The Tōkaidō series, especially, became a more formalized, in the treatment of which there is nothing to choose between a whole group of men, mainly pupils of Kuniyoshi. Ichijusai Yoshikage is one of the best of these. His Tōkaidō, with humorous scenes, would often be excellent but for the figures. He made also two sets of "Views of Yedo." Yoshitora deserves a note for his curious pictures of London and Paris, and the absolute disregard of truth which those inventive compositions display in the grouping of details. He made a large bird's-eye view of the Tōkaidō in three sheets, and another set of the views in the stereotyped lines.

This last stage of decay in landscape saw all the beauty swept out of them by mere formalism. The conventional signs are inserted by which the landscape is to be identified, as a procession introduced into the picture to keep out the composition; and, as a rule, that is all. Of this nature are the Tōkaidō series by Yoshitaya, Yoshimune, Sencho, Kuniisena, Kuniiteru and even Chikamara, who under his better known name of Kyōsai did work so much more able and personal. The Tōkaidō by Yoshitoshi may be mentioned as superior to the productions of the artists last referred to.
Hokusai painted other views of Mount Fuji, among which from the subjects of colour prints; but although book illustration in the ordinary sense of the word hardly enters into the scope of this volume, it is impossible to ignore his other great publication on the subject, "Eiga ku Hakkai," The Hundred Views of Mount Fuji," a superb set of compositions in intaglio, published in 1834-35 by Ishimura Gredo (vols. 1 and 2 engraved by Yegawa Tanizaki and his pupils), and Yei sakaya Foshibo of Nagoya (vol. 3 engraved by Yegawa Sentaro). This work has one hundred and fifty cuts; two other editions of it were published at Nagoya, one in black only and another tinted. A reproduction with English text by T. F. Dickins was also printed at London in 1880.

Strange: Coloured Prints. p. 65
account of the artist as well as an excellent portrait of
him (Promenades). And in his own book, Kyōsai Gwaden,
he has himself of his autobiography, and illustrated it
with sketches of amusing humours and face, the majority
of which are here showing him at work. This book
was published at Tokyo in 1884; it has four volumes,
two of which are devoted to a history of Japanese painting
and two to the life of the artist, all illustrated by himself
under the name of Kawanabe Kyōsai. The text is by
Watanabe Masakazu. Kyōsai has generally been said to
have been a pupil of Hokusai, but... This statement is with
our foundation. That he is to be classed with Hokusai above
all the other artists of the school is undeniable. His artistic
qualities closely resemble those of that master, his indepen-
dence of tradition, his wonderful facility, his realism, his
humour, and in no small degree the technique that he
adopted in his paintings at times. He came too late to
make many good prints... Kyōsai also supplied
good landscape to a figure by Hokusai... But in
this case the student will find more satisfaction in
accepting him as a painter, and studying the fine
drawings of fairy tales and illustrated proverbs, and
studies in ink. Among illustrated books...
yemon-tai kagami (candles), 1870; Kyōsai gwrare
1850; Kyōsai mangwa, 1881; and Kyōsai bun-
gwa, 1882. Source: Colour Prints, p. 87.
Kawanabe Tōiku Kiyōsai (Shōjo or Shōju) was born in 1831 on the 5th day of the 4th month at Kogah, in the province of Shimosa. As a boy he was for a short time under Kuniyoshi, but received his chief artistic training at the hands of Kano Tōshaku; soon, however, retreating from the traditions of the Kano School to the under and less restricted manner of the Ukiyo-e, in his early days Kiyōsai used the signature Chikamasa; and, as remarked above, his productions of this period are formal and with little suggestion of the style he afterwards used with so great effect. Kiyōsai attained celebrity at an early age; and during the period of ferment which culminated in the revolution of 1867-68, he was twice times imprisoned by the authorities of the shogunate for the political offence of caricaturing them. After the assumption of power by the present emperor, a great congress of painters and men of letters was held at which Kiyōsai was present. He, however, found enough to laugh at in the new state of things, and his caricature, inspired by this event, brought him again into the hands of the police. He died in 1889, at the age of 78, a widower, of turmoil and dissipation—always in trouble, always happy. Mr. Guimet and Mr. Regamy visited Kiyōsai in 1877, and have given us a pleasant
Hokkei, among Hokusai’s pupils, made some very interesting essays in landscape. His treatment of it in Surimono is always good, and in Shokoku Meisho—a series of famous views in different provinces—he shows a considerable trace of his master’s influence, especially in colour and the drawing of the figures. His composition is weak. This set is of unusual dimensions, 6 3/4 inches high only, by 14 3/4 inches wide. One of the subjects represented is an European ship of old and curious rig, sailing as she passes the hill Inasa, at the entrance to Nagasaki Harbours. Strange: Coloured Prints. p. 136.
Landscape: Shunsen.

Shunsen is responsible for a series of landscapes, slight, but quite distinctive in color, green and rose pink being the characteristics of the scheme used. In these, figures play a prominent part, although not so much as to dominate a clever suggestion of outdoor effect, got with the simplest of elements. An almost invariable convention used by Shunsen is the delimiting of his sky a little below the top of the print, with a hunchbroken bar of red; in this case a mere trick, though a pretty one, to help the distance. The composition is always very simple, and generally follows parallel lines.

