptions run the path of bizarre illusions and tend towards the road of wickedness, but one look at his most recent masterpiece, *Worship at Yushima*, reveals that he has overcome the blemish of his usual absurdities and now displays an inclination towards pure realism."⁴⁶ By realism, such critics apparently meant the text's treatment of serious social issues, such as class oppression, abortion, and women's rights, particularly as they pertained to the realities of modern urban life.

Despite its original reception as a work of "pure realism," however, *Worship at Yushima* appears to have drawn more of its content from the fiction and theater of the Edo period than it did from firsthand observations of the real world. The narrative borrows heavily from kabuki, with characters who engage in spontaneous theatrical performances in the streets, quote at-length from real kabuki plays, and imitate the actions of kabuki actors, in lives that play out like narratives from the stage. Rather than a representation modern life in the city, *Worship at Yushima* more often suggests the tropes of kabuki theater, in which the fates of characters are established from the opening act. For this reason, Charles Inouye writes that, in *Worship at Yushima*, "Kyōka's indebtedness to the early-modern tradition could not be more obvious... There are many ties between this story and previous formulations: the way in which obligation (*giri*) collides with emotion (*ninjō*), the double suicide at the riverbank, [and] the use of fetishes and other such narrative tricks to further the plot and reveal character."⁴⁷ As Inouye points out, Tayama Katai was particularly critical of the story in later years, writing, "But you could hardly call Kyōka's work realistic. Gradually it became clear that the source of his romanticism was the old kusazōshi texts of the Edo period."⁴⁸ Even upon its initial release, the response from the literary establishment was not unanimously positive and at least one contemporary critic, Takayama Chogyū (1871-1902), questioned in a review in *Taiyō* if the text could be called "realistic" at all. "When I read *Worship at Yushima* I can clearly recognize the signs of realism. However, the spirit of the larger work does not exactly harmonize with realism and it would be difficult for me to praise it in terms of its supposed realistic qualities."⁴⁹ Chogyū suggests that, rather than realism, Kyōka was better at dealing with enigmatic topics and was most convincing when "speaking of the secrets of heaven and earth and of the mysterious crossing of human lives and the universe." By considering only the alternatives of realism and non-realism, however, he overlooked the ways in which the narrative negotiated the spaces of the real world and a personal world of dreams. Turning to *Worship at Yushima*, first to the text and then to the images, one finds a work that alternates between realistic and theatrical modes of representation, and which hides at its center a space of childhood fantasy, buried deep in the heart of the city.

Worship at Yushima opens in the dorm room of an elite university in central Tokyo, where students gather to discuss their views on art, ethics, and contemporary society. The novel begins with a black tea (*kōcha*) party, a social gathering whose novelty is indicated by the students' drink of choice, for rather than consuming traditional Japanese green tea (*ocha*), they

⁴⁵ Suzuki, "Izumi Kyōka no seiritsu to bungei jihyō," 47.

⁴⁶ Suzuki, "Izumi Kyōka no seiritsu to bungei jihyō," 48.

⁴⁷ Inouye, *Similitude of Blossoms*, 136.

⁴⁸ From Tayama Katai, *Kindai no shōsetsu* (Tokyo: Kindai bunmeisha, 1923), 96. Quoted and translated by Inouye, *Similitude of Blossoms*, 137.

⁴⁹ See Suzuki, "Izumi Kyōka no seiritsu to bungei jihyō," 48.

opt for a more recent import, which is to be consumed, in the European manner, with a cube of sugar. The consumption of black tea thus signals the students' cosmopolitan aspirations, as well as their sense of belonging to a global intellectual elite. They spend little time, however, in discussing matters of international concern, as they veer quickly towards a debate on the conflict between love and honor, or the struggle between *giri* and *ninjō*—the central organizing theme of so much Edo period fiction. They focus their attention on the questionable moral behavior of one of their own members, Kōzuki Azusa, who has recently become entangled in a scandal involving a geisha. As a student of literature, Azusa has fair prospects for a successful career in academia, but his most promising opportunity for social advancement stems from his recent marriage to a wealthy aristocrat, Tamatsukasa Ryūko, who has vowed to grant him a lifestyle of wealth and power. Azusa, however, began seeing a geisha named Chōkichi in Yanaka, a *shitamachi* neighborhood, almost immediately after his honeymoon, and is threatening to end the marriage before it has even begun.

Following the opening scene, the setting switches suddenly from an elite university to a more familiar setting for Kyōka's urban fiction: the backstreets of the *shitamachi*. Genjirō, the son of a sushi vendor, rushes down a muddy street with a pair of *koma geta* (tall wooden sandals worn by geisha) wrapped up in a traditional *haori* coat under his arms. He is stopped by Kashira ("the boss"), a no-good playboy who teases him for cradling the sandals like a baby. When Kashira learns that they were a gift from the geisha Chōkichi he angrily derides her as a tomboy (*hanekkaeri*) and cheeky girl (*ochappii*) before recalling a recent street performance where she ran around town in boys' pants and waved a sword as she pretended to slay a monkey demon (*hihi*). Later in the narrative, it is revealed that Chōkichi and Azusa were both raised in the pleasure quarters and taught music and dance by instructors who beat, starved, and abused them. Chōkichi's mother was a geisha who sold her to a mistress when she was unable to pay off her debts and Azusa's mother was a geisha who left Tokyo for Sendai, only to die at an early age. Azusa's cousin, also a geisha, brought him back to the pleasure quarters in Tokyo after his mother's death. Unlike Chōkichi, Azusa was fortunate enough to escape the pleasure quarters through education, but rather than accept a position in upper class society after graduating, he began to long for the women of his youth and the song and dance of the *shitamachi*.

