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Shaping the present, crafting the past: imaging self-narrative in the life and work of Toyohara Kunichika (1835–1900)

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Department of Asian Studies, The University of Auckland, 2016
ABSTRACT

The artist Toyohara Kunichika (1835–1900) is today recognised as one of the leading figures in the history of Meiji-era nishiki-e prints, and particularly in the field of kabuki actor imagery. He belonged to a generation of nishiki-e woodblock print designers born and trained in the late Edo period (1603–1867[1868]) who came to artistic maturity during the following Meiji era (1867[1868]–1912). The socio-political, technological, and cultural changes occurring in the Meiji era posed new challenges to the long-established industry of woodblock prints. By the end of the nineteenth century figures like Kunichika came to be seen as representatives of past Edo-period culture operating in a present Meiji cultural milieu. This was despite the fact that many connoisseurs, collectors, and scholars from this time to the early to mid-twentieth centuries dismissed woodblock prints created in the late Edo and Meiji periods.

The aim of this study of Kunichika’s life and art is two-fold. First, it seeks to redress the stereotypical view that late Edo and Meiji prints embody a period of ‘decline’ and ‘decadence’, as upheld by writers from the later nineteenth century onwards, and advances our understanding of the qualities of nishiki-e of this period. It will show that the Meiji commercial print industry, although subject to different cultural considerations and economic hurdles, remained buoyant until the end of Kunichika’s life, and that print designers, writers, and actors of the age actively collaborated in the production of prints. Secondly, an examination of Kunichika’s October 1898 ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interview in the Yomiuri shinbun, as well as contemporary newspaper reports and his prolific body of work in the genre of nigao-e (‘likeness pictures’), sheds light on this artist’s views regarding his own place within the nineteenth-century woodblock print tradition and his self-identification (and self-narrative) as a ‘master of kabuki actor prints’ (nigao-e shi).
Fig. 1. Toyohara Kunichika (1835–1900).
'One day I will find the right words, and they will be simple'
(Jack Kerouac, *The dharma bums*, 1958)

To my parents
*Jane Isabelle Brewer Stephens (1917–96)*
*and Henry Edward Stephens (1921–2011)*
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I made my acquaintance with Toyohara Kunichika in the late 1990s when I was asked to work on an exhibition catalogue of the artist. That 1999 publication, *Time present and time past. Images of a forgotten master: Toyohara Kunichika, 1835–1900*, spawned an interest that continues to this day in Kunichika, in particular, and to the numerous other oft-forgotten later Edo/Meiji print designers, in general. My fascination with Meiji prints was encouraged early on by the late Robert (‘Bob’) Muller who, like me, believed Meiji artists were much overlooked, and Chris Uhlenbeck, who had the foresight to understand that this is a field worthy of study and exhibition. My subsequent projects with Chris on other artists of this period are testimony to this. Heartfelt thanks must go to Ellis Tinios—our many hours skyping about prints and books, as well as the merits of Meiji artists, sustained me through this journey. And I also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Oikawa Shigeru, who collaborated with me on *Time present and time past*, and who is a font of knowledge regarding Meiji print designers. Chris Uhlenbeck, Ellis Tinios and Oikawa Shigeru have been generous mentors to me over the years.

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Fig. 65. Toyohara Kunichika. Sawamura Tossō as Sasaki Gennosuke (佐々木源之助), from the series Photograph scenes—today on sale! (Shashin tokoro kyō uridashi 照真所今日うり出し), 1870. Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, 007-2890.

Fig. 66a–b. Cartes de visite. a. 1. Ichikawa Sadanji I as Togashi no Saemon and 2. Kawarasaki Sanshō (later Ichikawa Danjūrō IX) as Musashibō Benkei, 1872 (Illus. Iwata, ‘Shirō shōkai (1)’, 145), and b. Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Benkei in June 1887 (viewable: British Museum, 2001,0215,0.1.1-42).

Fig. 67. Toyohara Kunichika. Seen as if just photographed (Utsushita sō 写した相), from the series Thirty-two fashionable physiognomies (thoughts) (Tōsei sanjūnisen 當世三十二想), 1869. Pola Museum of Art, Hakone. Illus. Hinkel, Toyohara Kunichika, Abb. Nr. 40.

Fig. 68. Toyohara Kunichika. Kogiku of Sarugaku-chō and the Imado Daishichi inn (Sarugaku-chō Kogiku Imado Daishichi さるがく町小菊 今戸大七), from the series Thirty-six Tokyo restaurants (Tōkyō sanjūroku kaiseki 東京三十六会席), 1878. National Library of Australia, nla.pic-vn5197059.
Fig. 69. Toyohara Kunichika. Photograph (Shashin 写真), from the series Mirror of enlightenment sentiment (Kaika ninjō kagami 開化人情鏡), 1878. Illus. Hinkel, Toyohara Kunichika, Abb. Nr. 44.

Fig. 70. Toyohara Kunichika. Suketakaya Takasuke as Shashin no Owaka. Ichikawa Sadanji I as Yoarashi Okinu, Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Kaminari Oshun, Nakamura Shikan IV as Ibaraki Otaki, Onoe Taganojō as Otatsu, Nakamura Fukusuke as Torai Omatsu, and Onoe Kikugorō V as Takahashi Oden (写真のお若 開筆 slicing by Osanamai). in The allure of seven evil women (Enshoku shichinin dokufu 魅惑七人毒婦), 1878. Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, 201-4613/201-4614/201-4615.

Fig. 71. Toyohara Kunichika. True likeness (Shinsa 真書き) (Nakamura Shikan IV as Urashima Tarō 浦島太郎), from the series Twenty-four novelties of the enlightenment (Kaika nijūshisei kō shinsha 開化二十四好), 1877. Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, 201-3853.

Fig. 72. Toyohara Kunichika. Heron maiden (Sagi musume 鷺娘), from the series One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō (Ichikawa Danjūrō engei hyakuban 市川團十郎演藝百番), March 1898. Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, 007-1943.

Fig. 73. Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Heron maiden, in Butai no Danjūrō, 1923. Viewable: http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1014359, spread 188.

Fig. 74. Gosai (Migita) Toshihide. Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as the Heron maiden in New dances at the Kabuki Theatre: Heron maiden (Kabukiya shinkyōgen shosagoto Sagi musume 歌舞伎座新狂言所作事鷺娘 市川團十郎), 1892. Kokuritsu Gekijō: http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp:09056.

Fig. 75. Issen Yoshifuji. (detail, lower left corner) A humorous competition between foreign and domestic goods (Hakurai wamono tawamure dōgu chōhō kurabe 布衣来物道具調法くらべ), 1873. http://base5.nijl.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/G0000002JITUHAKU_37TA0000_0000_0000_0000_00.

Fig. 76. Toyohara Kunichika. Nakamura Shikan IV as Jinriki Tanigorō (神力谷五郎/中村芝薫), 4/1867. Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, 007-1348/007-1349/007-1350.

Fig. 77a–c. Toyohara Kunichika. Old and new kabuki eighteen (Shinko kabuki jūhachiban 新歌舞伎十八番), n.d. Kokuritsu Gekijō, www2.ntj.jac.go.jp 06140/06141/06142.

Fig. 78. Toyohara Kunichika. Hanakawado Sukeroku (花川戸助六), from the series One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō (Ichikawa Danjūrō engei hyakuban 市川團十郎演藝百番), March 1897. Illus. Newland, Time present and time past, pl. 104. Courtesy Hotei Japanese Prints.

Fig. 79. Toyohara Kunichika. (No. 3) The subscription list (san Kanjinchō 三 勧進帳), from the series One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō (Ichikawa Danjūrō engei hyakuban 市川團十郎演藝百番), 1893. Collection Arendie and Henk Herwig.
Fig. 80. Toyohara Kunichika. *Onoe Kikugorō V as Torii Suneemon/Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Okuhira Hirahachirō* (鳥居強右衛門/尾上菊五郎, 奥平平八郎/市川団十郎), from the series *One hundred roles of Baikō* (*Baikō hyakushu no uchi* 梅幸百種之内), 1893. Collection Arendie and Henk Herwig.

**Conclusion**

Fig. 81. Utagawa Kunimas IV (Hōsai). *The great actor Ichikawa Danjūrō IX (Meiyū kudaime Ichikawa Danjūrō* 名優九代目市川団十郎), 1903. Dora S. and Albert E. Dien collection.

Fig. 82. Toyohara Kunichika. *Cherry-blossom viewing on the banks of the Sumida River (Bokutei kanō no zu* 墨堤觀櫻の圖), 1893. Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan.
Introduction: challenging the art historiographic mould

We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot, ‘Little Gidding’ (1942), from The four quartets

Meiji nishiki-e: ‘going to the dogs’ or ‘bellows of life’?

The colour woodblock prints produced in the Meiji era (1867[1868]–1912) have, for the most part, been marginalised in the scholarly study of ukiyo-e (nishiki-e) as less worthy of aesthetic appreciation than the prints of the preceding Edo period (1603–1867). The negative appraisal of Meiji prints—as well as the prints created in the closing years of the Edo period—arose from the tastes (and expectations) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of European and North American connoisseurs, collectors, and scholars. Their censorious view of Meiji-era prints and books was forged based principally on their detestation of the genre of woodblock prints popular from the 1870s through the 1880s known today as kaika-e 開花絵 (‘enlightenment pictures’). These prints are characterised by garish colours, typically reds and purples, derived from imported (synthetic and natural) dyes.

1 Nishiki-e 錦絵, or ‘brocade print’, refers to woodblock prints following the introduction of full-colour printing in the mid-eighteenth century and so called because of the resemblance to multi-coloured silk ‘brocade’ (nishiki). Early ukiyo-e 浮世絵 (‘images of the floating world’) were printed in black and later, before the introduction of nishiki-e, printed initially in a limited palette (and then at times hand-coloured). We might question whether the term ukiyo-e in its original connotation as ‘images of the floating world’ is appropriate for nishiki-e with the advent the Meiji. I have opted for the more descriptive term nishiki-e, which I feel is more appropriate in cultural terms.

2 This chapter does not include a discussion of earlier compilations by Japanese writers like the Ukiyo-e ruikō 浮世絵類考 (Ukiyo-e miscellany) (and its later editions), which was known by Europeans collectors like Edmond de Goncourt, or the late nineteenth-century biography of the Utagawa school by Iijima Kyoshin, Ukiyo-e shi Utagawa retsuden (1894; rev. 1993). Iijima’s source provides relatively little information on Meiji artists and only as students of Hiroshige, Kunisada, and Kuniyoshi. Kunichika is mentioned regarding the construction of Kunisada memorial stone (193) and in passing as an artist who ‘drew actor portraits well’ (yoku haiyū no nigao o kaku) (201).

3 Certain types of Meiji prints are also described by terms like aka-e 赤絵 (‘red pictures’), perhaps a reference to the red pigment often used for prints of this period. The striking red was a mixture of eosin (洋新 or 洋真) and cochineal (臙脂); the use of cochineal perhaps reflects a sharp drop in the price of the Mexican product as it was increasingly threatened by synthetic dyes (email correspondence with Henry Smith II, 17 May 2014). The origins of the term are unclear; Oikawa Shigeru believes that it used among ukiyo-e dealers, as intimated in an account in Inoue Kazuo 井上和雄, ‘Beni-e shiken’ 紅絵私見 (‘Personal thoughts on beni-e), Ukiyo-e shi 浮世絵志 (February 1930): 4, in which he says that ukiyo-e dealers call Meiji prints aka-e, but lacking any of the spirit of earlier beni-e, and Sansandō Shujin 三粲洞主人, ‘Ukiyo-e machi o yuku: Takeda Ganko kei shi no hanashi’ 浮世絵街をゆく竹田玩
connoisseurs of the late nineteenth to the early to mid-twentieth centuries, they served as a standard by which Meiji *nishiki-e* were judged, and then often dismissed. It is only relatively recently that the full range of prints produced in the Meiji era has undergone critical reappraisal.

The term *kaika-e* itself was borrowed from the government’s own state ideology voiced in propagandistic slogans like *bunmei kaika* 文明開化 (‘civilisation and enlightenment’). The subject matter of these prints bore witness to and chronicled the changing economic, societal, and cultural face of Meiji Japan as it scrambled towards nationhood and recognition on the international stage. *Kaika-e* ranged from illustrations of Japanese women in western-style bustles and bonnets and men in top hats, as well as modern technologies and architectural styles from Europe and North America, to coverage of historical and political events and even portraits of the Emperor Meiji and his family. Their harsh palette attracted few connoisseurial supporters, and they were little appreciated among early scholars except as historical documents. Even today this latter view is prevalent in some quarters. But for publishers and the print-buying public of the early to mid-Meiji they bespoke the ‘novel’, and the link between their popularity and the policy of ‘civilisation and enlightenment’ is significant. Writing in 1980, Ōe Naokichi made a distinction between prints using imported reds and purples of *kaika-e* and earlier prints:

> ... of great interest is the perception of red as a ‘restoration’ (*ishin*) colour, coming to symbolise Meiji and distinct from earlier periods. The enthusiasm of the Meiji government’s policy towards *bunmei kaika* and the curiosity for new cultural products by the general public acknowledged the novel sense of the hitherto unseen ‘red colour’ ... and this could be thought as one able to express the character of the *Meiji ishin*. It is perhaps truly appropriate that is the colour representing the Meiji era is ‘Meiji red’ (*Meiji no aka*), even though nowadays *ukiyo-e* connoisseurs, even the general viewer, have come to perceive it with cold eyes ... with Japan’s modernisation the many sources of *Meiji no aka-e* were properly valued and as such reflects a historical position that can be thought as appropriate. ... I believe, too, that the works of Toyohara Kunichika, a *ukiyo-e* master living in the *bakumatsu* and Meiji eras, are deserving of attention when seen from such a viewpoint.

As a print genre, however, *kaika-e* accounted for only one comparatively small sub-

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4 *Kaika-e* cover a broad range of subjects. For a thorough discussion of *kaika-e*, see Hashiyama, *Ukiyo-e kai* 浮世絵界 vol. 1, 8 (October 1936): 48, in which the writer has the following: ‘In Shōnai [Yamagata Prefecture] I could not find anything worth buying; it couldn’t be helped, so I just had to be happy buying *aka-e* at fifty sen a sheet.” These accounts suggest that by the Shōwa era, the term *aka-e* was used as an almost derogatory reference to Meiji prints. Thanks to Oikawa Shigeru for bringing these articles to my attention.