Change: Colours Prints. p. 105

For understanding Hishige's Landscape

Cf. Toyohira.
Shunsen.
Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Hokusai)

were published during the years 1825 to 1829. They are about ten by fifteen inches in dimensions, and almost all executed in a characteristic colouring of light blues, greens and yellows, with here and there a note of rich red or brown to give strength and contrast. The signature is generally "Hokusai Tamekaze", with additions, and the series, in spite of its title, consists, when complete, of forty-six plates.

It is difficult to speak in measured language of this set of prints. As compositions they are unsurpassed, and should for this reason alone, form part of the course of study of every landscape painter. The boldness and rigour of the draughting, the amazing dexterity of the arrangement, and their intense concentration, put them on the very highest level as works of fine art. Above all, the sheer humanity of them — for not one is without its suggestion of pathos or humour — makes an appeal of the strongest. One feels how perfectly the artist takes his audience into his confidence. It is not only a piece of fine landscape that he offers us, but this is presented in such a way that we share with him the intimate pleasure of looking at it.

Strange: Obere Prints. p. 64
Kikugawa
Kikugawa
Kikura
Kikura
Kikura
Makoto (Kin'yu
Makoto (Okumura
Moronobu
Shibata

Shigenaga
Shigenaga
Shinka
Shunsho
Shunsho
Shunsei
Sukenosuke
Toshinobu
Toyoharu
Toyohiro
Toyokuni
Toyonobu (Ishikawa
Ushinari
Yeishi
Yeisho

Fuke: Cholo, p. 408.
Terminology

otan. ye. A rough broadside painting of small size on paper, precursor of the print.

uchida. ye. A print in the shape of a fan.

hachira. ye (pillar-print). A very tall, narrow print, size about 28 x 5, used to hang on the wood pillar.

surimono. A print generally of medium size and on thick soft paper, intended as a festival greeting or mementos of some social occasion.

koban. A vertical print slightly smaller than chuban.

chuban. A vertical print, about 11 x 8 inches, the medium size sheet.

hosoban. A small vertical print, about 12 x 6.

yokoban. A large horizontal print, about 18 x 13.

oban. " " vertical. " " 15 x 10.

kakemono. ye. Very tall, wide print, about 28 x 10.

seimi. ye. A print in black and white only.

beni. ye. A print in which beni (a pinkish) is the chief color used; applied to all color two-color prints.

kan. ye. A print in which kan (brick-red or orange) is the chief or only color; applied by hand.

urushi. ye. Lacquer used to heighten color.

diptych.
triplych.
pentaplych.

The surimono was a type of print not sold in the market; it was made upon special order of private individuals for use as a festival-greeting, an invitation, a congratulatory memorial, or an announcement. Its size was generally small, about five or six meko square; printed on very soft paper, it displays the utmost complexity of the technique of color-printing. The number of blocks was lavishly multiplied; the most subtle gradations of color were controlled; and the effect was heightened by every variety of gauze, gold, silver, and bronze powders, and mother-of-pearl dust. Yet in spite of all this effort, the surimono is, in the opinion of many collectors, not as a rule very impressive as a work of art. In the ordinary surimono the medium employed has outstripped the motive expressed, and what should have been the means has become the sole end. Nevertheless, they are unrivalled as specimens of workmanship and printing, and the best of them are highly treasured. Some of Hokusai's pupils excelled their master in this form.
Moronobu.

Hishikawa Moronobu, born probably in 1625, was the son of a famous embroidery and teppi dok activation designer who lived in the province of Awa. Moronobu worked at the trade of his father during his youth, obtaining thus a training in decorative invention that is traceable in all his later work. Upon the death of his father, he came to Yedo and took up the study of painting under the masters of the Tosa and Kanō schools. Gradually, however, the Ukiyo-e style, introduced by Mitatei some years before, became his chosen practice; and from painting he turned to the designing of woodcuts for book illustrations and broadsheets. Later in life he became a monk, and died probably in 1695, though some authorities say 1714. Moronobu's influence in the history of Japanese prints is twofold: He inspired the Ukiyo-e School with a new vitality, and he turned wood engraving into an art.

Moronobu seized this medium and transformed it. Into his woodcuts he poured that wonderful sense of design which he notably possessed, creating real pictures of striking decorative beauty. These books and prints, widely circulated, carried to the eyes of the mass, in a new and delightful diversion, spreading far and near the contagious fascination of the lively Ukiyo-e manner of drawing and awakening in the populace a thirst for more of these productions. -- Moronobu's first books ap
Moonobe: cont.

peared about 1660, and from that date onward of
his retirement he bought as many as a hun-
dred books and albums, and an unknown num-
ber of broad sheets. In all of these his orgynes,
genial, personality, and his strong sense of deco-
ration made themselves felt. — His charac-
teristic simplicity of sweeping line, the mastery
use he makes of black and white contrasts, and
the vivid force of his rendering of movement, the
fine lines live; the composition is grouped to
form a harmonious picture picture; a domi-

ting sense of form has entered here to transform
the chaotic haggardness of his predecessor's
attempts. — All of Moonobe's work was
printed in black and white only, but occasion-
ally the sheets were roughly colored by hand
after they had been printed. His designs have
little detail; as a rule the scene surrounding
his main figures is barely suggested by a few
d lines; and the figures themselves were bound
more than intense shorthand notation of a
theme. But how much life he gives them!

century of Moonobe's large single sheet com-
positions display so fine a power of composition
and so unsurpassable a mastery of rhythm and
tone that there can be no hesitancy in judging
him, quite apart from his historical signifi-
cance, to be an artist of the first order. Nothing
that he ever did was unsuccessful.