In the third part of the novel, Chōkichi makes her first direct appearance in the narrative during a scene of improvised backstreet theater. In an alleyway in Yanaka, two men imitate kabuki actors Onoe Kikugorō V and Sawamura Gennosuke IV as they play an impromptu performance of Mokuami's *Nezumi and the Fine-Patterned New Spring Cloak* (*Nezumi komon haruno shingata*, 1857), more commonly known as *Nezumi Kozō* after the main character of the play.⁵⁰ One of the actors beats wooden clappers, "*Kachi, kachi, kachi*," in a manner used to announce the opening of a kabuki play. The characters then deliver lines that are quoted verbatim and at length from Mokuami's work.⁵¹ The first actor plays Nezumi Kozō, a famous thief and folk hero from the Edo period, and presents a long soliloquy in which he compares his exploits to those of heroes from previous generations while defending his honor as a chivalrous thief. The second actor plays Matsuyama, a female robber and Nezumi's lover, and relates how, as a young woman, she preferred simple hairstyles and practical clothing to gaudy fashions, in part because she desired to be treated as an equal by her chosen company of male rogues. The pair then

⁵⁰ For detailed analysis of this scene, see annotations by Asada Shōjirō and Mita Hideaki in *Izumi Kyōka shū*, 234.

⁵¹ See Kawatake Mokuami, *Nezumi Kozō: Nezumi komon haru no shingata* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1928), 131-132.

alternates short lines of dialogue until they begin to finish each other's sentences in dramatic fashion.

Kiku:⁵² Even knowing I was a thief, you never rejected me. Gen: It is as they say, we are “lovers who resemble one another,” and thus I desire to be with you. Kiku: A demon lady who robs in the night... Gen: A demon lord who steals wallets from under sleepers' pillows... Kiku: Although I am brave, when tomorrow breaks my hands may already be bound by rope... Gen: When you are brought in for punishment by the court... Kiku: And in a flash we will both be dragged by horses... Gen: Two spears will send us to the next life... Kiku: Our bound fates written on paper banners... Gen: In the wilderness... Kiku: Our bodies shamefully discarded and displayed... Gen: How pitiful to think...⁵³

Before they can recite the concluding line (“...upon our fates”), Chōkichi emerges from a dark alleyway and shouts “Kinokuniya—,” or the *yagō* of Sawamura Gennosuke IV. She breaks into laughter, shouts it again, and then adds her imitation of a rhythm section, “*cha cha chacchiki chicchi don don*.” The unexpected excerpt from a kabuki play temporarily rends the story from the real world as it evokes the space of theater, in a manner similar to *Tale of the Vigil*.

After making her appearance, Chōkichi proceeds to a geisha house where she meets with Azusa. She reveals that she has recently had an abortion, but rather than comfort her, Azusa announces that he has decided to cut all ties with her in order to return to respectable society. After Azusa leaves, Chōkichi is unable to bear the shock of losing both her unborn child and her lover and begins to treat a doll as a living infant. The mistress of the house is disturbed by her behavior and has the doll torn apart and delivered to her in pieces in the hope that it will wake her from her madness, but when Chōkichi receives the mutilated figurine she is only further enraged. The mistress of the house then tells Chōkichi that she ordered a wicked old woman to slip her an abortifacient in order to terminate her pregnancy and allow her to continue working as a geisha. She then beats Chōkichi with her smoking pipe, to which Chōkichi responds by kicking over a kettle that raises a cloud of ash and allows her to disappear before the dust settles. The dramatic exit closes the scene with a puff of smoke, which cuts into the story like a special effect of the stage before leading towards the fated *shinjū* of the final scene.

In the closing chapter, Azusa is on his way to Yushima when he is stopped by an officer who insists that he come down to the police station where a mad woman has appeared screaming his name. The officer drags Azusa through the *shitamachi* neighborhoods of Yayoi and Nezu, which are compared by the narrator to *yomiji*, or the dark path to the afterlife. The comparison recalls the *michiyuki* scenes of Chikamatsu's *shinjū* plays, where ill-fated lovers embark on spiritually testing journeys towards the site of their deaths.⁵⁴ After finding Chōkichi at the police station, Azusa decides to commit suicide with her by jumping into a river and drowning—an act that once again echoes Chikamatsu's plays, in which double suicides often occur in rivers or on riverbanks. At the conclusion of the story, Azusa and Chōkichi are pardoned for their scandalous

⁵² Kyōka uses the actors' names to designate the lines of dialogue instead of those of the characters.

⁵³ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 5:272-273.

⁵⁴ Andrew Gerstle describes the *michiyuki* as a “travel song” or a “quiet pool in the stream” of the drama that constitutes a “spiritual rather than physical journey.” See *Circles of Fantasy: Convention in the Plays of Chikamatsu* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1986), 116-118.

behavior by the other characters, all of whom have come to recognize the beauty of their uncompromising love. In the final scene, a green and purple star burn brilliantly above their joint grave, indicating that their souls have found each other in the afterlife.