5 Ōe, ‘Ukiyo-e shi Toyohara Kunichika’, 40.
Newland  Introduction

genre within the enormous corpus of Meiji-era woodblock prints, and thus should not be seen as representative of the entire period. The situation is summarised by Helen Merritt as follows:

There was, in fact, not a single Meiji style. . . . Kunichika, Kyōsai, Kiyochika, Yoshitoshi, and their pupils all practised individual styles. Even before popular interest in *kaika*-e had run its course, artists were integrating new ideas from the Maruyama-Shijō, Tosa, Kano, and Nanga painting styles, each of which was evolving from a cross-fertilisation of styles within Japan as well as influences from the West. Nostalgia for *nishiki*-e, as well as the commercial viability which had always fostered them, sustained late Meiji prints in new roles by attracting buyers to books and magazines. Many are beautiful in their own right and deserve re-evaluation as objects of their times—times which were particularly complex.  

European and North American writers of the period clearly fuelled the pejorative view of Meiji *nishiki*-e that prevailed until the second half of the twentieth century, whereby *kaika*-e (a term not used by these writers but implied) were the predominant, if not the only, form of Meiji woodblock prints. This perception was also underscored by the belief that such brightly coloured prints challenged the romanticised view that many Westerners had of ‘Old Japan’ as a land of the exotic and the exquisite, a stereotype that is evidenced in the writings of nineteenth-century Western travellers and in Western art, theatre, and literature:

The traveler who enters suddenly into a period of social change—especially change from a feudal past to a democratic present—is likely to regret the decay of things beautiful and the ugliness of things new. What of both I may yet discover in Japan I know not; but today, in these exotic streets, the old and the new mingle so well that one seems to set off the other.

For the early connoisseurs of Japanese prints, then, a delicate composition by Suzuki Harunobu 鈴木春信 (1725?–70), Torii Kiyonaga 鳥居清長 (1752–1815), or Kitagawa Utamaro 喜多川歌麿 (1753–1806) embodied this illusion, while an ‘ornately’ coloured *kaika*-e image by Kunichika or his student Yōshū Chikanobu 楊洲周延 (1838–1912) depicting ladies in the latest European fashions shattered it (figs. 2–5). This is despite the fact that Meiji artists could and did produce equally delicate compositions (see fig. 5).

In the West, the ‘appreciation for’ or infatuation with Japanese prints initially emerged in Europe during the mid-nineteenth century, spearheaded principally by French collectors, dealers, and artists, most notably Edmond de Goncourt (1822–96), Louis Gonse (1846–1921),

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7 Hearn, Glimpses of unfamiliar Japan, 21–22; many foreign visitors to Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century comment on the country’s exquisite, exotic nature.
8 This discussion does not include the very first Western (European) collectors of Japanese prints, including Isaac Titsingh (1745–1812), Jan Cock Blomhoff (1779–1853), and Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866), since they were active before the Meiji. They collected objects more for socio-anthropological reasons and therefore are not relevant to my study here.
Siegfried Bing (1838–1905), and Claude Monet (1840–1926). Goncourt, in particular, espoused the view that the prints of Kitagawa Utamaro and Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849) represented the artistic pinnacle in the history of Japanese woodblock prints and that their deaths demarcated the beginning of ‘decay’ in the tradition. (In Goncourt’s defense we must note that he and his contemporaries would not have had access to the range of prints and artists we have today.) In Hokusai, L’art japonais au XVIIIe siècle Goncourt calls Hokusai ‘one of the most original artists on this earth’. Edo-period ukiyo-e were at the centre of their view of Japanese art in general and ‘. . . at no time did any of these [other Japanese art] forms threaten to unseat prints from their ruling position over European taste in Japanese art. Prints remained throughout this forty-year period [1850–90] the epitome of Japanese artistic expression’.

The moralising tone of French aesthetes like Goncourt, Gonse, and others was similarly adopted by writers such as Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853–1908) in the United States and William Anderson (1842–1900) in the United Kingdom. Fenollosa travelled to Japan in 1878 to teach philosophy at the University of Tokyo; he returned to the United States in 1890 and until 1896 was a curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. He wrote extensively on Japanese art and together with Kobayashi Bunshichi 小林文七 (1861–1923) was instrumental in Japan as the organiser of ukiyo-e exhibitions. Moreover, Fenollosa’s 1896 publication

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9 This introduction is not intended as an overview of the history of appreciation of Japanese prints outside Japan in the nineteenth century, but rather to make the point that it was not Meiji prints that were appreciated, rather primarily eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century artists. For further reading on the writings regarding these early collectors in Europe, see Put, Plunder and pleasure. On the situation in the United States, see Julia Meech, ‘The early years of Japanese print collecting in North America’, Impressions 25 (2003): 15–53.

10 De Goncourt, Hokusai, 16.

11 Evett, The critical reception of Japanese art, xii.

12 Both Anderson and Fenollosa knew Kunichika’s contemporary Kawanabe Kyōsai; Anderson commissioned watercolours from him that are today in the British Museum (thanks to Oikawa Shigeru for alerting me to this). Other noteworthy publications from this period were the Geschichtes des japanischen Farbenholzschnitts (Dresden: Gerhard Kühtmann, 1897) by Woldemar von Seidlitz (1850–1922), an advisor to the Königlichen Sammlungen für Wissenschaft Kunst in Dresden. Von Seidlitz draws his material from contemporaries like Fenollosa, Anderson, Philippe Burty (1830–90), and Justus Brinckmann (1843–1915). After Hiroshige he singles out Yoshitoshi, Sōgaku, Kyōsai, and Zeshin, yet he maintains that ‘if one were to ask if it is thinkable that the Japanese would, based on the old traditions, be able to return to a unique meaningful art, we would probably have to say no’ (213). Other European-language sources include Friedrich Succo, Utagawa Toyokuni und Seine Zeit (Munich: R. Piper & Co. Verlag. München, 1913); Friedrich Succo, Katsukawa Shunshō (Haruaki) (Plauen im Vogtland, Schultz & Co., 1922); C.J. Holmes, Hokusai (London, Unicorn, 1899); Fritz Rumpf, Sharaku (Würfel-Verlag, 1932), and Sadakichi Hartman, Japanese art (Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1904).

13 The catalogues accompanying these exhibitions, Catalogue of the exhibition of ukiyo-e [sic] paintings and prints held at Ikao Onsen, Uyeno Shinzaka from April 15th to May 15th, 1898 and Catalogue of the exhibition of paintings of Hokusai held at the Japan Fine Art Association, Uyeno Park, Tokio, from 13th to 30th January 1900, was published by the dealer-publisher Kobayashi Bunshichi. Kobayashi was important in pioneering these early exhibitions in Japan because he understood that ukiyo-e were popular among foreigners and neglected in his own country; see the monograph by Yamaguchi,
The masters of ukiyo-e: a complete historical description of Japanese paintings and color prints of the genre school was significant in shaping the perceptions regarding nishiki-e prints in the United States. He had little praise for the prints of the bakumatsu and Meiji eras, as is revealed in the comments on an 1850 triptych by Kunichika’s teacher, Utagawa Kunisada 歌川国貞 (1786–[12/1864]1/1865), and Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川広重 (1797–1858). Fenollosa entitles it Gentlemen in the plum garden:

Even to the end, these two of our triumvirate remain co-workers. How fine late Ukiyo-e can be, this piece shows. After this there is practically nothing but disintegration, with occasional gleams of traits borrowed from Europe in Kuniyoshi’s pupil Yoshitoshi, until the new war prints of last year.14

It is noteworthy that Fenollosa felt that the work of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi 月岡芳年 (1839–92), who had died four years earlier, and prints of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) merited mention. However, over a decade later Fenollosa is even less favourably inclined towards Meiji prints when discussing Utagawa Hiroshige II (1826–69) in the Epochs of Chinese and Japanese art: an outline history of East Asian design:

Doubtless there was a second Hiroshige, but his works comprise only a few and very bad ones done about 1860, when all colour printing was ‘going to the dogs’. It would not be in proportion to record the names of artists who followed that date.15

A similar view is echoed earlier in the writings of the English surgeon William Anderson, who came to Japan in 1873 to serve for seven years at the Naval Medical College and whose collection would form the core of the British Museum.16 Contemporary reviewers described him as: ‘The pioneer who first placed the study of the art of China and Japan upon a sound foundation in England, Dr. Anderson has done work which can never be entirely superseded. . .’17 His criticism in Japanese wood engravings: their history, technique and characteristics (1895) of bakumatsu and Meiji prints is tempered by an acceptance that

‘Kobayashi Bunshichi jiseki’. Kobayashi held the first ukiyo-e exhibition in Ueno, Tokyo in 1892 (his catalogue: Ukiyo-e tenrankai hinmoku 浮世絵展覧会品目) and also in 1897 (his catalogue: Ukiyo-e rekishi tenrankai hinmoku 浮世絵歴史展覧会品目). The 1892 exhibition in Ueno is reported upon in the Yomiuri shinbun on 8 November 1892, 2, in an item entitled ‘Ukiyo-e exhibition 浮世絵展覧会; it remarks that the works were being sold to Westerners and that older ukiyo-e bijinga were fetching the highest prices. He also released Iijima Kyoshin’s influential Katsushika Hokusai den 葛飾北斎伝 (1893) and Ukiyo-e shi binran 浮世絵師便覧 (1893). But as seen in the 1897 catalogue he does not include any work after Hiroshige, perhaps in reaction to what he felt foreigners, and by extension Japanese, were wanting to look at. The 1897 exhibit is reported upon in newspaper, e.g. ‘Ukiyo-e rekishi tenrankai Ōbeijin no hihiyō 浮世絵歴史欧米人展覧会桜批, Yomiuri shinbun (27 January 1897), 4, which includes critiques by four foreigners, among them Gonse and Goncourt.14 Fenollosa, The masters of ukiyo-e, 114. Thanks to Scott Johnson for providing this resource.15 Fenollosa, Epochs of Chinese and Japanese art.16 Satô, Modern Japanese art, 98 and 337.17 From a review of his ‘Japanese wood engravings: their history, technique and characteristics’ (1895) that appeared in The Burlington magazine for connoisseurs vol. 6, 20 (November 1904): 164.
historical developments influenced the work of the period. He conceded that some admirable pieces had been made and that in some areas ‘there is much to redeem . . . the earlier years of the period’, the works of which were ‘becoming a very nightmare to the sensitive eye’.

Anderson divides print history into six periods, the fifth (1829–49) and sixth (1849–[95]) relevant to our discussion here:

This [fifth] period in the history of wood-engraving fell below that which it succeeded, despite the valuable legacies bequeathed by Hokusai, [Hasegawa] Settan, [Kikuchi] Yōsai, and Hiroshigé, and with it the spirit that inspired these men seemed to pass away; for, from its closing years, the single sheet colour prints were becoming a very nightmare to the sensitive eye, and the albums of miscellaneous sketches, the pictorial handbooks of the towns and provinces, the vigorously illustrated novels; in fact, everything that formed the delight of the xylographic collector came almost suddenly to an end. It would not, however, be difficult for those who have studied the condition of the country in the disturbed period that preceded, and for a time followed, the downfall of the usurping Shogunate to account for the evil that had befallen the arts of peace . . .

Of the latest [sixth] period, from the death of Hokusai to the present time, there is only little to say. It began under very unfavourable auspices . . . The ‘single-sheet’ industry is still in difficulties, and may never resume its ancient glories, although a spur to effort in this direction has been given by the popular demand for pictures of the Chino-Japanese [sic] war; but in the volumes of bird and flower drawings of Bairei, the graceful fairy-tale pictures and collections of artisan designs by Sensai Yeitaku [Eitaku], the albums of Kiosai [Kyōsai], often called the second Hokusai, whose original and humorous work deserves a monograph to itself, and the recent war broadsides of Gekko,¹⁸ there is much to redeem the failure of the earlier years of the period; and the encouragement given by Europe and America to the charming series of children’s books published by the Kobunsha Company has already proved to the Japanese publishers that good work may now be made more profitable than at any time in the history of their calling.¹⁹

Events like Fenollosa’s New York show of 1896, and the numerous exhibitions in Europe, as well as the highly publicised international expositions, fired an interest in woodblock prints that continued well into the early decades of the twentieth century. This trend is reflected in the collections being developed at this time, and in turn the formation of an accepted ‘stable’ of artists deemed representative of the nishiki-e canon: Katsukawa Shunshō 胜川春章 (1726–92), Torii Kiyonaga, Katsushika Hokusai, Kitagawa Utamaro, Tōshūsai Sharaku 東洲斎写楽 (act. 1794–95), and Utagawa Hiroshige. The appreciation by private collectors and museums thus firmly lay in the domain of pre-bakumatsu Edo-period prints, but the international expositions of the day displayed the work of contemporaneous artists, and then modern prints

¹⁸ Kōno Bairei 幸野楳嶺 (1844–94), Sensai (Kobayashi) Eitaku, Kawanabe Kyōsai, and Ogata Gekkō. A growing number of artists like Bairei, Gekkō, and Eitaku who were having woodblock prints produced came from predominantly painting backgrounds and not exclusively nishiki-e studios; this demonstrates the gradual shift that was occurring at this time away from traditional nishiki-e studios, which were slowly disappearing.

were included in shipments to international exhibitions such as the second Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. Records of the objects intended for sale after this exhibition indicate that some two hundred nishiki-e were sent and that albums of paintings, not prints, were specially commissioned for the exhibition. Kunichika was among a group of thirty-eight artists selected to have paintings shown in Paris in 1867, together with the other Utagawa school artists Yoshitsuya, Yoshiiku, Yoshitora, Yoshitoshi, Risshō [Hiroshige II], Yoshimune, Yoshikazu, Sadahide, Kuniteru, and Kunisada (II?). Kunichika contributed ten images to the onna-e 女絵 section: Edo geisha 江戸芸者 (no. 32); two Machiya nyōbō 町家女房 (Merchant daughter, nos. 33 and 34); Bukke musume 武家娘 (Samurai daughter, no. 35); Odori shishō 踊師匠 (Dancing teacher, no. 36); Chaya-onna 茶屋女 (Teahouse waitress, no. 37); Tsubone 局 (Court lady, no. 38); Shimada-gami heyako 鶴田髪部屋 (Shimada-hairstyle beauty, no. 39); Kyō-musume 京娘 (Kyoto daughter, no. 40); and Kyō-jorōbeya 京女郎部屋 (Quarters of Kyoto prostitutes, no. 41).20 A Yomiuri shinbun article from 24 August 1892 also suggests that he contributed a theatre-themed work in an album, which was apparently well received; this same article discusses at length his participation in the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition (see Appendix III and Chapter One; see also fig. 82).