Fribe: Chato — p. 74
Masanobu.

Okumura Masanobu may be termed the central figure of this period; not only does he tower among the great men of his time, but around him revolve the changes in technique, full of far-reaching consequences, which came into being with his invention of two-color printing. Furthermore, he takes on additional historic importance as the founder of the Okumura School, which continues parallel to the Torii School, and whose productions are characterized by a fine development of grace and dignity that is to be found in the output of the rival line. Masanobu was born about 1685, and lived until about 1764—a life of very nearly eighty years, full of various achievements. During the course of his career he used many names, among which Ginkoetchi, Hōgaiamoto, Ōneshō, Tawaraya, Torre, and Kamye are the most frequent. Little is known of his life except that he began as a bookbinder at Yedo. It is said that soon after 1707 Masanobu founded a publishing establishment in connection with his bookshop, issuing prints as well as books. Masanobu's earliest works were book-illustrations and albums, which closely followed the manner of Maverden. Parallel with them he produced a number of "Tange," or large single-sheeted prints in black and white, which, after printing, were colored by hand with orange pigment. These probably date from about 1720. About 1720 he began to do work in a medium which he is said to have invented—the urushi-e, or lacquer print, in
which the turquoise gives a new richness and luminosity to the colors. The device of heightening the effect by applying gold powder to certain portions of the design was also employed by him. A play of light that is extraordinarily fascinating often marks his combinations of color. By about 1742 a new technical advance, the most vital in the whole history of the art, came into existence, and Masanobu is generally credited with its invention. This was the employment of two blocks beside the black key block to print two other colors upon the paper. The importance of this step was incommensurable: when it was taken the doom of the hand-colored print was sealed, and the way to still further development was opened. At first the colors used by Masanobu in his two-color works were a delicate apple-green and the equally delicate rose called beni, from which the same beni that came to be applied to all the two-color prints of this period. The combination of these two colors is singularly lovely, and the fresh charm of these sheets has led some collectors to pronounce as the most beautiful products of the art Masanobu lived long enough to produce some three-color prints, where these were denied about 1755, but the effects he obtained within were possibly less fascinating than those of his earlier process. So the list of Masanobu's probable inventions must be added: the pillar-print, that remarkable type about 4 to 6 inches wide and 25 to 40 inches high, which was to be an important form of the
It is possible that we must also attribute to him the invention of the mica background— that silver surface of powdered mica which gives a curious and beautiful tone to the figures outlined against it. Through his work runs that sweeping power of line which he derived from his study of Masanobu, and in addition, an elegance and suave grace that is the expression of his intimate grace and spirit. Masanobu is always mellow and harmonious. His figures, more fully proportioned than most of the figures of the period, sway in easy motion—a mixture of sweetness and distinction characterize his poses, heads, expert bodies, and ample draperies of this woman, while every resource of compact and dignified design is expended upon the impressive figures of his men. A certain high geniality, a pure, sunlighted warmth of conception runs through his work. Women, out-of-door scenes, and a few actors constitute the main subjects of Masanobu's work. As a portraiture his few productions give him as the greatest of his time. The landscape backgrounds in some of his smaller prints are delightful innovation. A full and brilliant life shows in all of Masanobu's work. At another period in the history of art, this was an effect: use made of the patterns of draperies.
For coloring see note Colors in Woodcuts.

Most of Hayamotos prints are of small size, almost square. In this form his refinement found its most perfect expression. If we would see an aspect of Hayamotu that is of more impressive proportion and realize that scope as well as daintiness was in him, we must turn to certain rare pillar-prints which were done chiefly in the years immediately preceding his untimely death. Here dignity combined with grace and an exalted sweetness of composition adds nobility to that exquisite color which here no less than in his small prints finds place.