Figures 124 and 125 - *Worship at Yushima* (1899), sleeve and cover, Kajita Hanks

Like Kyōka's text, the original artwork for *Worship at Yushima* balances realism, poetry, and drama as it presents multiple sides of the work in visual form. Kajita Hanks designed the 1899 Shun'yōdō version of *Worship at Yushima* with a sleeve depicting a realistic envelope, a cover with classical poetic tropes, and a frontispiece showing Chōkichi tending to her doll during a bout of madness. The sleeve takes the form of a postal envelope with simulated folds and a label printed onto the surface, as though to seal the contents of the novel within. The label bears the title of the work in clear, bold brushstrokes along with the name of the author. In order to emphasize the supposed reality of the item, the envelope includes a vermilion postage stamp and a black postmark on the top right corner. The verisimilitude of the envelope suggests a confession or a true account delivered by post directly to the hands of the reader. The story within threatens to expose the hidden secrets of modern society with scandalous details of an affair and an abortion occurring even within the circle of the educated.

The cover of *Worship at Yushima* takes a more poetic route than the sleeve and features plum blossom branches with pink buds and white flowers, multi-colored pendants with floral designs, and a shrine with a *torii* gate and stepping stones designed in glittering silver mica. The plum blossoms are a classical trope relating to Tenjin (or Sugawara-no-Michizane), who, as a poet and scholar of Chinese, is said to have been particularly fond of the flowers of the plum tree, which are associated with classical Sino-Japanese culture. The small mica drawing of the shrine in the background is hidden behind the branches of the plum tree and would hardly stand out if not for its glittering color. Rather than a realistic depiction of the shrine at Yushima, the mica structure provides only the hint of a building, but when considered together with the plum branches and the title of the novel, it can be interpreted as an image of the Yushima Tenjin shrine. The title of the book appears next to the shrine on the cover, but unlike the clear print on

the sleeve, it is rendered in a flowing grass script that adds to the classical aesthetic of the image while matching the fluid plant-like designs seen elsewhere in the print. The specific rendering of the word *mōde* (literally pilgrimage or visit to a shrine) further accentuates the classical feel of the title as the word is spelled with an archaic *manyōgana*-type script in which logographic *kanji* are used not for meaning, but rather for their phonetic value (万宇傳 is read as もうで).⁵⁵ The author's name also appears on the cover, but again, in contrast to the sleeve, it is rendered in seal script and arranged in the shape of a vermillion ink stamp, which further contributes to the feel of a classical document with a Sino-Japanese aesthetic.



Figure 126 - *Worship at Yushima*, frontispiece, Kajita Hanko

The frontispiece of *Worship at Yushima* moves closer to the story's drama with a multi-colored woodblock print that depicts Chōkichi gazing sullenly at her doll after her abortion. The space of her room is sparsely depicted and barely furnished as the image focuses instead on Chōkichi, the doll, and the colors of their garments. Chōkichi is dressed in a striped black and gray outer kimono that exemplifies the *iki* aesthetic, or a subdued and somber chic, that was popular during the Edo period. Her red under-kimono, or *nagajūban*, can be spotted around the opening of her sleeves and hem. In pleasure quarter literature, the traditional bright red underwear has erotic overtones because it is the final layer of clothing hidden under the kimono, but is usually revealed just enough to suggest the form of the human body that lies beneath. Chōkichi's clothing contains many other eye-catching highlights, such as an outer collar and sash painted in black lacquer, a decorative inner collar printed in purple with a design of thin green grass, and mica dust scattered all over her outer kimono. She looks down at an even more colorfully designed doll, whose kimono-shaped blanket (*kaimaki*) features a design of petals, tassels, a folding-fan, autumn leaves, and numerous other shapes that are colored in yellow, red, orange, green, and blue. The blue background of the blanket is subtly shaded and the design is filled in with tiny pinpoints of color that display the skill of the artists (including the head artist, woodcutter, and printer) and indicate that the woodblock print was created over multiple

⁵⁵ Thanks to Professor Matsumura Tomomi for providing assistance with the reading.

rubblings, likely dozens, with each step adding a new color detail to the image. Surrounding the doll's head is a miniature folding screen that is heavily coated in silver mica, which shines off the page and draws the reader's eye towards the concentration of color around the doll.

Altogether, Hanko's image emphasizes color and technique, which work to bring out the tone of the emotionally-charged scene, while also presenting the image as a skillful artistic component of the printed book.

In *Kyōka's Selected Works*, Settai captured an entirely different aspect of *Worship at Yushima* by shifting focus away from the work's dramatic narrative and towards its lyrical descriptions of urban space. As the title of the novel suggests, the neighborhood of Yushima plays a central role in the story, even though it is never featured as a main setting of its action, which mostly takes place in the neighborhoods of Yayoi, near the University of Tokyo, and Yanaka, deep in the backstreets of the *shitamachi*. Early on in the story, the reader learns that Azusa is a regular devotee at the Yushima Tenjin shrine, a popular place of worship situated in the *shitamachi* in northeastern Tokyo, which he began visiting shortly after moving back to the city with his cousin. As a college student, Azusa found himself in need of temporary lodging, which he managed to secure at a *nagaya* (long house) tucked into Yushima's narrow backstreets, beneath the shrine on the hill. By the opening of the work, he has already moved out of the neighborhood and can only describe its urban geography in retrospect. He continues to reminisce fondly over his former place of residence, but is unable to revisit its hidden spaces after urban restructuring closes access to its secluded alleyways.