The possibility that a broader appreciation of Meiji prints would occur—echoed in Anderson’s muted praise for Yoshitoshi, Sensai Eitaku 鮮斎永濯 (Kobayashi Eitaku, 1843–90), Kawanabe Kyōsai 河鍋暁斎 (1831–89), and Ogata Gekkō 尾形月耕 (1859–1920)—was eventually abjured in the face of unforgiving judgements by the American lawyer and print aficionado Arthur Davison Ficke (1883–1945). His Chats on Japanese prints (1915) was judged at the time of its publication an influential and scholarly work. In it, Ficke dismisses Japanese print designers after Kitagawa Utamaro and Utagawa Hiroshige as representatives of ‘the downfall’ (Anderson’s ‘fifth period’), a nomenclature that continued well into the

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20 Akiyama, Treasures of Asia, 180, mentions the existence of official records in the Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan (NDL), Tokyo, that records that one hundred prints in two albums were ordered by the Japanese government for the 1867 Paris exposition. In actual fact, they were paintings in two albums (the first of fifty sheets of female figures for 2,750 frs [55 frs per sheet], the second of fifty sheets of landscapes (mostly views of Edo) for 2,000 frs [40 frs per sheet]); another album of ‘the twelve months’ was not completed. The document also lists the subjects intended in each album; see Ōtsuka, Tokugawa Akitake taiō kiroku, vol. 2, 419–25; vol. 3, 41, 166. Also listed are two hundred nishiki-e brought to the exhibit by Shimizu Usaburō divided between seventy-nine Genji-e, thirty Edo famous views, fifty-five Tōkaidō scenes and thirty-six famous views of Mount Fuji. The artwork titles (and the artists’ names and addresses) are found in the transcription of the government documents relating to ukiyo-e included in the 1867 exhibition; see Kikuchi, ‘Dainikai Pari Bankokuhaku shuppin’. Some twenty-seven names (with addresses) are listed as ‘ukiyo-e gakō’浮世絵画工 (no. 90, part II, 32). Their contributions were placed in albums, measuring c. 45 x 55.8 cm. Kikuchi, ed., ‘Dainikai Pari Bankokuhaku shuppin ukiyo-e’, especially no. 90, Part II, 30–32. Lacambre, Le Japonisme, 148–49, discusses an album of crêped-paper triptychs by Kunisada and Kunichika, which has an affixed label from the 1867 Paris exposition below another label of the Desoye company, which is further evidence that this exhibits were for sale. See also Baumunk, ‘Japan auf den Weltausstellungen 1852–1933’, 44–50.
post-WWII period (see Suzuki/Oka below). Ficke’s assessment would only re-enforce the already critical view of bakumatsu and Meiji-era nishiki-e. He makes clear his stance regarding the ‘horde of little men’ designing prints during this era, and for scholars today demonstrates how little he understood the nishiki-e market and its consumption.  

When Utamaro died, in 1806, the great days of the figure-print were ended. There were to be no more Harunobus or Kiyonagas or Sharaku—only a horde of little men whose work retained few traces of the earlier generations. And our serious interest in the art as a whole must end here. Were it not for the superb renaissance of landscape which this period includes, side by side with the decay of figure-designing, it would be my choice to mark this date as the end of our history . . . The causes of the degradation of prints in this period appear to have been of several natures. For one, the accidents that regulate the birth of geniuses operated unkindly, and few artists of first-rate talent came to take the places of the dead masters. Further, the colour-print had gone somewhat out of fashion among its original public, and the people who now bought were chiefly of a lower and more ignorant class than the purchasers of Kiyonaga’s day. To the less exacting but eager demands of this class the publishers catered with coarser designs, cruder colours, and more careless printing. Now, in literal truth, the print-designer was the artisan; and amid the vast flood of commonplace productions of the time it is difficult to search out those few works that have a claim to beauty.

The lack of appreciation by Western collectors of Meiji (and bakumatsu) prints in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was likewise reflected in the patterns of collecting, when, as mentioned above, a number of important Western and Japanese collections of Edo-period prints were being formed. It was also then that a number of publishers issued fukuseiga (reproductions), among the earliest being Kobayashi Bunshichi. The scholar of early Meiji prints, Higuchi Hiroshi, credits that the foreign demand for woodblock prints from the first decades of the Meiji spawned the publication of fukuseiga by the ‘classical’ masters such as Utamaro, Sharaku, and Hokusai, among others. We should note that print designers of the period, like Kobayashi Eikō 小林永興 (1868–1933), a pupil of Sensai (Kobayashi) Eitaku, produced preparatory drawings for fukuseiga, and the fukuseiga publishing house Gahakudō 画博堂 was established in 1893 by Arai Yoshimune 新井芳宗 (1863–1941), a minor student of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi. What is noteworthy about this trend is that Meiji nishiki-e artists were exploiting their very specialised métier to cater to this demand as a way to supplement their incomes. The work by earlier Edo masters was much

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21 For example, the ‘original market’ was not lost and Ficke’s opinionated view that condemned the purchaser of this period as an ‘ignorant class’ compared to earlier times is far from the truth.
24 This business was later taken over by another Yoshitoshi pupil, Matsui Eikichi 松井栄吉. Account by Higuchi, ‘Ukiyo-e bunken mokuroku’; excerpt reprinted in Nagata, Shiryō ni yoru kindai ukiyoe-e jijō, 71–72.
sought after at a time when commercial pieces by contemporary designers, including that of Yoshitoshi, Kunichika, Kyōsai, and Kobayashi Kiyochika 小林清親 (1847–1915), were easily available (and being sold cheaply by dealers and bookstores in Japan). This phenomenon also underscores Westerners’ apparent preference for An’ei, Tenmei, and Kansei era (1772–1801) prints over Meiji examples.

Ficke’s opinions regarding bakumatsu and Meiji prints were shared by many of his contemporaries, even though it is evident that his analysis was coloured by his own subjectivity and tastes. For instance, there were a number of ‘first-rate’ artists ‘operating’ during this time, and there are many examples of ‘first-rate’ printings, as witnessed in the production of Kunichika’s two large sets of actor portraits, One hundred roles of Baikō (Baikō hyakushu no uchi 梅幸百種之内, 1893–94) and One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō (Ichikawa Danjūrō engei hyakuban 市川團十郎演藝百番, 1893–1903) (figs. 6 and 7; see also figs. 10, 11, 72, 78, 79, and 80). He may have been correct in his observation that the market base of the print-buying public was changing. The print-buying public appears to have been expanding steadily, but this ‘popular’ commercialisation of nishiki-e was an underlying thread through most of its history. It was not, in short, a bakumatsu (late Edo)/Meiji phenomenon. And the expansion of commercialisation (the market) did not result in a complete and sweeping decline in the quality of prints issued after the death of Utamaro, or even following the deaths of Hokusai or Hiroshige.

The appreciation of the merits of bakumatsu and Meiji blockcutting and printing does surface, however. The Englishman Edward Fairbrother Strange (1862–1929) assumes a generally dismissive tone in writing about Utagawa school artists: ‘. . .that an overwhelming demand, combined with increased technical and publishing facilities, soon degraded the art to the mere multiplication of examples of approved pattern, on lines which show few deviations attributable to the individuality of the makers.’ And of Kunisada ‘. . . no artist produced more prints than did Kunisada, and in none is the decline of the art more consistently displayed . . . he became the merest boiler of pots . . .’ Strange places the blame for the decline in the work of the pupils of Kunisada and Kuniyoshi 国芳 (1797–1861) squarely on the artists, and not with the artisans themselves:

For the present, whatever deterioration was to be seen in the inventive power and artistic skill of the nishikiye craftsmen generally, there was at least none in the arts of

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25 Takeda Taijirô 竹田泰次郎, Ukiyo-e shô no ima to mukashi 浮世絵商の今と昔 (Ukiyo-e print dealers, past and present), quoted in Sorimachi, Shimi no mukashigatari, 545.
26 Strange, Japanese colour prints (1st ed.), 42. Strange’s book was highly regarded in a contemporary review in The Burlington magazine for connoisseurs vol. 6, 20 (November 1904): 164, ‘the historical information, however, is more up-to-date than that in any book on the subject hitherto published in England, and that merit outweighs any minor deficiencies’.
27 Ibid., 49.
the engraver and printer. And so we find that a large number of prints of this period are beautiful in these respects, full of good pattern, still pleasant in colour, and in the highest sense decorative. Most of the men who made them were pupils of one or other of the great masters, and some are of considerable interest as personalities.  

The situation in Japan and recent developments

The disparaging opinions regarding Meiji (and bakumatsu) prints by Westerners compare more or less equally with those by Japanese writers. The Tokyo-based author Nagai Kafū 永井荷風 (1879–1959) remarks in 1914 in the literary journal Mita bungaku that ukiyo-e went into decline after the Bunsei and Tenpō eras (1818–40). He goes on to explains that it became increasingly ‘removed from “art” (bijutsu 美術) and advanced no further than an interest in curiosities (好事 kōzu) or as historical sources of customs and manners (fūzoku shiryō 風俗史料)’. Nonetheless, he maintains that traditional genres like actor prints, exemplified by the work of Kunichika, or in bijinga, notably the beauties by Kunisada II, were not necessarily interrupted. However, by the end of the essay, Kafū’s tone towards Meiji artists is less obdurate and borders on the empathic, acknowledging that a decline was inevitably precipitated by historical realities:

_Ukiyo-e of the Meiji era followed the work of Edo-period artists such as Hokusai, Kuniyoshi, and Kunisada—the final journey of ukiyo-e hastened little by little the decline of ukiyo-e even under those print masters still active in the Meiji era who received close instruction from them. Meiji ukiyo-e does not in actual fact rival the powerful work by artists like Hokusai, Kuniyoshi, and Kunisada and as such, those artists born in Meiji and instructed by Meiji print designers did not fulfil the style and the spirit passed down through the lineage of Edo ukiyo-e. And so, a state of decline of ukiyo-e can be imagined following the death(s) of the Edo ukiyo-e print designers still alive today in the Meiji._

Though the minority, there were voices of dissent in Japan. Advocates of Meiji prints there included Kojima Usui 小島烏水 (1873–1948), who pioneered the study of the artist Toyohara Kunichika with his first publication on the artist in 1929. He maintained that Kunichika was the ‘premier figure since Sharaku’ (Sharaku irai no daiichinin), the name ‘Sharaku’ a reference to the Edo-period actor portraitist, Tōshūsai Sharaku. Kojima fails to

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28 Ibid., 79.
30 Ibid., 156. Kafū also notes in the essay that writers outside Japan, in particular, viewed the artist Tsukioka Yoshitoshi as the last ukiyo-e master, to which were added Kawanabe Kyōsai, Shibata Zeshin, Kikuchi Yōsai, Kōno Bairei, Watanabe Shōtei, Sensai Eitaku, and Ogata Gekkō. He also mentions Hiroshige II and III, Kunisada II, Yoshimune, Yoshiiku, and Yoshitora.
31 Many Japanese writers of this period were influenced by Julius Kurth’s _Sharaku_ published in German in 1910 (Munich: R. Piper Verlag), and its appearance ‘stimulated serious study of ukiyo-e in Japan’; see Oikawa, ‘The maintenance of tradition’, in Newland, _Hotei encyclopedia_, vol. 1, 261–65. This influence is certainly seen in the titles used by Kojima Usui, including ‘Sharaku irai no daiichinin’, 6–12, and ‘Toyohara Kunichika hyōden’, in Edo makki no ukiyo-e, 217–59. There is also a third article by Kojima, ‘Futatabi Kunichika no koto domo’, 2–7.
acknowledge fully the representative body of actor portraits (yakusha-e 役者絵 or nigao-e 似顔絵) by nishiki-e artists after Sharaku and before Kunichika, such as his Utagawa-lineage forebears Kuniyoshi and Toyokuni, all of whose work informed Kunichika’s own. Nevertheless, Kojima’s writings are important as among the earliest in-depth monographic research on a Meiji-era print designer up to the early Shōwa era (1926–89).32 Kojima’s description of Kunichika as the ‘premier figure since Sharaku’ was to validate the corpus of the artist’s (kabuki-related) oeuvre in light of the Edo artist Sharaku. Such a comparative approach, as is found in many writings on bakumatsu and Meiji prints—certainly up to the 1980s—serves to position them within a historical context and to demonstrate that the history of nishiki-e in the Meiji cannot be completely divorced from the Edo nishiki-e that preceded them. Continuity existed. However, bakumatsu and Meiji prints must be understood within the context of the shifting cultural milieu, including publishing trends as well as public perception and expectations, of the period and not judged exclusively against their Edo counterparts, but neither in isolation. Writing in 1943 and then in 1955, the Japanese collector Higuchi Hiroshi concedes that prints from the bakumatsu onwards do stand apart, but suggests that they continued within an established tradition:

. . . the Kaei and Ansei eras, which followed the almost two hundred years of ukiyo-e history, marked an era of decline or decay (suitō) and a downfall (zuiraku). Nevertheless, the Kaei and Ansei eras, beginning with the arrival of the ships by Perry [Commodore Matthew Perry] raised the curtain on a new Japan, and it was a time of profound rebirth for ukiyo-e as works that have a novel journalistic (media) character.33 Higuchi points out the single most defining characteristic of kaika-e, that is, their role as chronicles of socio-cultural change and events. He is accurate in his assessment that prints such as the short-lived Yokohama-e and later kaika-e assumed a documentary role. But we might counter-argue, for example, that yakusha-e and bijinga, two time-honoured genres within the ukiyo-e canon, also functioned as commercially driven ‘chronicles’ of famous actors and beauties, respectively, of their cultural surroundings. This was in addition to their aesthetic qualities. Kojima’s work in the late 1920s and the early 1930s corresponded with an already growing recognition in Japan of ukiyo-e as a part of that country’s cultural landscape, no doubt aided by foreign interest during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (It would be decades, though, before it was an acknowledged field of academic study at universities.) The 1930s coincided with the first publication of multi-volume sets on Japanese

32 There are comparatively few sources written on Meiji artists during the Meiji era, with the exception of the Kawanabe Kyōsai-ō den 河鍋暁斎翁伝 (late 1890s; published posthumously) by Iijima Kyoshin. Miyatake Gaikotsu began publishing the ukiyo-e journal Kono hana 此花 (These blossoms) only in 1910, but there is little discussion of contemporary nishiki-e.