Scheik: Chats. p. 151
Korinsei's life is shrouded in more mystery prevalent in the case of most Ukiyo-e artists. It is known that he was a samurai, or feudal retainer of knightly rank, for the death of his master, Toriihaga, he became, as was the custom, a ronin and established himself near the picturesque Ryogozan Bridge in Yokosuka as a painter. He originally used the name Haruhide. Shigenaga was his first teacher, Harunobu his second; his work can safely be dated between 1770 and 1781. By the end of this period Kiyonaga was beginning to advance achievements that eclipsed Korinsei's. As Fumio Kudo points out, it was Korinsei's misfortune to collude with Harunobu at the beginning and with Kiyonaga at the end of his career; could we elaborate these two we might think of Korinsei as "the most beautiful Ukiyo-e designer."—His characteristic device in color is the predominance of a strong orange pigment based on lead, which, when originally applied, has the utmost brilliance. Combining this orange with a blue of his own making, he obtained novel and striking results. Korinsei's small prints have often a beauty almost equal to Harunobu's, but they lack individuality of manner. —But in his larger sheets he produced a few compositions whose elaborate magnificence is a new and individual achievement. —"Designs of Spring Greenery." —But Korinsei's distinctive glory lies in the sphere of pillarprints. —He is the supreme master, no one else has produced so many fine ones and practically all of his finest work is in this form.
Shiba Kōkan has already been mentioned as the forger of Harunobu's work. His ability needs no further recommendation when we admit that we cannot with certainty tell his prints from Harunobu's. This is his chief title to fame. He was born in 1747 and died in 1818. During his life he signed many names to his works and attempted many manners. From the Dutch at Nagasaki he learned something of the rules of European perspective, and tried, in the eighties, with success but without much beauty, to carry them over into Japanese art. In addition, he introduced shadows into some of his compositions—a device alien to the whole spirit of Chinese and Japanese painting. He was the first Japanese artist to attempt copper-plate engraving. Queen renderings of European scenes by him became to us. In a hundred different spheres of art, invention, and speculation he tried his hand. His intellectual curiosity in every field reminds one of Democritus da Vinci. He remains one of the most interesting and puzzling figures of his time—an adventurer, a restless experimenter, a forger, and a man of extraordinary, though chaste, genius. A poem written when he was dying has a curious vibrancy: "Kōkan now dies for he is very old; to the passing world he leaves a picture of the world that passes."
Dans leur recherche de réalisme et de nouveauté, les Japonais en vinrent à étudier les sciences et les arts européens chez les Hollandais de Céle-de-Décima, près de Nagasaki, et cela malgré l'opposition de l'ancienne édition de lettres du gouvernement shogunal. C'est ainsi que Shiba Kozan (1747-1818) apprit les lois de la perspective. Il fut aussi le premier Japonais à employer la peinture à l'huile et la gravure sur cuivre au burin et à la couche forte. La collection Hayachi renfermait de lui une vue prise à l'endroit Oura dans l'est de Zennin gravée sur pierre et imprimée au trait noir coloré à la main. Admirateur des œuvres européennes, il compara l'Oranda Kika, merveilles hollandaises. Deux de ces kakemonos qui apparten- rent à la collection Barboufeau donnent une bonne impression de ses tentatives d'assimilation. Shiba Kozan fut un initiateur. Tokugawa lui dut la connaissance de la loi de la perspective qui lui furent enseignées vers 1796.
Shunsho.

Shunsho's sense of dramatic composition was keen; and his precious actors take scenes out of life. A vivid menace, his tense actor limbs shake with a concentrated and imprisoned fury not the less impressive because of its intentional exaggeration. They have not Harunobu's unreality of perfect grace, but rather the utterly different outer reality of magnified passion. In repose they are like statues; in action they have the vigor of those natural forces—waves, river currents, storms of thunder—which are the background. Shunsho's figures of women, or rather his figures of men acting the part of women, according to the irrevocable custom of the Japanese stage at this time—aceless violent, but often as tense.—All his figures are dynamic—the forerunners of volcanic fires whose existence he suggests by restless line-conflicts. Shunsho's predecessors in actor representation had never equalled the intensity of these figures and faces. Shunsho tears the heart out of a rôle and holds it up for us to see. He gives the passion of the actor such expression as would have been impossible to Kiyonobu, twisting the face into a distorted and grandiose mask beside which the faces of the primitives seem wooden and meaningless.
Shuncho's work includes a very great number of actor prints in the narrow upright hansome form and a few large square prints. He also issued a series of small illustrations for the "Kirimo-Manju," an old romantic chronicle which furnished many favorite subjects to the artists. These are quiet in design and soft in color; to them the eye may always turn for rest if wearied by the streaming actors. In collaboration with Shigemasa he produced a set of ten small prints representing agriculture, which have considerable charm. In 1776 the same pair of artists brought out a series of book-illustrations called "Mirror of the Beauties of the Green Houses," representing groups of courtesans occupied with the various activities of daily life—in the street, the house, the garden, and the temple. This book has been called "the most beautiful ever produced in Japan" when one examines its chief rival, "The Mirror of the Beautiful Women of the Yoshiwara" by Kitao Masanobu, one must have no hesitancy in giving Shuncho's and Shigemasa's the first place. This means, very probably, the first place among the illustrated books of the world. Its pages, printed in rose, purple, brown, yellow and grey, are rich and delicate.
Third Period: Higashiyama and his Followers