Azusa's fascination with Yushima precedes his first visit to the shrine, as he is aware that his mother worked there as a geisha before moving away from Tokyo to start a family.⁵⁶ He becomes further fascinated by the neighborhood after running into the same beautiful woman in its backstreets three times in a row. The first time he meets her is during one of his monthly visits to the Yushima Tenjin shrine, when he forgets to bring his wallet and is unable to pay for the ablution water at the hand-washing pavilion (*chōzuya*). Just as he is about to turn away and give up on offering his prayers, a stranger suddenly appears and agrees to cover his fee. He instantly feels a mysterious attraction to the woman, later revealed to be Chōkichi, whom he describes as resembling a combination of the ghost of his mother, a shadow projected from a previous lifetime, and Kanzeon (the bodhisattva of compassion, also known as Kannon). Later, when Azusa moves into Yushima as a student, he runs into Chōkichi two more times before falling in love with her. The second time he meets her is during a move from a friend's house to a *nagaya* in Yushima's hidden backstreets. Azusa spends the night wandering the dark alleyways of the neighborhood, unable to find his place of lodging, but right as he is about to give in to despair, the mysterious woman from before suddenly appears, as though by a miracle, to lead him to his destination.

Picturing Azusa's time as a resident in Yushima, the narrator describes the space of the neighborhood in two extended flashbacks. More than any other location in *Kyōka's* early urban fiction, Yushima is rendered as a fully realized urban space, made navigable to the reader's imagination vis-à-vis the narrator's precise description of its geographic markers.

The building next to the inn was a small *senbei* cracker shop, the home on the opposite corner was a *nagaya* where the owner would moonlight as a floral

⁵⁶ On a biographical note, previous scholars have pointed out that *Kyōka's* own mother lived in a neighborhood next to Yushima (Shitaya) before she moved to Kanazawa to start a family. See Hinode Yumi, "Izumi *Kyōka Yushima mōde* ron: shinshō fūkei to shite no Yushima," *Machikaneyama ronsō*, 31:1997, 30

hairpin maker, and between them both was an alleyway. Enter the alley and you would quickly hit a black wooden fence at the end. Turn right and you would see a votive lantern hanging behind *iki* lattice doors, but that wasn't it. Suddenly you would happen upon a veranda and a stone fence, through which you could see a roof with wooden tiles—that's where I was moving to. The neighborhood was hidden by willows, cut off by pine tree branches, covered by massive rooftops, and blocked by rows of two-story houses. It couldn't be seen from the top of Otokozaka hill... If you looked down from the metal railing, even though it was directly beneath your eyes, still you couldn't spot a single roof of the neighborhood hidden beneath Tenjin shrine.⁵⁷

The narrator's description of Yushima is one of a forgotten world of Edo-period customs that has diverged from the modern city of Tokyo thanks to its geographic seclusion. Its labyrinthine structure of narrow backstreets is permanently hidden from sight, thus allowing it to escape the relentless forward march of modernity. In an attempt to conjure up its hidden spaces, Azusa mentally retraces the steps that once led him into its alleyways. For Azusa, Yushima is a sacred space, inhabited by the ghost of his mother, the Shinto god Tenjin, and the earthly goddess Chōkichi. In the context of the novel, it is the geographic locus of his fate.

In his illustration for *Worship at Yushima*, Settai draws on a separate description of the neighborhood, in which Azusa imagines his mother's daily life as she wandered around the city's backstreets.

Azusa recalled the times that he would lean on the metal railing of the observation deck and stare endlessly at the box-shaped houses that surrounded the neighborhood below... He would stare at their weathered eaves and wonder if his mother had lived in one of those houses. He would sound the circular gong at the shrine and imagine his mother, seventeen or eighteen-years-old at the time, striking that same gong. He would look to his left at the row of *iki* second-story verandas, where scarlet-backed kimono were hung out to dry and mirror stands cast shadows on sliding paper doors at night.⁵⁸

Drawing on the above passage, Settai's illustration of Yushima pictures the Tenjin shrine on top of the hill, the second-story verandas of the town below, and a section of willow trees, cherry blossoms, and mist in the middle. His print is almost entirely devoid of people, with the exception of a single human figure who climbs down a steep staircase towards the left. In both the shrine and the town, Settai outlines tiles, beams, joints, rails, and wooden frameworks with hundreds of neatly arranged lines. His representation of the shrine accurately reproduces traditional Shinto architecture, as well as the form of the specific building at Yushima, including its three halls, or the *haiden* (worship hall), the *heiden* (offertory hall), and *honden* (sanctuary), and its roof structures, or the *chigi* (forked roof finials) and *katsuogi* (decorative horizontal logs) atop the sanctuary.⁵⁹ In the town below, Settai depicts *shōji* frameworks, lattices, and veranda railings, each with individual geometric patterns. Contrasting with the precise and angular arrangement of his architecture is the middle section of the image, where willow branches, mist,

⁵⁷ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 5:299-300.

⁵⁸ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 5:296.

⁵⁹ This is based on my own observations of the same buildings, which can still be found in Yushima today.

and *sakura* are loosely represented with hundreds of soft, curved lines. Although these elements are not mentioned specifically in the text, they might be considered as the dreamlike “cover” over Yushima—a neighborhood permanently shaded by tree branches and swathed in mist.