33 Higuchi, Bakumatsu Meiji no ukiyo-e shūsei, 3; see also Higuchi, Bakumatsu Meiji kaikaki no nishiki-e hanga.
prints, such as the 20-volume *Ukiyo-e taika shūsei* 浮世絵大家集 (*A collection of great ukiyo-e masters*). The only Meiji artist included in this set was Kobayashi Kiyochika in volume 18, entitled *Hiroshige/Kiyochika*. In his introduction historian and critic Sasakawa Rinpū 笹川臨風 (1870–1949) has little to commend Meiji artists: ‘The work of the so-called ‘ukiyo-e artists’ of the Meiji and later periods . . . is extremely coarse in both style and coloration and has no value other than as a record of the manners and customs of the time’.34

It was only due to the efforts of Inoue Kazuo 井上和雄 (1889–1946) that the six supplemental volumes in the series were dedicated to Meiji artists.35 Inoue remarks at the end of the introduction to volume 4, *Kunichika/Chikanobu* (1933):

Like Moronobu, Harunobu, and Utamaro, Yoshitoshi and Kunichika too portrayed the trends of the period. They were artists who used their natural talents to create vivid images of contemporary life that faithfully reflect the spirit of their time . . . The Genroku, the Meiwa, the Kansei—each of these eras has its own distinct flavour, and though different, the continuation of *ukiyo-e* within them becomes clear. This is even more pronounced amidst the confusion surrounding the bakumatsu period, with *ukiyo-e* illustrating the sentiments of the era. With the advent of the Meiji bunmei kaika and the upheaval of society there was a further spur in the production of *ukiyo-e*.

Perhaps in this regard, ‘Meiji prints’ (*Meiji-e*) have the imposing task as ‘Meiji pictures’ that manifest and recollect that period of Meiji that honours the birth of the nation. The value of these Meiji prints ought never be carelessly overlooked since they also provide a reference for later generations.36

Interest in Meiji nishiki-e increased gradually in the post-war period—that is, from the 1960s onwards; however, prejudices against them as inferior to pre-bakumatsu Edo-period prints remained entrenched. Not surprisingly, the area of focus was still principally kaika-e—perhaps a parallel was seen between Japan’s changing cultural circumstances in post-WWII Japan and the move to modernisation in the mid-nineteenth century.

Another significant factor that should be recognised is that several seminal publications appeared around 1966/1967, and their release coincided with the centenary of establishment of the Meiji government. Japanese publications continued to be spearheaded by individual collectors, including the aforementioned Higuchi Hiroshi, Tanba Tsuneo (1881–1971), and Nonogami Keiichi (1909–2004).37 In a publication of his own holdings, Nonogami elaborates

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34 Sakato and Yoshida, Hiroshige/Kiyochika, 11.
37 For example, Tanba, *Nishiki-e ni miru Meiji tennō*, and Tanba’s collection, principally of
on Higuchi’s assertion above regarding the importance of Meiji prints as chronicles of the era. He is aware that *Yokohama-e* and *kaika-e* are fully representative of the period of ‘civilisation and enlightenment’, and therefore not all-encompassing. But indicative of a shifting view of Meiji prints, he is convinced that the pieces selected for this publication were done with the aim of showing ‘objects that should be seen as artworks’ in their own right (*bijutsu sakuhin toshite mirubeki mono*), thereby removing them from the realm of the ‘purely journalistic’ and elevating them to the realm of the artistic. 38

It was also in the 1960s that Japanese print scholars, most notably Narazaki Muneshige (1904–2001), Oka Isaburō (1914–2010), and Suzuki Jūzō (1919–2010), began to turn their attention to *bakumatsu* and Meiji prints. 39 Yet earlier stereotypes prevailed. For instance, *The decadents*, a 1969 translation of the volume *Kōki ukiyo-e* by Suzuki and Oka, focuses on later Edo-period artists Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, and Keisai Eisen 池斎 英泉 (1790–1848). They label the period when these three successful nineteenth-century artists were active as ‘the downfall’, and by extension applicable to the following era:

> Once the great achievements of the Temmei (1781–1789) and Kansei (1789–1801) eras were past, the culture of the Edo began to show increasing signs of decadence. The ukiyo-e did not escape this general decline. Having reached its peak in the last two decades of the eighteenth century with the work of Sharaku and Utamaro, it began to deteriorate in the Bunka and Bunsei eras, and the word ‘late’ as applied to the ukiyo-e of the Bunka era and later has always been used as a term of disparagement. . . . What is more, for all but a few people the term ‘late ukiyo-e’ calls to mind a particular type of cloying, decadent, and vulgar print—the garishly colored, stereotyped actor portraits, the grisly murder scenes and the stylized, contorted pictures of women. It calls to mind, in other words, the ukiyo-e of the very last years before the final collapse of the Tokugawa regime and the advent of the Meiji Restoration. Together, their work constitutes the last flowering of the ukiyo-e. 40

Although in theory critical of later *nishiki-e*, Suzuki and Oka nevertheless maintain that ‘this collection [of work] aims at correcting the injustice and providing a new outlook on the late ukiyo-e’. 41 But in calling for a reassessment they were also resetting the boundaries regarding the denouement of *ukiyo-e*, here to be seen in the work of Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, and Eisen. This contrasts with earlier writers mentioned above who sounded the death knoll for *nishiki-e* after Hiroshige and Hokusai. Other scholars, like Narazaki Muneshige, while writing in the 1960s on Meiji and specifically on *kaika-e*, had a somewhat different take on Meiji

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39 Narazaki, *Bunmei kaika to ukiyo-e*.
41 Ibid., 10.
print designers. Narazaki conceded in an article in the journal *Ukiyo-e geijutsu* in 1963 that there were great Meiji print designers, but it was only an accident of birth and/or artistic activity in the Meiji that doomed them to insignificance. Such was the situation with Yoshitoshi, who he claims was an artist ‘whose natural talents were such that he might easily have been the greatest of all *ukiyo-e* artists—if only he had been born a few generations earlier’.

Yet, Yoshitoshi’s subjects and style reveal that it would be difficult to see him as anything other than a Meiji artist. Ultimately, what this tells us is that the judgements regarding *bakumatsu* and Meiji prints were desultory and subjective.

Increased scholarship in Japan from the 1960s onwards resulted in a tendency to canonise ‘good’ Meiji prints and print designers (i.e. not *kaika-e*) in a fashion similar to the canonisation of ‘elite’ or ‘high’ *ukiyo-e* Edo-period print designers such as Sharaku, Utamaro, Hiroshige, and Hokusai from the nineteenth century onwards. By the 1980s, Yoshitoshi, Kobayashi Kiyochika, and Kawanabe Kyōsai, in particular, were held up as the leading lights of Meiji prints. Comparatively little attention was given to Kunichika and others like his student Chikanobu, except as artists of *kaika-e*.

In the West, the 1980s represented a watershed in the study of Meiji nishiki-e, prompted most notably with the publication of *The world of the Meiji print: impressions of a new civilization* (1986). While principally a discussion of *Yokohama-e* and the related *kaika-e*, *The world of the Meiji print* breaks new ground as a publication in English devotedly entirely to the Meiji print. Edward Seidensticker (1922–2007) remarks in the foreword that a reappraisal is long overdue:

If we discard our predispositions about Japaneseness, then many Meiji prints . . . are good art. They are tightly organized and well executed, and the sense of colour, albeit color that tends far more toward the brilliant and highly saturated than did the traditional spectrum, is sure. It may not be as nearly infallible as was the old sense. The

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42 Originally published in Narazaki, ‘An outline of *ukiyo-e*’, 5. Reprinted in review article by Lane, ‘On monographs and Kuniyoshi’, 339, note 1. Even at this time print scholars took a negative view to Meiji, as evinced in Lane’s remarks preceding the Narazaki quote: ‘Professor Narazaki has recently suggested a rather drastic elevation of that interesting but surely secondary figure, Yoshitoshi . . .’

43 While subject to the vagaries of the market, prices of prints at auction do give us something of a clue as to their appreciation in today’s terms. In email correspondence on this topic, Chris Uhlenbeck wrote on 7 April 2008 that Yoshitoshi’s work remains the most expensive of all Meiji artists; Kiyochika fluctuates in popularity, prices for Kunichika’s work is fairly stable, but the prices for Chikanobu and Gekkō are on the rise in the first decade of the twentieth-first century. By contrast, Kyōsai receives only a moderate degree of interest. Typically, however, print prices do appreciate after major exhibitions or publications. An update on 4 July 2014 revealed unchanged and changing trends: Yoshitoshi still remains the most expensive, with continued interest in major triptychs, his *Moon* series; earlier works are now selling at record prices. Chikanobu and Gekkō *bijin* triptychs in mint condition are still on the rise; ghost prints by Kawanabe Kyōsai are in demand, while the remainder of his work, such as his beautifully printed Chūshingura prints, are down. Uhlenbeck points out that individual collectors can dictate trends; if a collector ceases to collect a particular artist, prices of that individual’s work can decline. Moreover, major exhibitions undoubtedly impact an artist’s popularity.

Newland  Introduction

pinks and reds in particular have a way of shouting everything else into silence. One wishes that there were not quite so many cherry trees, always in full blossom, and sunrises or sunsets, it is not always possible to tell which. The management of the greens and purples, on the other hand, is often good, even though they are different, in a European and chemical way, from the greens and purples or the eighteenth century.

The best of the Meiji woodcuts may not be supremely good art, but there lingers a suspicion that this is also true of eighteenth-century ukiyo-e. The high ukiyo-e, if we may use the term, may more frequently be accused of prettiness and even preciosity than the Meiji prints.  

A reappraisal: overturning ‘writing of the past in terms of the present’
Any evaluation of Meiji prints must therefore reference the historical, cultural, and social background against which Meiji nishiki-e were designed and published. Anderson’s judgement of Meiji prints as ‘a nightmare to the sensitive eye’, Fenollosa’s view of them ‘going to the dogs’, or Ficke’s notion of a ‘downfall’ are harsh criticisms, but delivered as such they become assumptions that expose the tastes and aesthetic subjectivities of their era. These would not have necessarily reflected the views of the majority of Meiji print designers or the audience that consumed them. The following admission by woodblock print scholar Roger S. Keyes underlies the conflictive position facing modern scholars when writing about another culture—that is, the temporal sphere in which this culture was ‘consumed’—and echoes Foucault’s observation that we must avoid ‘writing of the past in terms of the present’.

What I did not realize at the time was that I had never looked at a Meiji picture long enough to begin to understand or appreciate it, that I had never even seen a good Meiji picture, and that my language said far less about Meiji art than it did about my own limitations, prejudice, and inexperience.

‘Crude’, for example, I was thinking of triptychs of kabuki actors by Kunichika, popping eyes, wooden poses, and raw backgrounds of aniline red. I remember looking at albums of those prints and feeling physically sick ill, stomach distressed. Reason enough to dismiss them. Years later, I look at the same prints and feel vitality and exuberance, released energy, a bellow of life.

Such observations give credence to the notion that sociological factors, including cultural perception, impact the reputation of art and how it is transmitted to posterity and that extraneous influences can in part explain the ‘differential survival’ in the collective memory.

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45 Meech-Pekarik, The world of the Meiji print, x–xi. English-language publications since the late 1980s also include, for example, Chałkin, The Sino-Japanese war; Smith, Kiyochika; Schaap and Van den Ing, Beauty and violence; Clark, Demon of painting; Newland, Time present and time past; Keene et al., Japan at the dawn of the modern age; Coates, Chikanobu; and Uhlenbeck and Newland, Yoshitoshi. In Japan, this is matched by a number of scholarly publications such as the thoroughly researched publication on Meiji prints, Iwakiri, Meiji hanga shi, Iwakiri, Yoshitoshi, and the earlier Ukiyo-e Ōta Kinen Bijutsukan, Tokubetsuten Nihon inshōha. See Bibliography for listing of sources.

46 Foucault, Discipline and punish, 31.

47 Keyes, ‘Meiji art’, in Vos, Meiji: Japanese art in transition, 34. Keyes was among the first post-war scholars outside Japan to write on individual Meiji artists, see Keyes, Courage and silence.
In the quest for a more balanced view of Meiji nishiki-e, therefore, it is important first that we acknowledge them as a continuation of and a significant later phase in the woodblock print canon. To speak of this era as one of ‘decay’ or ‘decline’ is misleading. Woodblock prints (ukiyo-e/nishiki-e) were mass consumables, the production and subjects of which were driven by a system of supply and demand, and during the Edo period this print industry had ‘developed into a complex commercial enterprise with sophisticated mechanisms of production, marketing, diffusion, and consumption’.

This state of affairs continued well into the Meiji era. Demand was in large part fuelled by the tastes of the print-buying public. Moreover, at various junctures in its history, other socio-political and economic factors such as official censorship and sumptuary reforms impacted the woodblock print industry. Publishers could only remain buoyant against competition from other nishiki-e publishers, and in the case of Meiji prints, additionally against other more reprographic media like lithography and photography (see Chapter Four), if they catered to these demands. This meant that publishers needed to be au courant with current fashions and information, be they the plays and actors of the kabuki theatre, popular street entertainment, the women of the pleasure quarters, famous locales, war reportage, or changing urban landscapes. More entrepreneurial Tokyo-based Meiji

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48 Halbwachs (Coser), On collective memory, introduction, 31.
49 Richter, Marketing the word, 30. Not included here are privately produced works like surimono.
50 The general assertion is that woodblock prints were inexpensive items. According to the writer Santō Kyōden in his kibyōshi, Edo jiman meisan zue 侍士自慢名産杖 (Pride of Edo: staff of famous products, 1805), two single-sheet actor prints cost 16 mon, and an ōban format nishiki-e cost 20 mon, roughly the equivalent price of a bowl of soba noodles. By comparison, a standard ōban print by Kunichika, the Anō no tsbume from the set Thirty-six good and evil beauties (Zen-aku sanjūrokubijin, 1876), lists its price at 2 sen 5 rin. The yen was established in 1872; a sens was 1/100 of a yen, and a rin was 1/10 of a sen. As for 1 ryō, it was worth 4,000 mon, so a sen would at one point have been the equivalent of 40 mon. 2 sen 5 rin would have been roughly 100 mon, which meant that by Meiji a 20 mon print would have appreciated to 100 mon. (More luxuriously printed works would certainly have cost more; this does not include privately published prints like surimono.) My thanks to Lawrence E. Marceau for helping to source this information. See also Akai, ‘The common people and painting’, 184–85.
51 For example, the Tenpō Reforms of 1841–43, ‘banned the illustration of actors, prostitutes (courtesans) and geisha; limitations were placed on the number of sheets in a polyptych (no more than three), the number of colour blocks (no more than seven or eight) and the price of prints; and the re-organization of the censorship system. Ukiyo-e prints were also affected indirectly by new restrictions on literature, the theatre and even occupations such as hairdressing. The ban on actor prints was evaded by portraying actors as historical or literary characters, or even as Buddhist sculptures’. Newland, Hotei encyclopedia, vol. 2, 494.
52 In the Edo period, alone, it is thought that some 5,000 publishers of prints and books were active, with the majority located in Edo and Kyoto. This number encompasses all publishing, not just woodblock prints. There is no agreement on the number of Meiji publishers, although earlier writers maintain that the number was much smaller, see Inoue, Keichō irai shoka shūran (roughly 1,181 individual publishers). However, research by later writers reveal that the number is greater; see Inoue, Kinsei shorin hanmoto sōran, 6 (5,000 individual publishers).
53 It could be said that yakusha-e and bijinga were the most risky areas for publishers, due to their dependence on vogue. See Uhlenbeck, ‘Production constraints in the world of ukiyo-e’, in Newland, Commercial and cultural climate, 15.
Newland  Introduction

publishers, such as Akiyama Buemon 秋山武右衛門 (d. 1900) of the Kokkeidō 滑稽堂, Matsuki Eikichi 松木平吉 (IV, 1836–91; V, 1870–1931) of the Daikokuya 大黒屋, and Fukuda Kumajirō 福田熊次郎 (1842–98) / Fukuda Hatsujirō 福田初次郎 (1867–1939) of the Gusokuya 具足屋, would have speculated on what kinds of prints would sell. Meiji

publishers enlisted artists through a cleverly manoeuvred plan of marketing in which the artist (as ‘name-branding’) or the introduction of compositions catering to new fashions and trends (e.g. nishiki-e shinbun or ‘photograph’ prints) became a persuasive marketing tool. Woodblock prints thereby evolved as a ‘mirror on society’ to borrow the words of Donald Keene, however distorted that mirror might be. In the process, it functioned as a type of media, ‘a form of social communication—creating a public sphere through its circulation of images (information, knowledge, and pleasure)’. (This, it must be said, does not necessarily differ from other publishers throughout the history of woodblock prints.)