In the period of the Primitives the artistic impulse was almost wholly one of devotion—an attempt to express in line and color the great themes of design that eternal within the brain of the artist. The Primitives were inspired by what Von Steinlein calls the desire of "presenting single characterized motives of movement." Their creations had no relation to observed fact or to an exact rendering of Nature; they were the shadows of lofty dreams, form projects by the luminous spirit of the artist against the wall of space. The designs of the Second Period, though hardly more realistic than those of the First, were nevertheless nearer life. The delights and passions of real men, even though piously regarded color the conception of the artist as he approached his work, so that we find in Harunobu the exquisite joys, in Shunsuo the terrific revolt, and in Buncho the imperceptible longings of the heart. Yet it is all symbolistic, all pictorial, and nothing real is portrayed; the sharply limited field of those prints is a world of imagination from which no path of communication open to regions of everyday. The perception of these artists did not enter into and interpret the seen earth; absorbed in the creation of a personal dream, it imposed its arbitrary categories upon objects from without, and had little respect for their intrinsic beauty. Then, with magic incantations, the designer shattered the forms of the real world to bits and whimsically re-moulded them nearer to the heart's desire.
This attitude—a mixture of adolescence, playfulness, and vision—may be described by the phrase "naively imaginative." The decorative impulse of the Primitives and the naively imaginative impulse of the Early Polychrome masters changed in the Third Period to a different variety of inspiration—the naturalistic and interpretive. By naturalistic and interpretive, I mean the attempt to seize a number of detached elements of observed life and weave them into a design that reports not only the idea-symphonies of the artist, but also some sense of the deep nature of the elements themselves. The artists of this period, while mastering the decorative impulse of the Primitives and the imaginative freedom of the Early Polychrome masters, found reality more interesting and more worthy of faithful attention than did their predecessors. Buncho fell off as a tangent to life on the wings of geometrical design, but Buncho lingers observant among beautiful women in quiet gardens; Harunobu abandoned the real world for his harmonious dreams of color; but Kiyonaga weaves into harmony the perfect forms which his creative imagination evokes from the imperfect forms of our life. The earlier artists had hints of landscape background; this period was to go farther and relate the landscape pictorially and materially to the figures. The work of these designers is no longer the world of a lovely but private dream; we seem to enter a region as wide and free as life itself, inhabited by groups of superb and graceful figures that are as unforgettable as the Greek gods.
Kiyonaga

No other Ukiyo-e artist ever so dominated his period. all earlier print-designers were gradually driven into retirement by his colossal success, and the majority of his contemporaries adopted his style. In him all previously developed resources met; after him began that long decline which led through intermediate stages of much haunting loveliness to the final death of the art. The Torii school was awakewed from its slumber, and for the second and final time assumed the dominance it had in the days of Kiyomitsu. Little is known of Kiyonaga's life. Born in 1742, he worked as a young man for a bookseller at Yedo. He studied painting under Kiyomitsu, became the first head of the Torii school, produced the most important of his work between 1777 and 1790, and not long after 1790 retired from any large amount of print-designing. His death occurred in 1815. Picken: Cat. p. 26.
The diptych and triptych in Kyosanaga

For other was the impulse that led Kyosanaga to his
diptych and triptych compositions. The great triptych
of the Resurrection, the diptych of the Night Expiation,
the Serenade 'Triptych and the whole series
of diptychs called Twelve Months South,' to
which belongs the marvellous 'Terrace by the Sea,'
are all dominated by an indigenous rhythm
of line and color. These designs have not shrunk
under the enticing force of Harnensbrue's minuteley detailed
peace, nor Korin's richness; all these elements
Kyosanaga sacrifices for a broader sweep and a
more unified pictorial quality. His designs coor-
dinate the elements of line, color, figures, and
landscape into total impressions of such large
harmony as we have not seen before and shall
hardly see again. To overestimate the genius that
produced the grouping of his best works is
impossible; to realize it fully requires careful
analysis, so unobtrusive and inevitable are
its effects. Kyosanaga's greatest works are
these triptychs and diptychs in which he de-
picts the holiday life of his Olymian figures.
Even single sheets from them are treasures;
for though they combine into still greater com-
positions, each one is a perfect unit that can
stand alone. His pillar prints are ranked a-

among the foremost works in this form.
In many respects like Kiyonaga, Shuncho can hardly be regarded as second even to his master, except in originality. He lacked Kiyonaga's great creative imagination—an imagination which brought into being the Olympian style. But his gifts enabled him to assimilate this style perfectly and turn it to his own slighter, different uses. His sense of composition is rather undistinguished when compared with Kiyonaga's; but the delicacy of his drawing, the restrained harmony of his color and the clean intangibility of his line have a beauty that we could ill afford to sacrifice even for Kiyonaga's strength. Kiyonaga brings down the gods in all their noble dignity to walk the earth in calm magnificence; but Shuncho leads us into a secret heaven where the loveliest and most flower-like of the gods have remained behind. His is a softer beauty, touched with gentle half-light, vibrant with fervent yearning; his subject women turn in mid-sorrow as though sacred grave music had suddenly leapt to their hearing; their perfection passes over into the region where beauty becomes sadness. No women in the whole range of Japanese art so haunt one's memory as those his; no beauty seems at the same time so flawless and so changed with the burden of transitoriness. One cannot but feel that where Kiyonaga's keen vision saw only the happiness and brilliance and splendor of the forms that swept by him in motor procession, Shuncho saw also the ghastly fleshlessness of their passing and the melancholy of their radiance sunset-bound; and around his figures...
Shuncho:

In historical importance and in originality Shuncho is secondary to Kiyonaga; in absolute beauty his work deserves a place beside that of the master. As a colorist—his most distinguished rôle—he was perhaps the greater of the two.