Figure 127 - *Worship at Yushima*, front endpapers, from *Kyōka's Selected Works* (1915), Settai

In Settai's depiction of the neighborhood below, one finds several details that closely follow Kyōka's description of Yushima in the text. To begin, the city is pictured from the second-floor up, which corresponds literally to Kyōka's detail of a “row of *iki* second-story verandas.” Closer up, the illustration features even smaller details drawn from the text, such as a “scarlet-backed kimono... hung out to dry” and a few “mirror stands.” Partially hidden behind a *shōji* in one room is the long sleeve of a red undergarment (*nagajūban*) hung on a kimono rack (*ikō*) to air, while across from the rack in the same room is a mirror stand (*kagamitate*) topped by a full-length mirror that sits next to a latticed window. In a building to the left, the base of another mirror stand is just barely visible from behind a wall, while in the room next door a discarded black kimono with red fabric can be glimpsed through partially open *shōji*. In his depiction of the shrine above the city, Settai includes details from a later passage of Kyōka's text where the narrator describes “the overhanging roof of the votive hall, the eaves of the main shrine, the *torii* gate, doves perched on the roof of the hand-washing pavilion, two or three of which coo as they flutter about the couple.”⁶⁰ Almost all of the details in the text are represented in the illustration, including the prominent rooftops, the eaves of the buildings, and the pair of birds that flutter about the *chōzuya*.

In addition to representing the details of Kyōka's text, Settai's image makes use of the visual element of his art form to expand upon the dreamlike quality of the city. For one, his print features a view that looks directly into private rooms with open doors, which allows the viewer to peer inside normally hidden spaces with little obstruction. The people who live in those rooms, however, are entirely missing from the picture. Rather than a living town, Settai's Yushima functions more like an empty stage ready to be filled in by the imagination of the

⁶⁰ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 5:306.

viewer.⁶¹ Within the rooms are glimpses of kimono and mirror stands that hint at the presence of a woman (perhaps Azusa's mother or Chōkichi), but no human figure ever appears from behind sliding screens or lattice windows. Outside of the buildings, a single female figure climbs down the steps of the shrine and back towards the city. She is tiny in size and minimally detailed, showing mostly black hair and a black kimono.⁶² She also has no face, which invites the viewer to imagine her with whatever countenance seems most fitting. If the reader connects the image to the text, then the woman will likely be interpreted as Azusa's mother, whom Azusa imagines as ringing the gong at the shrine before returning to the row of verandas below, but, as in the text, she could just as well be Chōkichi, the bodhisattva Kanzeon, or a combination of all of the above.

The total poetic sentiment of Settai's image arises from a combination of its formal features, including line, color, and point-of-view, as well as the artist's careful depiction of minor details drawn directly from the text, such as hanging *nagajūban* and hidden mirrors. Together, the details add up to a dreamlike atmosphere where the real city of Yushima becomes a phantasmal vision of itself. A similar sentiment is present in Kyōka's text, where the author writes that, when Azusa looks at Yushima, "It is as though the image of a phantom appears before his very eyes."⁶³ Together, Kyōka and Settai turn the hidden corner of Tokyo into a sanctuary of dreams, where every line and bend of the city's architecture contrasts with serene, bodhisattva-like figures to evoke a space that exists beyond the physical boundaries of the real world. Their vision is faithful to the real geography of the contemporary city, as the physical layout of Yushima featured in the endpaper illustration resembles the actual neighborhood as it exists even today. At the same time, Settai's image presents an impossible view, one of open verandas and empty houses, where the urban dweller's personal dreams form the primary axis of an imagined city space. No longer a stage, the city has become a backroom, where the hidden mechanisms of fate and cosmology produce the fiction of urban life.

Conclusion: Dreaming in the City, Alone

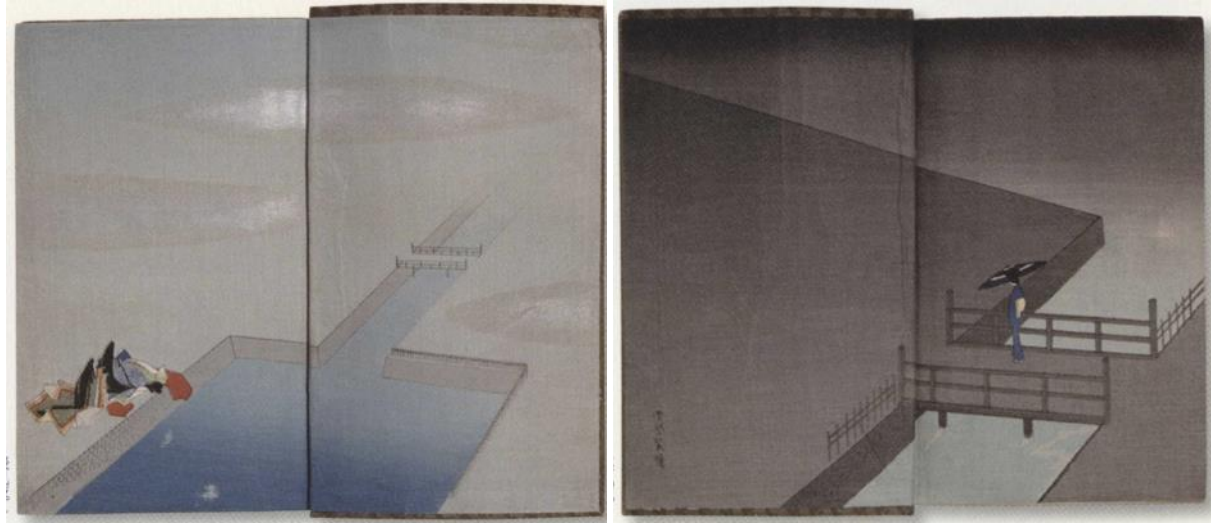
In *The Love Grass Collection* (*Aisōshū*, 1918), a later compilation of Kyōka's fiction, Settai includes two prints of vaguely urban landscapes that blur the boundaries of reality and dream. Rather than readily identifiable cities, they are instead outlines, or oneiric traces, of city spaces. The scenery of Settai's prints in *The Love Grass Collection* is composed of massive gray blocks of ground and thin, wooden bridges that span over moats of cloudy water. In the front endpaper print, two figures resembling courtier women from Heian period illustrated fiction, such as the *Tale of Genji Picture Scrolls*, sit atop an expanse of gray, stone-like ground next to a rectangular pool. They are depicted from the back, with their faces turned away from the viewer, as one combs the long black hair of the other in front of her. The women are clothed in multiple