For publishers, as well as for print designers, economic survival required adaptability to market trends, to work within socio-economic (political) constraints, and to understand that in their particular niche market a sustained ‘continuity within change’ was vital. This is nowhere better imaged than in the nishiki-e of the bakumatsu and Meiji eras. The Meiji ishin marked the transition from a principally agrarian to an industrialising economy, which was formulated based on Euro-American models. In the early years of the era the Meiji government strove to disassociate itself from what it saw as the legacy of isolation under the previous Tokugawa government, weighing up the Edo past against what would be the Meiji future. The reconfiguration of the Meiji, as manifest in propagandistic slogans like the aforementioned ‘civilisation and enlightenment’, represented a Neuzeit, while the Edo period

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54 This, of course, is not new with Meiji prints. An earlier, oft cited publisher/artist collaboration is that between Tsutaya Jūzaburō (1750–97) and Kitagawa Utamaro. Needless to say, the greatest risk for a publisher was when he undertook the initiative for a project and not the result of a specific commission.
55 Keene, ‘Characteristic responses to Confucianism in Tokugawa literature’, in Keene, Confucianism and Tokugawa culture, 137. Keene uses this in his discussion on theatre.
56 Katsuya, ‘Social networks’, in Lillehoj, Acquisition: art and ownership, 112. Even though Katsuya’s article deals with the Edo period, it is also has relevance to Meiji popular culture.
57 Expression taken from Gluck, ‘Patterns of the past: themes in Japanese history’, in Embree and Gluck, Asia in western and world history, 723–71. Gluck believes that the Meiji is one of the ‘three-and-a-half great reforms’ in Japanese history (the other two being the Taika Reform of the seventh century, the seventeenth century borrowings by the Tokugawa shogunate from Song and Ming China, and the post-war reforms) that exhibit most clearly the ‘pattern of deliberate, massive, and aggressive cultural borrowing, followed by periods of gradual adaptation, or “Japanization”, of foreign ways’ (724–25).
58 I agree with Stefan Tanaka’s view that the translation of Meiji ishin as ‘Meiji Restoration’ has epistemological problems, and the idea of ‘revolution’ might be more accurate. See Tanaka, New times in modern Japan, 2. The term ‘ishin’ is accurately translated as ‘restoration’ but the original Japanese is a euphemism (literally, ‘this is new’ これ新た也) employed by the Meiji oligarchs precisely to underscore the notion that they emphatically were not engaged in ‘revolution’. Nevertheless, from an external perspective, the events of 1867–1868 constitute a coup-d’état.
embodied the feudal and thus the culturally retardataire. By advocating a policy of bunmei kaika Japan not only hoped to persuade the West that it was capable of evolving into a modern state and therefore should be afforded the right to be viewed on equal diplomatic and economic footing on the international stage, but that it also wished to convince its own citizens that such a path would reap untold benefits. But such a momentous shift threw Japan into an era of an absorption of foreign ways in an ‘effort literally to re-think the realm’. A maelstrom of change occurred on all levels of government and society from the establishment of a Constitution in 1889 to an injunction in 1871 that required rickshaw pullers to wear more than loincloths so as not to be rebuked by foreigners as ‘backwards’. (In August 1894, Japan also entered into international conflict with the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95.) Writing in 1892, Natsume Sōseki believed it was imperative for the Japanese people to look forwards, because ‘unless we totally discard everything old and adopt the new, it will be difficult to attain equality with Western countries’, although he also reasoned that if done it would ‘soon weaken the vital spirit we have inherited from our ancestors [and leave us] cripples’. The dilemma surrounding the seemingly conflicting obligations of national pride and culture, and the necessity of borrowing to keep pace with the modern world, characterised the early years of Meiji history.

Given that by their very nature woodblock prints illustrated the ‘divertimenti of the here-and-now’ and were pictorialisations of a subjective, ever-shifting urban culture, it is not surprising that the lens through which we view Meiji prints becomes so multifaceted. The ‘mirror on society’ envisioned in Meiji prints becomes a reflection of the myriad changes—obligations imposed by tradition versus the necessity of the modern—experienced by Meiji society as a whole. This also extends to the Meiji nishiki-e rubric, which resulted in the need to assimilate the external (the foreign) in the form of a new pictorial language (modern accretions or in the case of kaika-e a bolder palette) to show the changing Meiji environment, while at the same time preserve the internal (the traditional woodblock format) and cater to shifting aesthetics. When viewed in this light, the popularity of kaika-e, or the overlay of a new pictorial language upon established genres in the woodblock print canon, does not seem particularly out of place. For instance, the recasting of a composition of the Suruga-chō from the celebrated set One hundred famous views of Edo by Hiroshige (I) as a view of the same

59 Reference here is made to the imposition of unequal trade treaties with the US and European powers, beginning with the 1858 US Harris Treaty.
62 Davis, Utamaro and the spectacle of beauty, 7.
area replete with modern accretions in the ‘new’ capital of Tokyo in Famous places in Tokyo by Hiroshige III (1842–94) (figs. 8 and 9) demonstrates that print designers and publishers were enacting new strategies to attract sales. The same is also seen in other established genres, including actor prints (figs. 10 and 11). Genres remain essentially the same, but the contents are changed to suit contemporary demands and tastes.

In spite of the introduction of new reprographic technologies in the early Meiji era, woodblock prints in established genres continued production (see Chapter Four). The harsh criticism of nishiki-e from the end of the bakumatsu period into the Meiji can be repudiated by examples, certainly by the 1880s and 1890s, that testify to sophisticated printing, blockcutting, and composition as seen in Kunichika’s two ambitious later sets of Onoe Kikugorō V and Ichikawa Danjūrō IX mentioned above. These, of course, contrast the body of cheaply produced works that have for far too long plagued the image of Meiji prints. It can be said that the nishiki-e print tradition faded following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, since after this time it is clear that the process could no longer keep pace with other reprographic techniques like photography or lithography. This would eventually lead to a new interpretation of woodblock printing as formulated in the later shin hanga and sōsaku hanga movements in which woodblock prints were variously ‘marketed’ or ‘created’ under the rubric of ‘art’, although this distinction becomes problematic in the discussion of nishiki-e. It raises numerous questions that demand further research—namely, what was the aesthetic worth of Edo/Meiji prints aside from their role as mass consumables? Should they not be viewed as popular art created in multiples, objects that chronicle but have a striking aesthetic appeal?63 It could be asserted that, with Kunichika’s stature as an artist embodying the nishiki-e tradition and the fact that star actors Onoe Kikugorō V and Ichikawa Danjūrō IX actively sought him out to create sets of woodblock-printed actor portraits, these series, too, inhabited the realm of art.

Towards an understanding of Kunichika

Meiji print designers thus faced the challenge of having to adapt to the shifting social, cultural, economic, and technological landscape precipitated by the Meiji ishin, articulating, as noted above, an artistic continuum in their work within circumstances of contemporary change. Those born and trained in the Edo period who matured in the Meiji faced particular challenges because their careers bridged two cultural temporalities. Toyohara Kunichika, for

63 Although publishers of shin-hanga, most notably Watanabe Shōzaburō (1885–1962), aimed to infuse new life into the colour woodblock print tradition, it was done so by marketing these works as ‘art’. Ukiyo-e (not including surimono here) in their original form were by and large not seen as ‘artworks’, rather as commercial ephemera. This discussion does not extend to books. Also not included here is a discussion regarding the reproduction of artworks in the art journals that were being published at this time.
one, was apprenticed in the Edo bakumatsu period to the hugely successful Utagawa Kunisada and as such was heir to the Utagawa stylistic lineage that dominated nineteenth-century nishiki-e. But his reputation was not firmly established until the Meiji era. Kunichika and his contemporaries, such as Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, Kawanabe Kyōsai, Yōshū Chikanobu, and Baidō Hōsai, would have been conscious of their Edo artistic roots, while understanding the realities of operating in the Meiji Tokyo. It is noteworthy that the Meiji artists have strong bakumatsu roots but did not truly blossom until Meiji. Some embraced this ‘present’ more willingly than others; Kunichika was perhaps less inclined to break with his cultural past, since this underscored his own carefully confected persona. This is borne out by his prints (and paintings) and his own oral musings, two aspects of his character that form the basis of this study.

Kunichika’s prints are themselves ‘telling’ chronicles of the numerous genres in which he worked and occupy an important place within the history of Meiji nishiki-e. They support overwhelmingly our image of him as a specialist in actor prints. That he, too, identified himself as such is known to us from the only extant primary source on him, a four-part interview with Kunichika entitled ‘Meiji no Edokko’ 明治の江戸兒 (‘A Meiji Edoite’, or ‘A Meiji child of Edo’) that appeared in four instalments in the Tokyo daily newspaper Yomiuri shinbun on 24–26 and 28 October 1898 (interview nos. 20–23) (fig. 12a–b).

Kunichika’s maturity as a print designer corresponded to a period of rapid growth of the western-style daily newspaper in Japan. A writer at the Japan weekly mail in the late 1870s claimed that Tokyo had more newspapers than London, setting the figure at over one hundred. This is all the more astonishing when we consider that no daily newspapers existed in Japan in 1870.

The largest daily newspaper in the 1870s was the Yomiuri shinbun 読売新聞 (読売新聞, est. 1874), which would become recognised for its concentration on literature and the arts. In 1877 its annual sales reportedly neared 5.5 million copies. By the late nineteenth century, when the Kunichika interview went to press, the patterns of newspaper readership had experienced a shift away from newspapers, many with government ties, to private papers like the Yomiuri shinbun catering to a broader readership base. An in-depth discussion of the factors that were a catalyst to this shift lies outside the scope of our study here, but suffice it to say that major elements included a dramatic rise in literacy following the Sino-Japanese War in 1894–95 coupled with the increasingly difficult existence of the working class in urban centres. This spawned ‘a vocal, publicly attuned class of commoners ready to support newspapers or any other medium that might make life more liveable’.

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64 Huffman, Creating a public, 58.
65 Ibid., 60.
66 Ibid., 228.
Critical, too, for private newspapers was the overriding economic concern of how to turn a profit in the face of fierce competition. Economic survival hinged on strengthening circulation and savvy editors understood the need for innovation in order to attract greater sales. The introduction of feature stories, announcements of local events, including art news, and eye-catching formats with flashy display ads and bordered features were all part of this mechanism (fig. 13a–b).

The *Yomiuri shinbun*, for example, reported on *shogakai* and the gatherings of artists and poets, or memorial services (*tsuizen*) of theatre personalities at well-known inns or restaurants like the Nakamurarō in East Ryōgoku (see text MNE 21, Chapter Two). The *Yomiuri shinbun* and its competitor *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun*, which began circulation in Tokyo in 1888 and was one of the richest papers in the country, also published items on international and domestic art expositions and feature articles on Edo-period *nishiki-e* masters. Moreover, these newspapers appear to have been used by more entrepreneurial publishers like Akiyama Buemon as a means to publicise the release of their serial independent sheet series, often under the heading ‘Nishiki-e’ 錦絵. This is seen, for instance, in his announcements of the publication of individual images and the completion of Yoshitoshi’s set *One hundred aspects of the moon* (*Tsuki hyakushi* 月百姿, 1886–92). These indicate that the prints were often advertised in instalments of three and presumably available through subscription. Notice of both the Kikugorō V and Danjūrō IX sets were also publicised in the *Yomiuri* (see Chapter Four). The *Yomiuri shinbun* and *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* both carried obituaries on *nishiki-e* artists, including Kunichika (see Appendix III), Yoshitoshi, his student Mizuno Toshikata, and the Torii school artists Kiyosada and Kiyomitsu. Moreover, the *Yomiuri shinbun* ran the aforementioned ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interview in October 1898—such an interview with a

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67 The Nakamurarō appears consistently in the news throughout the Meiji era; a report from 11 September 1881, 3, states that the ‘Nakamurarō, ranked ‘number one (第一等) of the great inns in the city of Tokyo’ was recently destroyed by fire and announces the three-day opening festivities; other types of events include *tsuizen* (e.g. for Chikamatsu Monzaemon on 14 November 1888).

68 The completion of the Yoshitoshi set is announced in a *Yomiuri* news item from 22 May 1892, 2. Other news items reporting the release of the Yoshitoshi set, for example, appear on 20 January 1886, 2; 8 April 1886, 3; 19 April 1887, 2; 26 July 1887, 2; 26 October 1887, 3; 28 November 1888, 3; 15 March 1889, 3; 3 September 1889, 3; 11 November 1889, 3, and 12 August 1891, 3.

nishiki-e master is unique (see Chapters One and Two).  