Field: Chats. p. 240.
Utamaro.

Utamaro, the central and in some ways the most fascinating figure of this period, has been from the first a great favorite with the Eastern European collector. His graceful, sinuous women are the images that come most readily to the mind of many people at the mention of Japanese prints.

In his own time and land his popularity was equalled by that of no other artist. It was by his portraits of women that Utamaro won his great fame — — his characteristic feminine type. Her strange and languid beauty, the drooping lines of her robes, her unnatural, slenderness and willowiness, are the expression of Utamaro's feverish mind; as her creator he ranks as the most brilliant, the most sophisticated, and the most poetical designer of his time.

— Utamaro was born in 1753 in the province of Musashi. Early in life he went to Yedo and there studied under the noted print painter and book-illustrator Toyohara Chikanobu, whose same authorities say was his father. Almost from the beginning of his career he lived with the famous publisher, Soutaya, who issued his prints, and this relation continued up to the date of Soutaya's death in 1797.

In Utamaro's early work, which began with an illustrated book in 1776, the influence of Kiyonaga was strong. Shunsho's and Kitao Masanobu's characteristics are also sometimes
visible. Some of his early work is signed Toyokaze. In 1780 the first important product of Utamaro’s career saw the light—his famous "Gifts of the Ebb and Tide"—a book of exquisitely conceived and delicately printed representations of shells and rocks on the seashore. In each Book of 1788. In the decade between 1780 and 1790 Utamaro produced many additional books. The single-sheet prints which he issued during this decade are exceedingly beautiful works of a high that the inexperienced eye would never recognize as Utamaro’s. The figures are like those of Kiyonaga’s prime, but drawn with a slenderness of line and restlessness of pose that strike a different and thrilling note. With 1790 began the classic period of Utamaro’s work. During the decade from 1790-1800, Utamaro was, except for the isolated figure of Haraku, outstandingly the most versatile and brilliant among them. During this last decade of the eighteenth century Utamaro produced the greatest of his works. Among these must be counted the remarkable series of half-length portraits on silver backgrounds. This 1790 decade, when Utamaro was at the zenith of his powers saw many triumphs besides the silver portraits. He was necessarily busy with experiments of every kind—his labors necessarily for new effects and
passed on to new manners. Discarding the type
of head that had appeared in the silver portraits, he
decided that more restless, haunting types by
which we best know him. The ethereal and
supple bodies, the slender necks, the slightly
strained poses, all indicate the nervous hyper-
-aesthetic tension of the hour. Toward the end of
the decade his peculiarities grew even more
marked. The necks of his figures became in-
credibly slender; the bodies took on unnatural
length; at many longer prevailed them.——
In the year 1806 he died, and with him died the
great days of the Japanese prints.
Few people approach Sharaku's work for the first time without regarding him as a repulsive charlatan, the creator of perversity and senselessly ugly portraits whose cross-eyes, impossible mouths, and angry gestures have not the slightest claim to be called art. At first these strange pictures may even seem almost pricking to the spectator—a view of them which he will remember in later years with almost incredulous wonder. To overcome one's original feeling of repulsion may take a long time; but to every serious student of Japanese prints there comes at last a day when he sees these portraits with different eyes, and suddenly the consciousness is born in him that Sharaku stands on the highest level of genius, in a greatness unique, sublime, and appalling.

It was therefore with the colossal and tragic gestures of the No dance in his soul, the distorted and monumental intensity of the No masks in his eyes, and the contempt and irony of the No performer for the common actor in his heart, that Sharaku, coming to Yedo, took up his terrible brush to depict the Yedo actors as he saw them. The resulting series of portraits is surely one of the supreme examples of graphic characterization and devastating contempt that the world has ever seen.
[Handwritten text not legible]
Like a beautiful island in the midst of a sea of weeds, the landscape prints of the first half of the nineteenth century stand apart from the general disfigurement and debasement of print-designing. The great days of the figure print were over; but now, into an art filled with the second-rate followers of Utamaro and Toyokuni, came the fresh and brilliant landscape genius of Hiroshige and Katsushika. Their work did not share in the general decay; it must be regarded as a new shoot shot up by the roots of a tree whose main trunk had already fallen into irreparable decay.

Fischer: Chats, p. 358
Hokusai was born in 1760, the son of a mirror-maker. He lived to the age of eighty-nine years—a long life, crowded with privation that wore on sympathetically, and with melancholy devotion to his art. When in his seventies, he said: "Ever, since the age of six years I have felt the impulse to draw the forms of objects. Up to the age of fifty years I made a great number of drawings, but I am dissatisfied with every thing that I created prior to my seventieth year. At the age of seventy-three I, for the first time, began to grasp the true forms and nature of birds, fish and plants. It follows that at the age of eighty I shall have made still greater progress; at ninety I shall be able to create all objects. At a hundred I shall have attained to still higher, unimaginable powers; and when I finally reach my one hundred and tenth year, everyone, every dot will live with an intense life. I write these who are going to live as long as I to convince themselves and then I shall keep my word. Written ten at the age of seventy-five years by me, formally Hokusai, now called the old man mad with painting." His dying words were: "If the gods had given me only ten years more—only five years more—I could have become a really great painter!"  