⁶¹ Later in his career, Settai would build on his experience in illustrating stage-like views of classical Japanese environments to become one of the most accomplished set designers in the world of modern kabuki. From 1924 to his death in 1939, Settai designed some two-hundred stage sets, including sets for adaptations of stories by major authors such as Tsubouchi Shōyō, Nakazato Kaizan, and Kawaguchi Matsutarō. As previously stated, he even designed film sets, including one for an early filmic adaptation of Tanizaki's *A Portrait of Shunkin*. For draft images of Settai's set designs, in addition to a handful of extant photographs, see Saitama Kenritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, *Komura Settai to sono jidai*, 82-95; Harada, Hirata, et. al., *Ishō no tensai Komura Settai*, 98-105.

⁶² A draft image of the print at Keiō University reveals tiny highlights, including a black *haori* coat, a blue hem and collar, and a hint of red *nagajūban* at the sleeves.

⁶³ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 5:302.

layers of angular kimono that bunch up into jumbles of colored fabrics, which are printed in various shades of blue, green, orange, and red. Their long black hair and deeply layered clothing evokes the world of the Heian court, particularly as it was visualized in painted picture scrolls of the period, and thus links the endpaper print back to the earliest examples of illustration in the canon of Japanese literature. The time period of Settai's cityscape, however, is impossible to ascertain, as he juxtaposes classical figures with an empty expanse of gray and blue space, with no buildings or natural features to help identify an era or location. At the top of the image are painted large clouds of silver mica, likely by hand, which accentuate the hazy, dreamlike qualities of the borderless environment.



Figures 128 and 129 - *The Love Grass Collection* (1918), front and back endpapers, Settai

On the back endpaper of *The Love Grass Collection* is printed a similar image, this time featuring only a single woman wearing a blue kimono, a yellow *obi*, and tall wooden *geta* as she crosses a bridge while holding a dark blue umbrella in hand. The image corresponds loosely to a scene in *Shamisen Moat* (*Shamisenbōri*, 1910), a geisha story included in the collection, in which a woman disappears into a cloud of mist as she crosses a wooden plank lying over a puddle-sized canal. The moat is part of a spidery network of gutters and makeshift bridges that spread out endlessly into the alleyways of Tokyo. A character in the novel describes the backstreet as follows:

On one side is a black fence and a small gutter. There's a dark *nagaya* there too. There's an *utazawa* song instructor's home at the dead end of the alleyway and a house deep in the shadows with a festival lantern hanging... Sensei, if you look towards the dark fence you'll spot a willow tree... over it you'll see guard spikes...⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Kyōka, *Kyōka zenshū*, 13:250-251.

In contrast with Kyōka's detailed description of the urban landscape, Settai's image is nearly devoid of any identifiable structures. His city architecture has been reduced to a handful of lines indicating the rails and supports of a flimsy bridge, two tiny fences, and the brick-lined edge of a large, gray square. The woman in his print proceeds from one empty gray slab to another in a space that is not quite a city, but is much less a natural landscape. It is space without referential structures: an empty space of lines, angles, and washed-out greys. The woman would appear to be wandering from nowhere to nowhere, trapped in a virtual landscape that exists outside the boundaries of reality.

In his prints for *The Love Grass Collection*, Settai emphasizes qualities of isolation and spatial distortion in a dreamlike urban landscape. As works composed primarily of line and space, his prints combine the graphic qualities of Art Nouveau with a dark color palette and somber tone to create a pervasive sense of emptiness, which adheres to the surface of the visual plane. At once elegant and austere, such images lie on the border of dreams and nightmares, depending on how one interprets their mood. Part of their impact, however, lies not in the abstraction of their environments, but in the inhabitants of such spaces, whose faces are turned permanently away from the viewer, and who wander endlessly through surreal landscapes, with no entrance or exit in sight. As with the Kokū Bosatsu in Settai's essay, such figures are embedded in their environments, like Buddhist statues in the dark corners of old temples. Trapped in obscurity, they bide their time in silence, beckoning endlessly to their viewers, who peer from above into isolated worlds. The realm that they inhabit recalls the structure of dreams, where all spatial orientation is left behind, and where seemingly insignificant structures hide layers of esoteric meaning. In *The Love Grass Collection*, Settai's artwork might even be said to steal the show from Kyōka's fiction, but it does so by building on the architecture of a shared imaginary space. Nurtured by a cross-pollination of forms, Kyōka and Settai's imaginary world takes shape at the intersection of visual and literary space, where the pull of strange perspectives dissolves the city into a geometry of dreams.