The Yomiuri shinbun ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interview is our only in-depth autobiographical source on Kunichika, and it has provided the basis for subsequent biographies on the artist. As I argue in Chapters One and Two, however, a closer reading of the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interview raises questions about the reliability of the information in it. Through a series of apparently unrelated anecdotes on his life and art, Kunichika paints a colourful picture of himself as the paradigmatic ‘child of Edo’ (Edokko). By retelling and embellishing his own narrative—and we can imagine that he retold these anecdotes often—Kunichika projected a stereotypical image of the Edokko and modified (or enhanced) the perception of what by this time would have represented a distanced cultural past. Whether Kunichika is aware of this or not—he was most likely more concerned with how his contemporaries viewed him—this narrative would mould the perception by later generations of him as a nishiki-e artist. By extension it should also contribute to the definition of the Meiji nishiki-e tradition. That is, to appropriate the words of the Argentinian poet Jorge Luis Borges, Kunichika’s Yomiuri interview would ‘modify our conception of the [his] past, as it will modify the future’ perception of him.  

What we must consider is that by 1898, when the interview appeared, the majority of the nishiki-e artists of his generation had died, and Kunichika would have been free to mould with impunity his own ‘self-myth’ as one of the last surviving print designers to have trained in the bakumatsu period.  

The Yomiuri interview was released less than two years before Kunichika’s death. It offers us the opportunity to extrapolate the image Kunichika fashions for public consumption, as it does about how a Meiji readership may have related to him and the era that they perceived he represented. Over three decades had passed between the end of the Edo period and the Yomiuri interview, and it is not inconceivable that a number of the readers of the interview had no first-hand memory of the bakumatsu period when Kunichika formed his own artistic identity in the Utagawa studio. There would have been a number who were born post-Meiji ishin. To the Tokyo newspaper readership in 1898, a figure like Kunichika would have inhabited a cultural space when Tokyo was Edo. The city of Edo, the Edo period and its corresponding culture were viewed during the Meiji with nostalgia and remembrance as uniquely ‘Japanese’. In reading his anecdotes about various art and literary figures, as well as his own exploits, the public could envision this Edo cultural past, however ‘massaged’ that vision might be. In turn, this would contribute to an understanding of their own place as

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70 As will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis, the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ suite had interviews with two nishiki-e artists: Kunichika and Baidō Hōsai.
71 Borges, ‘Kafka and his precursors’, 108.
‘modern’ Meiji Japanese,\textsuperscript{72} even though this space was ‘built upon fragments of the past that are now remembered as quaint, romantic’.\textsuperscript{73}

Kunichika’s \textit{Yomiuri} interview projects this perceived (and contrived) ideal of the \textit{Edokko}. It is also my contention that the masculine ‘Edokko-ness’ that defines Kunichika in the \textit{Yomiuri} interview is most demonstrably objectified in the aesthetic of his kabuki actor prints (see Chapter Four). The intense emotion embedded in kabuki actor prints, which typically illustrated the performer in a pose during a climatic moment in the story (\textit{mie}), would have held great appeal for Kunichika, and his actor portraits in effect become projections of his own (masculine) self-image. Moreover, by cornering this niche market in the late nineteenth century, Kunichika had positioned himself as the artist to undertake commissions of actor portraits, most notably at the end of his life with sets like the \textit{One hundred roles of Baikō} and \textit{One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō}.

\textbf{Background and structure of the thesis}

The merits of a study of Kunichika’s life, self-image and art are two-fold: first, it assists us in redressing the stereotypical view that \textit{bakumatsu} and Meiji prints represent a period of ‘decline’ and ‘decadence’, as upheld by writers from the nineteenth century onwards, and advances our understanding of the qualities of \textit{nishiki-e} of this period. It will show that the Meiji commercial print industry, although subject to different cultural considerations and economic challenges, remained buoyant until the end of Kunichika’s life, and that print designers, writers, and actors of the age actively collaborated in the production of prints. Secondly, an examination of the \textit{Yomiuri} interview segments sheds light on Kunichika’s views regarding his own place within the nineteenth-century woodblock print tradition as a designer of kabuki actor prints. In the process, the thesis aims to underscore the artist’s cultural and therefore artistic identity conveyed in the \textit{Yomiuri} interview as one firmly rooted in an ‘Edo sense of self’.

\textsuperscript{72} I am drawing upon (and exploring) notions regarding our understanding of history/culture through an understanding of the past, as set forth by Johan Huizinga who stated that ‘history is the form in which a culture becomes conscious of its past’, in W.E. Krul, ‘Huizinga’s definitie van de geschiedenis’, in Huizinga, \textit{De taak van de cultuurgeschiedenis}, 284. This idea is taken up by more recent scholars like Ankersmit, \textit{Historical representation}, 1, who states that ‘we do not know who we are unless we have an adequate understanding of our past’, 1. In art, we must question the past that art visualised; relating to the validity of the visualisation of the past through art. Recent studies like that by Haskell have shown ‘images formerly assumed to depict only what could have been seen by an ‘innocent eye’ were in fact the products of conscious or unconscious manipulation’. Haskell, \textit{History and its images}. 5.

\textsuperscript{73} Tanaka, \textit{New Times in modern Japan}, 2. Also the notion that ‘The historical fact is that Japan retrieved much that it borrowed even as it massaged the borrowings into more familiar shapes’. Gluck, ‘Patterns of the past: themes in Japanese history’, in Embree and Gluck, \textit{Asia in western and world history}, 730.
This study is divided into four chapters. Chapter One sets the stage with a description of the four instalments of Kunichika’s ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interview in the Yomiuri and argues that Kunichika utilises the very public vehicle of the then relatively new media of the newspaper to construct and promote his self-narrative. This is viewed against research into the role of the narrative in the writing of history and the manufacture of the individual persona. The longest chapter in this thesis, Chapter Two, is a translation with annotated commentaries of the four Yomiuri segments. It offers a biography of Kunichika. The annotations not only intend to provide what comparatively little data we have about Kunichika, but also to demonstrate that his anecdotes connect him with a cultural and artistic space that is grounded in the image of Edo. This contextualised interpretation goes beyond conventional discussions of Kunichika, which either dwell on his production of prints or simply repeat information from early sources without examination. Closer scrutiny of the texts also reveals that Kunichika is clearly embellishing his stories to create a more colourful self-image and to accentuate his ‘Edokko-ness’, since this Edokko image added to his celebrity as his life and work came to embody a romanticised view of Japan’s own past. (Perhaps it also suggests Kunichika’s reluctance to embrace the Meiji.) Contemporary accounts from newspapers are interspersed throughout this thesis in an effort to elucidate further the image of Kunichika in the public eye. It should be emphasised that such an extensive use of newspaper reports provides new insights on Kunichika, or on any of the artists mentioned in this thesis, represents a fresh approach in the study of Meiji artists outside Japan.74

Chapter Three looks at the Kunichika Yomiuri within a larger cultural context. The discovery that Kunichika’s interview was one within a suite of nine interviews with men—including the nishiki-e artist Baidō Hōsai 梅堂豊斎 (1848–1920)—who were seen as typically Edokko prompted the question of why such a feature would have been commissioned. Was it done as a form of ‘recorded oral history’ regarding an aspect of the historical past that was beginning to fade from the collective memory in Meiji, or was it that the Edokko image was undergoing a renewal, becoming mythicised in that collective memory, and that these figures were touted as its representatives?

The methodology of this dissertation focuses on the analysis of Kunichika’s (self-) image as an artist of nigao-e and his position within that tradition during the Meiji era, rather than advancing a more conventional art historical investigation and discussion of his stylistic development. However, Chapter Four is perhaps the most ‘art historically’ grounded segment

74 I am one of the first scholars outside Japan to use newspaper reporting extensively in an effort to expand our knowledge about Meiji artists. I took this approach in Amy Reigle Newland, ‘The great authority of ukiyo-e masters’: the making of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi’s public persona’, in Uhlenbeck and Newland, Yoshitoshi, 25–46, and Newland, ‘In the shadow of another: introducing the “Meiji no Edokko” Baidō Hosai’, 5–26.
of the thesis (indebted to my own training as an art historian) and outlines the significance of Kunichika’s enduring legacy as a print designer of Meiji kabuki imagery within a broader cultural context. The set *One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō* is used tangentially as a ‘case study’ to illustrate the high level of production possible in Meiji *nishiki-e* and how sets such as this exemplify the structure of commissioned sets for commercial consumption. Such ambitious projects likewise invite a review of how actors used the medium of the woodblock print as one type of name-brand marketing (before being eclipsed by photography). The production of the *One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō*, for instance, was apparently commissioned by the actor himself and seemingly in reaction to a similar set Kunichika produced of the kabuki actor Onoe Kikugorō V. This chapter will also discuss in some depth the role and reciprocal influence of photography on the genre of actor portraiture, since Kunichika would have been well aware of its impact on his métier at the time of the *Yomiuri* interview.
CHAPTER ONE

Crafting the past, shaping the present: imaging and imagining self-narrative

*Everything is a tale, Martin. What we believe, what we know, what we remember, even what we dream. Everything is a story, a narrative, a sequence of events with characters communicating an emotional content. We only accept as true what can be narrated. Don’t tell me you’re not tempted by the idea.*

Carlos Ruiz Zafón, *The angel’s game*, 2009

Narration involves the recounting, casting, and ordering of events, and it imposes a structure on these events to craft a persuasive interpretation of reality. This interpretation ‘works up the material given in perception and reflection, fashions it, and creates something new, in the same way that human agents by their actions fashion distinctive forms of historical life out of the world they inherit as their past’.\(^1\) As such, the historical narrative is not only an ‘icon of events, past or present, of which it speaks; it is also an index of the kind of actions that produce the kinds of events we wish to call historical’.\(^2\)

Much debate has arisen over the validity of the role of narrativity within the ‘architecture of historical knowledge’.\(^3\) Scholars, including Paul Ricoeur, Roland Barthes, Hayden White, and Jerome Bruner, have argued convincingly for the use of narrative as a device in historiographical study.\(^4\) Bruner, for one, maintains that narrative is a cultural product that creates a perception of ourselves and how we form expressions of selfhood. Integral to this process of ‘self-making’ is the ‘constructing’ and ‘reconstructing’ of self-image, the roots of which are inextricably bound by a constructed cultural past, influenced by the present and contributing to the future. For Bruner, the capacity for us to narrate produces ‘a selfhood that joins us with others, that permits us to hark back selectively to our past while shaping ourselves for the possibilities of an imagined future’.\(^5\) Narrative is therefore a construct setting us up in a relationship within the world of others; it determines how this world perceives us and how we wish to be perceived. The use of narrative to shape an image of self and to reinforce one’s place within a particular cultural sphere finds resonance in the

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\(^1\) Paul Ricoeur discussed in White, *The content of form*, 178.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ricoeur, *Memory, history, forgetting*, 238.
\(^4\) It is not the aim of this study to delve into the history surrounding the study of validity of narrative, but clearly one of the strongest supporters of narrative as a legitimate goal of historical study is Paul Ricoeur, who attempted to solve the problematic relationship between narrative and historiography, and who advocated for ‘content of historicality with a “structure of time” that cannot be represented except in a narrative mode’ (from White, *The content of form*, 1987, 54). For an excellent overview of the role of narrative in history, see Messier and Batra, ‘Narration, memory, history’.
discussion of Toyohara Kunichika’s life and as relates to his own narrative in the *Yomiuri shinbun*.

*Kunichika’s narration as life story: the Yomiuri shinbun*

Kunichika’s prints are representative of the variety typifying many Meiji-era colour woodblock print artists who were trained in the late Edo, or *bakumatsu*, era. His oeuvre serves a vital function in the history of Meiji *nishiki-e*, extending to designs in diverse genres: first and foremost *yakusha-e* 役者絵 (actor prints) (fig. 14), but also *bijinga* 美人画 (‘beauty’ prints) (fig. 15), *musha-e* 武者絵 (warrior [historical] prints), *omocha-e* 玩具絵 (toy prints) (fig. 16), and *sumō-e* 相撲絵 (sumo prints) (fig. 17), to images that inspired advertisements for medicines (*baiyaku hanga* 薬版画) (fig. 18) as well as *hagoita-e* 羽子板絵 (battledore prints, see also Chapter Two, figs. 27–29). These works can be viewed as insightful visual chronicles that help us to gauge the state of the Meiji-era woodblock publishing industry. However, it is Kunichika’s reputation as a ‘specialist in actor prints’ or in ‘actor likenesses’ (*yakusha-e shi* 役者絵師) that dominates our perception of him as a *nishiki-e* designer. This view is corroborated by his extant work, which overwhelmingly comprises kabuki-related prints, the image projected in the Meiji press, and his reception in other textual materials such as contemporary rankings, or *saiken*. The latter were a type of guidebook that included rankings of all aspects of popular culture (see Chapter Two, fig. 48).

Meiji Japan’s daily newspapers are a rich, yet almost entirely untapped, source that offer insightful information on Kunichika and other print artists through short news items and longer feature articles. They reveal how these artists were perceived and received by the public, and the nature of their standing. This is seen in news items like ‘Utagawa ha gakō no senmon’ (‘The specialties of Utagawa school designers’) that appeared on 30 November 1890 in the *Yomiuri shinbun*. It lists the major print designers of the day alongside their respective specialties:

There are numerous Utagawa school designers who are connected [to the production] of *hanshita-e* [preparatory drawings for a print]; if we were to single out those celebrated names with their current specialities: in *musha-e* [warrior prints] there is Yoshitoshi; in *nigao* [actor likenesses], Kunichika; *kanjo* [women of the court], Chikanobu; in *oshi-e* Kunimasa; in *teasobi* [play pictures] pictures Kunitoshi; in *shinbun sashi-e* [newspaper illustrations], Toshihide; in *meisho-e* [pictures of famous places], Ginkō; in *ruji abura-e* [copies of oil paintings], Kiyochika; in *misemono kanban-e* [entertainment billboards] Yoshimori; in *shibai* [gekiba] *kanban-e* [kabuki billboards], Kiyomitsu; in *nenjū gyōji-e* [pictures of annual events], Shōgetsu; in *uchiwa-e* [fan pictures], Gyokuei. . .(p. 3)

A few of the artists—Utagawa Yoshimori II 歌川芳盛 (1830–84), Tōshū Shōgetsu
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東洲勝月 (act. 1880s–1890s), and Nabeta Gyokuei 鍋田玉英 (1847–?)—have still received relatively little attention by art historians. Others like Gosai (Migita) Toshihide 右田年英 (1862–1925), Torii Kiyomitsu 鳥居清満 (1832–92), Kunimasa (Kunimasa IV/Baidō Hōsai), Utagawa Kunitoshi 歌川国利 (1847–99), and Adachi Ginkō 安達吟光 (act. 1874–97) are slowly garnering scholarly attention. Yoshitoshi, Kunichika, Chikanobu, and Kiyochika are firmly established within the art historical canon of Meiji-era woodblock prints in both the West and in Japan. 6

The above Yomiuri article associates Kunichika with nigao-e, and he promotes this image in the Yomiuri shinbun ‘Meiji no Edokko’ (hereafter MNE) of 24–26 and 28 October 1898. Such an extensive newspaper interview with a designer of nishiki-e is unusual, and it provides a rare opportunity to read first-hand the ‘conversation’ with a nineteenth-century designer of colour woodblock prints, even if this conversation is somewhat embellished. As already noted, the only other lengthy newspaper interview conducted with a Meiji print designer known to this writer is of the print designer Kunimasa (Baidō Hōsai), another Kunisada disciple, and also within the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ suite of interviews.