Trice Chato, p. 363
Hokusai.

His figures are drawn with a light and sure realism that is generally mingled with humor and often with vulgarity. His vigorous power of observing and recording faces and attitudes is almost unparalleled. Fantasy, whimsical conceits, irony, grotesqueness animate them; always they have a tremendous life. The play of his brush is miraculous. His landscapes are his greatest work. In the best of these he sheds off his truculent mood, and creates designs whose stark brilliance and originality of composition is unsurpassed. And at least once in the noblest of his prints—the rare and monumental series of The Imagery of the Poets—he achieves a high originality that will always be impressive.

His work may be divided roughly into three periods. In the first he followed the traditions of Honshe, Shunchi, Utamaro, and others of his contemporaries, with great skill but no special originality. His countless book illustrations of this time were all conceived with lively fancy, but never with great skill but no special originality. His landscapes of this period, such as the very wide prints and screen prints in which he painted a delicately suggested landscape, more extraordinarily graceful women's figures not unlike those of Utamaro. Already he was a master of drawing, but he kept incessantly at his studies under many teachers, learning among
other things. European perspective from Mitsu Kotar. His work was done with his and the following period, under a dozen different names, of which Sori, Yoko, Sheiko and Taiko are the most important.

In 1812 began his second or realistic period, with the publication of the first book of his fifteen-volume series of drawings, the "Manjansu." In this epoch he turned from the style of his predecessors and launched into a hitherto undreamed journalistic realm. He took a lively sense of the comic and the burlesque, and an insatiable interest in the smallest details of life, he threw over all formal stylistic quality and set sail on a riotous voyage of naturalistic discovery. — — Holusaki himself did not recover. In his third period, the stylistic one, he great hero that was in him transcended his petty motives and the trivial discrepancies of seen things and he created those visions which constitute his lasting glory. Between 1823 and 1830 he issued these series, "The Thirty-six Views of Fuji," "The Bridges," "The Waterfalls," "The Dog Chos Islands," and "The Imagery of the Poet," in which we hail him as master. No longer the steep question, he brings us his dream.

Even his latest years were crowded with continued effort. In 1849 at the age of eighty-nine years,inded.

lak: Chako. — p. 370.
Hiroshige takes rank by unanimous consent as the
famous landscape artist produced by the Ukiyo
School. Less rigid in his treatment, seems chiefly in
the more delicate and transitory appearances
of cloud and mist, rain and snow, sunrise and dusk,
which give to a landscape at each moment so much of its specific character. These atmospheric ef
fects of his are quite famous — Hiroshige's great
strength lay in his genius for strikingly effective
composition and in the skill with which he adapts
his designs to the limitations of the color-print
technique. He reduced the pictured scene to a
few simple elements of a highly decorative char
acter, and managed to make them so symbolic
and suggestive that we do not miss the multi
itude of details which he purposely omits. A
strongly dominant impression of unity is the re
sult.

One curious characteristic of these
prints at once strikes the Western eye — the use of a
band of dark color along the top of the picture, which
is shaded gradually down into the clear white of
the lower sky. This convention serves several purpuss.
It provides a mass to balance the color at the bottom
of the design, bringing the whole sheet into the pic
ture and not leaving the upper portion as a mere
margin above the landscape proper. It also cre
ates height and atmosphere, setting the bright
part of the design, the middle, back into the frame
created by the upper and lower masses. And last
ly, it renders with peculiar accuracy the effect
of gradual vanishing, which we actually ex
perience as we look at a landscape in our
visual field, the sky does not end in a sharp line, but blurs and darkens at the upper edge of the space that our eyes survey.

Hiroshige's bird and flower designs are works of extraordinary freshness and loveliness; a simple and idyllic charm emanates from them, and as compositions they take high rank.

Hiroshige was born in 1796, just as the great period of figure-designing was drawing to its close. To a youth he attempted to gain entrance to the studio of Toyoharu, but the fortunate fact that there was no room for him forced him to enter the studio of the less popular but more subtly gifted Toyohiro. Here he studied landscape, a branch in which he was destined far to outstrip his master. That delicate genius which was Toyohiro's cannot but have produced its effect upon the pupil; and it pleases one to fancy that it is some echo of Toyohiro's marvellous refinement of feeling that gains at last full expression in some of Hiroshige's most beautiful landscapes. In 1828, Toyohiro died, and Hiroshige became independent. -- Toto Mei-sho or earlier series of Edo views, distinguished by curious long red clouds in each plate. Shortly after 1830, Hiroshige found occasion to travel from Edo, the northern capital, to Kyoto, the southern capital, along the great post-road which he has immortalized -- the Tokaido. Here resulted his series of horizontal plates, "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido," completed about 1834. This remains his best-known and
unsurpassed work. Each picture is endowed with unfailing vividness and originality some famous scene along the crowded national highway. For reasons unknown to us, Hiroshige prepared new designs for some of the plates after the original publication of the series; and these variation plates are of great interest to collectors. In this, which we may call the Katsukawa period of Hiroshige's work, he abandoned to a certain extent the delicate drawing of his queer Tokaido and Yedo roads and employed larger unbroken color masses, aiming at broader effects. In the fifth, Hiroshige abandoned almost entirely the horizontal or lateral prints of his earlier days and adopted the upright shape.