Conclusion: Scraps

In 1943, illustrator Kimura Sōhachi (1893-1958) published *Thoughts on Modern Illustration* (*Kindai sashie kō*), a book-length investigation of the development of illustrative art in modern Japan.¹ Referring to illustration as an art of “scraps” [*hogo*], he writes, “Illustration is a fine art that doesn’t appear to be a fine art. That’s what makes it interesting and unique... you don’t create an illustration with the aim of hanging it in an alcove, rather, you create it for the morning newspaper, which is destined to be tossed on the side of the road by sunset.”² Sōhachi goes on to describe the various indignities suffered by illustrators when publishing their work in the average morning paper, where images are often crammed into tiny corners, with text that bleeds through from the other side of the page, while vying with copious advertisements for attention. Far from being dispirited by such working conditions, however, Sōhachi sees the ephemerality of illustration as one of its most admirable traits, and one which even gives the illustrator a certain freedom of expression. Knowing that illustrations are not destined for the alcove, illustrators can experiment with various styles, perspectives, and techniques, and even deviate from the text entirely, with little concern for the outcome of their decisions, whose consequences will invariably be short term. Elsewhere, Sōhachi celebrates the freedom of modern illustrators to completely ignore the texts with which they are entrusted, as they focus solely on the merit of their own artwork.³ As Sōhachi makes clear, the independence of the illustrator was only a recent development, with origins in the late 1920’s; previously, illustrations were bound to their texts, to which they owed the entirety of their existence. Writing in 1943, Sōhachi saw the beginning of mass media culture and the proliferation of images in modern society as a boon for the illustrator, who became a freelance artist, responsible primarily for the ability of his or her work to attract an audience. Referring to this new era of illustration as its “golden age,” Sōhachi championed the transition of illustration from a subordinate position, whose relationship to the text was one of dependence, to a popular art form that bore no allegiance to the world of modern literature.

Sōhachi was not the first to argue for the independence of illustration as an art form; long before him, Kajita Hanko took up the defense of illustration in an article that appeared in *Waseda bungaku* in 1907. In the article, Kajita begins his argument by tracing the origins of illustration to the *ukiyo-e* images included in *kusazōshi*, whose role was to “grasp the heart of the text and express it in concrete terms,” a function that he describes as “explanatory” or “illustrative” in nature (*setsumei-teki*).⁴ Claiming that readers had developed beyond the need for “explanatory” images, which were appropriate for the less educated audiences of the past, he argued that it was time for illustrators to be granted their freedom, in order to create images that could stand as works of art on their own. He writes:

¹ Sōhachi was best known for his illustration of Nagai Kafū’s *A Strange Tale from East of the River* (*Bokutō kidan*, 1937), one of the most iconic pieces of illustrated fiction from the pre-war period, which appeared in the pages of the *Asahi shinbun*. He was also known for his illustrations of popular fiction by authors such as Shirai Kyōji and Nakazato Kaizan. *Kindai sashie kō* (Tokyo: Sōgabō, 1943), 59; 303.

² Sōhachi, *Kindai sashie kō*, 191.

³ Sōhachi, *Kindai sashie kō*, 80.

⁴ Kajita Hanko, “Shōsetsu no sashie oyobi kuchie ni tsuite,” *Waseda bungaku* 19 (June, 1907): 135.

Just because the images that appear in novels are ‘illustrations’ of those novels does not mean that they should be bound to their texts to the end, being treated as little more than explanatory notes. In other words, illustrations should not be so subservient to their novels that they lose their true nature as images... Rather than merely explanatory pictures, illustrations should demonstrate an aesthetic interest of their own.⁵

Kajita’s opinion was expressed during a turning point in the history of illustration in Japan, as the art form transitioned from an indispensable component of printed fiction, to an optional—or even extraneous—element of literary texts. It was a period that Sōhachi would later refer to as the “dark age of illustration,” when illustrators largely left their traditional profession behind and entered into the world of exhibition painting or other visual arts.⁶ From the beginning of the 1910’s to the end of the 1920’s, illustrations that had previously accompanied texts in great number were replaced by singular images, such as illustrated covers, endpapers, or frontispieces, whose connection to the work of fiction was often tangential or decorative in nature. At the same time, many books began to forgo the use of images entirely.

Illustration made a major comeback in the late 1920’s, accompanying an unprecedented surge in the production of print media. Leading the proliferation of print culture was Kōdansha, a company that targeted as wide a demographic of readers as possible with their general interest magazines, which featured a grab bag of news stories, advice columns, literary publications, illustrations, and photographs. In 1909, Kōdansha published its first title, *Yuben*, which was considered a solid hit with 14,000 copies sold.⁷ In 1925, the company published a magazine whose sales sent shockwaves throughout the industry, *Kingu*, which sold 740,000 copies of its first issue. In 1928, the magazine sold 1,400,000 copies in a single month. Prior to *Kingu*’s success, the leading magazine in terms of sales was *Shufu no tomo*, a periodical that targeted housewives as its primary audience, which topped the market with print runs of around 250,000, in the mid-to-late 1920’s. Together with a surge in sales of individual titles, the variety of titles available to the reading public also skyrocketed. In 1926, the total number of titles published in Japan, in the combined form of newspapers, magazines, and books, was approximately 412; in 1932, the number was 4,945.⁸ This change in scale, equivalent to a paradigm shift, had a major effect on the role of illustration in print culture, as illustrators came to occupy a new position in the media complex.