The Yomiuri interview is a particularly valuable resource for the art historian since no diary, jottings or letters by Kunichika have been unearthed. 7 No shini-e 死絵 (‘death pictures’, a memorial portrait) of Kunichika are yet documented, even though he himself produced shini-e of kabuki actors and of his teacher Kunisada. The artist does hint at the existence of a diary in MNE 20, ‘. . . this is pretty odd so I made notes in a diary (nikki 日記)’, but no such document has been discovered. Other than signatures and until 1875 addresses (see Chapter Two, Table II), Kunichika did not insert lengthy biographical inscriptions on his commercial prints, illustrated books, privately commissioned surimono, or paintings that may have disclosed his own feelings about his training as a print designer in the later Edo period and in Meiji. However, the changing forms of his signatures assist in part in tracking the course of

6 Noteworthy is the fact that Kiyomitsu was not an Utagawa artist, rather belonged to the Torii lineage, nor were Kiyochika, Ginkō, and Shōgetsu, which might cause us to question the title of the article or to speculate about whether any print designer of this period would immediately be associated with the Utagawa school, which dominated the history of nishiki-e in the nineteenth century. Relatively little in-depth research by scholars inside and outside Japan has been done on these artists, even though they do appear in the press at the time; e.g. Gyokuei, a student of Chikanobu, is applauded for his fan prints in ‘Gyokuei no ōatarī’ 玉英の大当たり (‘Gyokuei’s great hit’), Yomiuri shinbun (8 June 1892), 1, or the mention of his work at the Third Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai, Yomiuri shinbun (10 May 1890), 1; for the more obscure Shōgetsu: ‘Senshutsu Edo yonjūhakkei’ 選出江戸四十八景 (‘Selection of forty-seven Edo views’), Tōkyō Asahi shinbun (20 September 1892), 3. A degree of attention has been paid to Kunitoshi more recently, e.g. Morimoto, ‘Meiji no ukiyo-e shi Utagawa Kunitoshi—Kunitoshi o motomete’. Other Utagawa artists active during this period are discussed in the Yomiuri, ‘Ukiyo-e shi no ibutsu’, 3.

7 This author has not uncovered any letters; by contrast, seven surviving letters are known by his teacher Kunisada to his publisher and are housed in the Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan.

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his career up to his establishment as an artist and the recognisable signature ‘Toyohara Kunichika’ 豊原國周. This evolution of signature forms corresponds to his own artistic development, linking him to his teacher in its early forms, as noted regarding ‘Yanagishima Kunichika’ 柳島國周, ‘Toyokuni monjin Kunichika’ 豊国門人國周, ‘Ichōsai Kunichika’ 一鴬斎國周, or ‘Utagawa Kunichika’ 歌川國周 (see Chapter Two).

Poetry by Kunichika was also included on certain of his prints, the best known being his contribution to his teacher’s shini-e (see below), but also on certain of his actor prints. The latter, for example, implies that he (and his verse) was respected enough for inclusion among individuals of note, as seen on a 1894 triptych illustrating the play Tokete mimasu Musubi Kashiwa with actors Ichikawa Danjūrō IX and Ichikawa Danzō III. Kunichika’s verse appears alongside those by Sanshō 三升 (Danjūrō IX), San’en 三猿 (Danzō III), Tsuruoka San’ō 鶴岡三翁, an unidentified individual (Suminao Kensui ? 住直見水), Danshūrō Enshi 談州樓燕枝 (1837–1900), and Keikaen 桂花園 (1830–1899) (fig. 19; see also Appendix III: Tōkyō Asahi shinbun, 15 September 1894). San’en, San’ō, and Keikaen also contributed poetry to Kunichika’s One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō series. Kunichika’s contribution reads:

丸い世に習へ新酒のひざ直し
marui yo ni narae shinshu no hizanaoshi

Learn from the circular world!
This season’s brew moves to her new home.

The Yomiuri interview emphasises Kunichika’s own art history in which he sees himself as a designer of actor prints with little mention of the many other genres that he equally mastered: ‘I am an artist of nigao-e and for that reason, I have kept company with all the actors’ (MNE 23). The interview segments are loosely organised in a chronological sequence. In the first two instalments, Kunichika shares snippets about his childhood, his training, and some of the artists, actors, and patrons with whom he was acquainted. The third and fourth instalments provide further personal insights into this artistic milieu and provide us with some sense of the cultural setting that informed Kunichika’s own work as a kabuki actor portraitist. All told, each segment offers insights into the commercial, literary, and artistic circles in which Kunichika purportedly moved, those that included wealthy patrons; writers,

8 The verse seems to be suggesting that the ‘new brew’ could be equated with a ‘new bride’ who, moving into her husband’s home must abide by the practices and customs of her new home. The release of the triptych by Akiyama is announced in the Yomiuri shinbun, ‘Tokete mimasu Musubi Kashiwa’, 3.
poets and journalists; kabuki actors such as the aforementioned influential Ichikawa Danjūrō IX and Onoe Kikugorō V; raconteurs such as Shibata Nankoku; print designers such as Kawanabe Kyōsai, Utagawa Toyokuni III (Kunisada), Yoshitsuya 芳斎, and Kuniteru I 国輝 (1808–74). His narrative would mould the perception later generations have of him as a nishiki-e artist and would also secure his place within the Meiji nishiki-e canon.

Elements of the Yomiuri interview appear to have formed the basis for the majority of later reports by Japanese scholars relating to Kunichika’s biography. Yet there has been little or no interpretative, contextualised analysis of the underlying content of the Yomiuri interview, either as a portrayal of the types of artistic, literary, and theatre coteries that existed at this time, or of how Kunichika used the then emerging media of the newspaper as a forum to craft and promote his persona—as nigao-e designer and Edokko—to a wider audience. The artist’s accounts in the interview have been taken at face value with little scrutiny. Surfacing with predictable regularity in any biography on the artist, for example, are his self-assertive claims such as ‘I have moved 117 times until now since leaving my place of birth. I am not bragging, but during his lifetime Hokusai moved eighty times, so as far as moving goes I have one up on Hokusai’ (MNE 20), or his candid, almost defiant, statement ‘from the very beginning I did not take to Danjūrō’ (MNE 23). The latter is a reference to the influential Meiji kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō IX and the most oft-depicted subject in Kunichika’s actor prints (see Chapter Four).

A closer reading of the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interview, however, raises questions about the degree of fiction versus fact, or memory versus imagination. It suggests that Kunichika has refashioned and reconfigured the sequences of events to dramatise the tale of his life and his art in order to fit a constructed cultural image of the Edokko (see Chapter Two). The anecdotes in the Yomiuri shinbun become nostalgic musings on a vanishing cultural milieu—a sort of re-inhabiting of the past—desired by the Meiji newspaper readership (see Chapter Three). Kunichika’s personal reminiscences become reminisces of the city of Edo (later Tokyo) and of the Edokko. In the process, Kunichika establishes his own myth of self as an artist who is representative of and ‘clings’ to this cultural past, one formed

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9 Mori Senzō (1895–1985) reproduces the Yomiuri shinbun interview in his ‘Kunichika to sono seikatsu’ in Shinpen Meiji jinbutsu yawa, 240–61, in a somewhat modified form. Mori does not include the reporter’s annotations, themselves of interest, nor does he remain true to the original article in form and language in his transcription of the interviews in that he (or editorial staff) frequently inserts punctuation and characters different from the original to facilitate the reading of the text. I have transcribed the text from the original articles and have attempted to transcribe them in their actual form, and as far as possible, the transcription in Appendix I is true to the original Yomiuri shinbun article. This accommodates the fact that throughout the interviews one finds the use of characters with gloss readings that are clearly a reflection of Kunichika’s speech, but are not necessarily the conventional reading of the characters as printed.
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as a young apprentice working under the master Kunisada. The *Yomiuri* interview could be interpreted as an attempt to reinforce and reaffirm his standing as a *nishiki-e shi* (*nishiki-e* master) during an epoch undergoing great technological challenges (see Chapter Four). At the same time, his engagement in a conversation populating such a public forum as the newspaper would have served to guarantee his own artistic memory and legacy. In turn, this can be seen as translating into a collective memory through the combination of his prints (creative output), and interview (attempts to set parameters of what he wanted us to remember about him): ‘autobiographical memories of directly experienced events do indeed have deeper impact . . . collective memory of each generation is largely influenced by their life experiences at a relatively young age’.10

The form and flow from one instalment to another in the *Yomiuri* interview imply that they were composed during one long session with the artist. Kunichika takes centre stage, speaking in an easy, unabashed, and casual manner, his turns of phrase (e.g. *asshi* vs. *watakushi* for ‘I’, *Tōkei* for Tokyo)11 linking him to the capital (Edo) Tokyo where he spent his entire life and providing clues to his merchant townsman upbringing. The ‘voice’ of the interviews is therefore clearly not orthodox, rather delivered in the vernacular. His connection to the city underscores his own self-identity and is likewise reinforced by his métier as a designer of *nishiki-e*.

The *Yomiuri* reporter’s name is not listed, and his identity cannot be established with certainty. However, the scholar Mori Senzō remarked that the writer of Kunichika’s ‘obituary’, which appeared on 20 July 1900 in the *Yomiuri shinbun*,12 was the print scholar Iijima Kyoshin 飯島虔心 (1841–1901) (fig. 20).13 Writing under the name ‘Kyokugai Kanjin’ 局外閑人 (‘a leisurely outsider’), Iijima noted that his acquaintance with Kunichika was long standing. He visited him during his life and watched him work.14 Iijima would have been keenly aware of the importance in documenting a *nishiki-e* figure like Kunichika in what can

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12 *Kyokugai Kanjin*, ‘Ko Toyohara Kunichika no seikō’, 4; see Appendix III under ‘20 July 1900’ for the complete text.
13 According to the extremely brief obituary for Iijima in the *Yomiuri shinbun* (3 August, 1901), Iijima Kyoshin contributed articles to the newspaper for a number of years under the name Kyokugai Kanjin; see Mori, ‘Iijima Kyoshin no ukiyo-e zatsudan’.* The Kunichika interviews are not included among the articles he cites. Yoshida Teruji also points out that the name ‘Kyokugai Kanjin’ was one of Iijima’s art names (go); see Yoshida, *Ukiyo-e jiten*, vol. 1, 39–40. Iijima, born Iijima Hanjūrō, was the eldest son of a Tokugawa bakufu retainer and himself a civil servant under the Meiji government (eventually in the Monbushō Henshū Kyoku); he was influential in pioneering an appreciation of *ukiyo-e* studies in Japan. In addition to his newspaper articles and editorials on print designers and print genres, including Hiroshige and Sharaku, his manuscripts include *Katsushika Hokusai den* (1893); *Ukiyo-e shi Utagawa retsuden* 浮世絵師歌川列伝 (1894; rev. 1993), and the aforementioned Kawanabe Kyōsai-ō den (late 1890s); see also Ann Herring, ‘Iijima Kyoshin’, in Newland, *Hotei encyclopedia*, vol. 2, 446.
been seen today as a form of oral/written history. As a frequent contributor on *nishiki-e* to the *Yomiuri shinbun*, it could be that Iijima was also the driving force behind Kunichika agreeing to the MNE interview. However, we cannot substantiate definitively whether Iijima or anyone else had a hand in recommending Kunichika for the interview, or whether it was Kunichika who approached the newspaper or vice versa. Or did one of Kunichika’s publishers, such as the Gusokuya, have a hand in promoting Kunichika in an effort to assist him financially (i.e. if he was paid for this interview)? It would be difficult to establish whether Kunichika’s participation was the result of a publisher’s urging, who may also have done so in the hope that the exposure such an article might afford would stimulate sales. One of Kunichika’s most ambitious actor series—*One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX*—was in production at this time. A tentative collation of dates suggests that there was a surge in the set’s production in 1898, with some sixty of the known one hundred images released during this year (see Table I). The use of newspapers to publicise an artist like Kunichika, who would have enjoyed a degree of celebrity as a *nishiki-e shi*, would have also been an effective marketing ploy. The press was also utilised to announce the domestic/foreign exhibitions and *shogakai* in which Kunichika participated.

The reporter’s role as a ‘passive’ narrator—a type of extradiegetic narrator—is indicated throughout by the occasional interjection to signal an end to one anecdote and the commencement of another, or, in the case of the first instalment, to introduce Kunichika:

Continuing the legacy of Utagawa Toyokuni, Toyohara Kunichika has become a star of ‘likeness pictures’ (*nigao-e*) masters. His common name is Arakawa Yasohachi. This year he is sixty-four [sixty-three in Western reckoning]; a third-generation *Edokko*, he is an interesting character. While his life-long career has been as brilliant as that of ‘brocade pictures of the East’ [*Azuma nishiki-e*], he leads a transient life with an extreme lack of concern for money. He now resides in a corner of Honjo’s Omote-chō, and it would appear has little money. His home is situated on the northern side of Kumagai Inari-higashi 2-chōme; he occupies the middle of a terraced house. There is a newly cleaned lattice upon which is hung a nameplate and letterbox. Across from a shoe rack measuring about 2.75 m is a dirty space, the size of a single tatami; it is furnished with a long unsightly hibachi and also with a decorated Buddhist altar. The humble interior, the size of two tatami mats, is cluttered with a desk. It is difficult to imagine that a popular, famous artist would live in a place like this. At first, it was strange to realise that this is the residence of a great artist . . . Looking around with a penetrating gaze and stroking his white beard—about 18 or 21 cm long—he talks about the heyday of the *Edokko*. . . (see annotation Chapter Two)
The reporter’s brief, poignant prefatory remarks set the stage for the interview and his subsequent comments are clearly added for the benefit of the Yomiuri reader. But they also assist in creating a mental picture of Kunichika. The image of him as an older artist with a ‘long white beard’ stands in stark contrast to the only documented portrait of the artist, a formal photograph taken sometime late in his life (see fig. 1). We can envision Kunichika, a Bohemian-like figure inhabiting a cramped, cluttered room. Seated in conversation ‘wearing a broad grin’ (MNE 22), his talents as a raconteur enthral, his gesturing adding to his performative persona, as in ‘without show he makes as if to tuck up the mosquito net in both hands’ (MNE 22). And we realise that he fully embraced a joie de vivre, ‘at this time he continued to relish the taste of sake offered to him by women, and as such he became the life of the party’ (MNE 21).