In the year 1858, just after the publication of the "One Thousand Views of Edo," Hiroshige died. He did not live to see the plates for his "Thirty-six Views of Fuji" completed. One of the collector's treasures is a striking memorial portrait by Kuniyoda that was said shortly after Hiroshige's death. The old man is represented with a finely-shaped head, powerful, quiet features, and eyes as piercing as an eagle. The number of Hiroshige's different designs runs into at least three or four thousand, not counting his illustrated books.
The Three Religions

"Three Sake Tasters": picture by Okumura Masanobu (circa 1710)


First: 985 (?) to 1608.
Chiefly portraits of divinities, engraved in the Buddhist temples.

Second: 1608-1680.
Early illustrated books, with roughly cut pictures, sometimes hand-colored, names of artists and engravers unknown.

Third: 1680-1710.
Artistic albums—illustrated books—pictorial broadsides—panoramic views. Rudimentary chromoxylography.

Fourth: 1710-1828.
Artistically illustrated books of all kinds, especially old pictures, and volumes for instruction of artisans. Chromoxylography in books and broadsides. The second half of this term, from 1765 to 1828 is the best period of chromoxylography.

Fifth: 1829-1849.
Signaled by the later works of Hokusai, the topographical handbooks of Ukiyo, and the landscapes of Hiroshige. Decline of chromoxylography.

Sixth: 1849 to Present Day.

The surimono or New Year's cards, which came into fashion in Yedo in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, are gems of chromatography, and display the technical resources of the engravers at their best. They are usually of quarto or octavo size, printed with great care on thick creamy paper, adorned with designs by well-known artists of the popular school, and bearing some little conceit in the form of a verse or a proverb. The best period is between 1800 and 1840.
Taniz Bunchō
1763-1830.
Illustrated Works of Fiction.

The early volumes, often works of some pretension, were of octavo size, but they were soon followed by others of a less imposing and more popular type. One set of these, consisting usually of semi-historical stories, were of a long shape and dedicatory size, embellished by whole-page or two-page pictorial woodcuts; the other was a still smaller publication issued on very thin paper, each with an ornate wrapper and bearing cuts on every page. These novellets, or kusazoshi as they were called, were essentially popular literature - heroic, tragic or humorous - and they were characterized by the strange admixture of text and illustration upon the same page, the lines of the text occupying the spaces in the picture that would usually be filled with background or accessories. The persons introduced into the scene were moreover distinguished by little character labels, generally placed upon some part of the dress, in order to relieve the reader from any difficulty in interpreting the composition.


A very early specimen, dated 1662 is now in the British Museum. - - - list of artists included all the best names in the popular school - T. Kiyonobu, T. Kiyonobu, Nishigawa Sukemune, T. Kiyonaga, T. Kiyotani, Tomikawa Gintaré, Kitao Masanobu (Kindey), Rantōnai Shunto, Kitagawa Utamaro, Wadaawa Toyohiro, U. Toyokuni, Yeishi, Hokusai.
Color Prints.

There are no colored engravings in the world that may be compared with those of Japan in the long period from the coming of Torii Kiyonaga to the passing of Utagawa Toyokuni; the eye is beguiled by a bluish shade of ineffable calligraphic beauty and by a tender harmony of color that cheers but never wearsis the senses. In most of the popular broadsides of this time an almost feminine gentleness pervades the choice of motive and its treatment, and it is but rarely, as in some of the earlier works of Toyokuni and his pupil Kuniyada, that a stronger chord is struck. As schemes of dramatic decoration they are scarcely to be surpassed and have rarely been equalled, and the time is not far distant when the sheets which brought the engraver the pittance of a mechanic, and were sold for a vile price in the streets of Yedo, Osaka and Kyoto will rank in the estimation of the collector with the masterpieces of the engraver's art.

Shiba Kōkan (Shiba Gokan).
1747 – 1818.

Books illustrated with perspective (1780 - 1800).
Gwato daiyu dan, a book of travels, 1781.

Kōkan Koki-ke, book.

An artist who is best known as a clever imitator of his master, Harunobu, whose signatures he forged upon a number of prints. He also used the studio name of Harushige in signing prints in the Harunobu manner. In later years he painted pictures in semi-European style, and made copper-plate engravings which were colored by hand.

Lastly must be mentioned an entirely independent artist, originally attached to the Naturalistic school of painters, Kikuchi Yōsai, whose drawings of the worthies of ancient Japan in the twenty volumes of the book called the Zenken Hojutsu are superior in refinement and truth to anything of the kind produced by Hakusa or his school. The portraits of Yōsai were actually types of the patrician order, while most of the popular artists were either purely imaginary, like the women of Ukiyoe, or modelled upon stage impersonations, adjusted to the tastes of an audience from which, unfortunately, all the representatives of culture and genteel birth were excluded by the social law of the age.