Whereas, prior to the mid-Taishō period, it would have been possible to keep track of every major work of fiction published in a year, together with the artists who illustrated them, following the media explosion of the late 1920’s, the sheer proliferation of publications meant that it was nearly impossible for any individual to follow every title published. With so many new titles printed every month, the literary establishment scrambled to identify which works should be considered as pure literature (*junbungaku*), or essential reading for literary enthusiasts, as opposed to popular fiction (*taishū shōsetsu*), for consumption by the general public. One quick

⁵ Kajita, “Shōsetsu no sashie,” 136.

⁶ Sōhachi, *Kindai sashie kō*, 14.

⁷ The following numbers are all found in Shiozawa Minobu, *Shuppansha* (Tokyo: Jitsumu Kyōiku Shuppan, 1998), 156-157.

⁸ Kashiwakura Yasuo, Satō Takumi, Komuro Hisako, *Nihon no masu media* (Tokyo: Hōsō Daigaku Kyōiku Shinkōkai, 2007), 55.

way of identifying the difference was to draw the line at illustration.⁹ While some texts falling into the category of *junbungaku* continued to feature illustration into the post-war period, the vast majority did not. The most extensively illustrated texts of the 1920's and 30's were often historical epics, romances, children's stories, and other forms of popular fiction, which now lie entirely outside of the canon of Japanese literature. The names of the authors and artists who produced such works are known almost exclusively to specialists in historical print media, or else to fans of historical novels and movies based on popular texts of the time.¹⁰ Whereas writers such as Ozaki Kōyō, Izumi Kyōka, and Natsume Sōseki once published most of their fiction with pictures, whether in newspapers, magazines, or books, only the rare example of a major literary figure continued to do so after the 1930's (Tanizaki Jun'ichirō being perhaps the most conspicuous example).¹¹

When considering that the late 1920's brought an end to the privileged position of illustration in Japanese literature, it might seem strange that Sōhachi chose to refer to such an era as a "golden age" for the genre. What Sōhachi makes clear throughout his text, however, is that he is far less interested in literary history than he is in the evolution of illustration as a subordinate art form to the driving force behind the visual media and popular culture of the future. At one point, he claims brazenly that he often avoids reading the stories that he is tasked with illustrating, while also denying that he has any interest in reading novels at all. When perusing his favorite works of fiction, he looks only at the pictures¹² (a manner of "reading" that recalls earlier accounts of authors' experiences with *kusazōshi*). He ends his book by conceding that his work contains no detailed information on the texts that it mentions, as the goal of his study was to focus exclusively on illustration. At the end of the book, he poses a rhetorical question that further widens the divide between text and image: "Who am I, an artist, to say anything to someone who writes words for a living?"¹³ Sōhachi, as an illustrator, provides an extreme account of literary history, in which pictures lie at the center of the story. At the same

⁹ The difference between pure and popular literature was widely debated in literary journals during the 1920's, as authors attempted to differentiate between literature that aimed to make serious artistic statements, without regard to prevailing tastes or trends, and fiction meant exclusively for the masses, whose primary function was to entertain. Literary critic Nakamura Mitsuo refers to the late 1920's as the beginning of the vulgarization (*zokka*) of Japanese literature, while singling out Kawabata Yasunari as a writer who successfully transitioned between popular and pure modes of writing. See Nakamura Mitsuo, *Ronkō Kawabata Yasunari* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1978), 58. Quoted in Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 813. The distinction between categories was further solidified with the establishment of the Naoki Prize for popular fiction and the Akutagawa Prize for pure literature by Kikuchi Kan (1888-1948) in 1935. The Naoki prize was named after pop fiction writer Naoki Sanjūgo (1891-1934), a figure who is today primarily remembered for the award that carries his name, while the latter was named after Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, a major figure in the literary establishment of the early 20th century, whose short stories are considered a central part of the modern canon of Japanese literature. Both prizes continue to be among the most prestigious literary awards in Japan today, as they continue to reinforce demarcations of literary value. See Edward Mack, *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing, Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 188-190.

¹⁰ Popular authors of this time period include Kamitsukasa Shōken (1874-1947), Nakazato Kaizan (1885-1944), Shirai Kyōji (1889-1980), and Yoshiya Nobuko (1896-1973). Major illustrators include Iwata Sentarō (1901-1974), Ishii Tatsuzō (1887-1973) Nakamura Gokuryō (1890-1969), Kawabata Ryūji (1885-1966), Kōno Michisei (1895-1950), and Yamamoto Kanae (1882-1946).

¹¹ Tanizaki's most extensively illustrated works, *The Key* (*Kagi*, 1956) and *Diary of a Mad Old Man* (*Fūten rōjin nikki*, 1961-1962), were published with illustrations by world-renowned woodblock print artist, Munakata Shikō (1903-1975).

¹² Sōhachi, *Kindai sashie kō*, 90.

¹³ Sōhachi, *Kindai sashie kō*, 331.

time, his account is remarkably prescient in its grasp of the direction that popular culture and media would eventually take, as images continued to proliferate at an ever-greater rate, often with little consideration for the words that accompanied them. In his worldview, words and pictures were already two separate domains, with no need to associate, outside of the aim of catching the reader's attention. Rather than rarified works of art, Sōhachi saw illustrations as ephemeral images that reflected the mood of their times, together with the tastes of the general reading public. Viewed on a daily basis by hundreds of thousands of eyes, they were discarded by sunset—a true art of scraps. Sōhachi's account, though beginning with *kusazōshi* and ending in the 1940's, suggests the impending development of new visually-oriented forms of art, such as manga and anime, in which illustrators would once again become essential members of the creative project. His account begs the question, however, of whether the text-image relationship of the past had any bearing on the future.

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