The reporter introduces Kunichika by positioning him as an artist who ‘continues the legacy of Utagawa Toyokuni’. This could be interpreted as a reference to Kunichika’s own teacher Toyokuni III, better known today as Kunisada, or perhaps to Toyokuni I. The absence of any explanatory information about this ‘Toyokuni’—either Toyokuni I or Toyokuni III—suggests that even in the late nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth, the name ‘Toyokuni’ was still familiar to the average Tokyoite. The Utagawa lineage of nishiki-e artists trained by Toyokuni I remained very much alive in the public consciousness and would have been strongly identified as representative of Edo culture. Periodic news items about Toyokuni...
I and Kunisada in papers like the *Yomiuri* support this. Tellingly, Kunichika’s name is included together with that of Hōsai Kunisada (Baidō Hōsai) in a *Yomiuri* report from 7 and 13 November 1893. It describes their participation in the construction of a carved stone monument on the grounds of Kameido Tenjin park dedicated to the Utagawa Toyokuni line (Kunisada II and III). The park was celebrated for its blossoming plum trees:

To commemorate the late master Utagawa Toyokuni, an artist celebrated throughout the country, the sculptor Den Kakunen is at present carving a stone monument measuring 1.5 *shaku* (h.) x 2 *shaku* (w.) [based] on a portrait of the master by the two messieurs Kunisada [Hōsai Kunisada] and Kunichika. The memorial will be finished sometime in the first ten days of next month; it is planned to install it within the grounds of the Kameido Tenjin. (7 November)

The erection of the memorial within the Kameido park grounds was mentioned in a previous issue. On the right side of memorial are carved images of the famous Utagawa Toyokuni II and Yanagishima Toyokuni III; these are a joint work of Toyohara Kunichika and Hōsai Kunisada . . . the *hokku* reads: ‘the trunks have forgotten their age, the plums in bloom’ (**miki wa mina o wo wasurete ume no hana** 幹はみな老を忘れて 梅の花). (13 November)

Another *Yomiuri* article from 12 August 1892 gives a list of the remaining—and presumably noteworthy—students of Kunisada, including Kunichika, who were connected with the construction of a monument to Kunisada II and Kunisada III. Kunichika, Kunimasa (Baidō Hōsai), and Kunitoshi are singled out as the promoters of the memorial and as assisting Kunisada III’s daughter Utajo in the project. A similar monument was also constructed for Kunichika’s contemporary Yoshitoshi, and it has an extensive list of his

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15 For example, a number of news items in the *Yomiuri* report the erection of monument to Kunisada, e.g., from 12 December 1890 (page 3) headlined ‘Meijin Toyokuni no nijūnana nenki’ 名人豊国の廿七年忌 highlights the events on the imminent twenty-seventh death anniversary (presumably of Kunisada) and visits to the graves of Toyokuni I, II, and III. A feature article on the founder Toyokuni I, entitled ‘Issei Utagawa Toyokuni no haiyūnigao-e’ 一世歌川豊国の俳優似顔絵, appeared in the newspaper on 16 February 1901, 5. This was written by Kyokugai Kanjin.

16 The work of sculptor Den Kakunen 田鶴年 also included two stone guardian lion-dogs at the (koma-inu) in 1886 at the Ninomiya Shrine 二宮神社 in Funabashi, Chiba Prefecture; http://5.pro.tok2.com/~tetsuyosie/chiba/mobarasi/ninomiya/ninomiya.html. He is described on the website as **sekikō** 石工; he is one among other such artisans (e.g. Kō Gunkaku 廣群鶴, Miya Kinen 宮亀年, and Boku Seishō 留世祥) in the online article *Gohime chokōkushi Seikisen・Sakai Hachiemon ni tsuite* 御碑銘彫刻師、井亀泉・酒井八右衛門について; http://www.city.bunkyo.lg.jp/rekishikan/column/rekishikandayori_14.pdf

17 ‘Utagawa Toyokuni-ō no hi’, 3.

18 The site for this monument is given as the Mokubo Temple 本母寺 in Mukōjima, different from the site of the monument reported upon over a year later. The twenty-one names singled out include (in order appearing in the article): (living) Kunichika, Kunimasa, Kunitoshi, Kunimitsu, Kunimatsu, Kuniteru III, Kunimine, Kuninao, Kunimaro II, and (decendent) Sadahide, Kunimaro I, Kuniteru II, Kunihisa, Kunitaka, Kunikyo, Kunitaka, Kunitame, Kunitaki, and Toyomoro. Utagawa Utajo is listed as the wife of a wealthy man named Noguchi Hisataka.
students and patrons from various walks of life. No such memorial is believed to have been erected for Kunichika.\(^\text{19}\)

The link with the Toyokuni line serves to validate Kunichika’s place within the Utagawa school, whose numerous branches and students dominated nineteenth-century colour woodblock print production. It permitted him the ‘status’ that would have been enjoyed by being bound to this particular lineage (see Chapter Two). After first speaking about his own rather humble beginnings, Kunichika makes clear in the first interview segment (\(MNE\ 20\)) his long association with Toyokuni III (Kunisada), who ran a large and successful studio:

\[\ldots\] I became a student of Ichiyūsai Chikanobu, but once I had the basics down I became a student of Toyokuni II [Toyokuni III]. Toyokuni II did the illustrations for the \(Inaka Genji\); he was the one referred to as ‘the master (meijin 名人) Toyokuni’. I trained there for exactly seventeen years. I heard later that my teacher was also at the studio of Toyokuni [I] for seventeen years, so I thought this is really quite bizarre. But if I could just put that aside, [I’d like to mention] that I have moved 117 times until now since leaving my place of birth. I am not bragging, but during his lifetime Hokusai moved eighty times, so as far as moving goes I have one up on Hokusai.

The unbroken transmission of what would have been seen in the Meiji as the traditional ‘Edo’ Utagawa school is a significant marker in defining Kunichika. This is further echoed in Iijima Kyoshin’s obituary when he describes the artist:

Since his youth he was accomplished at drawing; he became the student of Kōchōrō Toyokuni under whom he learned painting/art techniques. Ultimately achieving the true spirit of his teacher, he was permitted to use the character ‘Kuni’ and assumed the name ‘Kunichika’. He excelled at most actor nigao-e and was adept in the palette of the Utagawa school.\(^\text{20}\)

However, Kunichika attempts to trump the high standing of his teacher when he elaborates upon the temporarily strained relationship between himself and Kunisada following a fracas at the latter’s home that was caused by a work he had agreed to design (\(MNE\ 21\)):

\[\text{At that time my works were selling well . . . coming from me this might seem odd, but my work was doing better than my teacher’s, so as a punishment he took the name ‘Kunichika’ away from me . . .}\]

The name ‘Kunichika’ was soon restored, the artist conceding that the situation was a ‘real blow to me for a time’, but that Kunichika would so publicly equate himself with or even see himself (i.e. his art) better than his teacher is indeed audacious and a bold gesture of self-promotion. By the end of Kunisada’s life, Kunichika’s standing as one of his leading students is uncontested, borne out by the elaborate \(shini-e\) of the teacher by Kunichika with

\(^{19}\) For a listing of names on the Yoshitoshi memorial, see Uhlenbeck and Newland, \(Yoshitoshi\), 2011, 43.

explanatory text by the writer and journalist Kanagaki Robun 仮名垣魯文 (1829–94) (fig. 21).
His verse also appears on the work, together with two other Kunisada students: Kunisada II (1823–80; here signed 一寿斎国貞) and Kunihisa (here signed 一雪斎国久; 1832–91). It reads:

口真似の師のかけふます小節季候 一鴬斎國周
kuchi mane no / shi no kage fumazu /
ko-sekizoro

Following the master of kuchimane at a respectful distance— the junior door-to-door busker

Ichiōsai Kunichika

Though the verse is difficult to decipher, the underlying message is clearly that Kunichika positions himself at a respectful distance behind his teacher, thus ‘not treading on the [his] shadow’ (kage o fumazu). This work is signed with the suitably deferential name ‘Monjin Ichiōsai Kunichika kinpitsu’ 門人一鴬斎國周謹筆 (see Chapter Two for a discussion the names ‘Ichiōsai’ and ‘Kunichika’). The signatures on other images of his teacher, one for the catalogue sheet of the series A contemporary selection of thirty-six flowers and another for a shini-e, read Ichiōsai Kunichika shinsha ‘Drawn by Ichiōsai Kunichika’) and ‘Nijūkyūsai gokugetsu Kunichika sha’ 二十九才極月国周寫 (‘Age twenty-nine, last month of the year, drawn by Kunichika’), respectively (see figs. 22, 23).

But Kunichika goes further in validating his position by allying himself and entering into a play of one-upmanship with another great print designer—Katsushika Hokusai—who by this time was very much venerated inside and outside Japan. In the interview Kunichika employs the term anibun (‘sworn elder brother’) to describe himself when he asserts ‘so as far as moving goes I have one up on Hokusai’. This comparison is not lost on the press of the period that appears then, as now, fascinated by the intimate details of people’s private lives, in this case an aspect already broadcast seven years earlier in a Yomiuri article from 8 May 1891:

Although it is recorded that Hokusai—rightly known as the ‘great art master of the recent past’ (中古の聖) —enjoyed moving (iten-zuki) and during his lifetime moved over one hundred times, it seems that today’s Kunichika also likes moving a great deal. He has already moved house eighty-five times, which means that he will no doubt move over 140 to 150 times. 22

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21 Kuchimane is a reference to a type of kyōgen entertainment, most visibly seen in characters such as Tarō Kaja. The expression ‘kage o fumazu’ is thought to have Buddhist origins. The entire text of this shini-e is transcribed on http://yajifun.tumblr.com/post/82692867845/memorial-portrait-of-the-artist-utagawa-kunisada.

22 ‘Gakō wa sōjite hikkoshi zuki ka’ (‘Do print designers as a rule like to move?’), 3.
Kunichika’s ‘moving sickness’ (iten byō)—so aptly employed in a later Yomiuri headline from 6 April 1896—becomes a leitmotif in the description of the artist, as though his peripatetic lifestyle was a matter of singular pride and celebrity. The underlying motivation appears to be much less romantic:

The artist Toyohara Kunichika, the ‘eldest son’ of the Utagawa school and reputed for his fickle nature, has moved at most during the course of a year an absurd seventy times within a month. Hokusai, also well known for being a ‘person on the move’ (itenka), is said to have shifted over eighty-two times, but Kunichika has already moved eighty-two times six years ago. To date he moved over one hundred times and this time it had to do with tax registration, since with each move taxes must be declared. He [Kunichika] was quite annoyed since he did not know that he had later to pay 10 yen.23

Inevitably he is compared with Hokusai, but his connection to the Utagawa school is commonly alluded to, as seen in the form in the above article, or in more deferential descriptions such as ‘Utagawa ha no tōryō to aogaretaru Toyohara Kunichika’ (‘Toyohara Kunichika, respected as a pillar of the Utagawa school’), in a Yomiuri article from 14 May 1892:

Lately is the news that Toyohara Kunichika, understood as revered leader [pillar] of the Utagawa school, always tires of his residence and drifts everywhere. His current Mukōjima residence marks his one hundredth [move] and even surpasses the old master Hokusai.24

This link to the Utagawa school and other prestigious members places Kunichika firmly within the tradition he represents with pride. His penchant for the unpredictable, especially as relates to his living circumstances, is similarly noted earlier in another Yomiuri article of 27 July 1891 entitled ‘Toyohara Kunichika has suddenly upped sticks, his whereabouts unknown’. The reporter is careful to point out that Kunichika is revered alongside his contemporary, the equally talented Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, who was to die some eleven months later in June 1892. This mention further establishes Kunichika’s connection with the Utagawa school stable:

The master Toyohara Kunichika—a fully eccentric figure—is seen one of the two ‘pillars’ of ukiyo-e masters along with Yoshitoshi; [he] has moved eighty-seven times over a period of more than fifty years. In actual fact, it seems that no one knows where he is. While at his eighty-fifth residence in Asakusa Kojima-chō, the student most faithful to Master Kunichika was Toyama Chikamasa (外山周政). He [Kunichika] was to locate temporarily to Kanasugi-mura in Shitaya just as he was about to move to Fuyuki-chō in Fukagawa, but a few days beforehand and for whatever reason, he hurriedly packed his bags and left his household belongings to Chikamasa. Saying he

was going on a trip and that Chikamasa must not worry, he then left abruptly. It is not known where he has gone.\textsuperscript{25}

The bold manner in which Kunichika carves out and attempts to establish his standing is not surprising. By 1898, when the interview took place, Kunichika was at the end of a long career stretching some fifty years, one that coincided with the final years of the bakufu capital of Edo and the birth of the imperial capital of a ‘modern’ Tokyo. The major nishiki-e artists of his generation were already gone: Utagawa Yoshitora 歌川芳虎 (act. 1850–80), Gountei Sadahide 五雲亭貞秀 (1807–73), Kawanabe Kyōsai, and Tsukioka Yoshitoshi. Longevity, alongside training, talent, and sustained effort, had elevated Kunichika to a privileged place, a primus inter pares among nishiki-e masters. This was especially relevant at a time when the viability of the colour woodblock print as a reprographic medium for portraiture and images of popular culture (e.g. kabuki actors, Yoshiwara courtesans, famous views) was being challenged by newer technologies such as photography and lithography (see Chapter Four).

His obituarist Iijima Kyoshin describes him as such:

\begin{quote}
. . . one of the great artists of early modern ukiyo-e, as evinced by past praises. Alas, the death of Kunichika is indeed lamentable . . . Kunichika appeared carefree, with a straightforward character, he wholeheartedly guarded his teacher’s style, took little notice of others, had great gusto and so forth. He had a great taste for sake, and when he was drunk, he would hum and dance, absorbed, just like a child. He always struggled with the family finances; he often participated in shogakai and these profitable events ran for a few days. Also, he often toured the region of Shin’etsu,\textsuperscript{26} and without fail on his return home was out of pocket. He had a taste for moving, living in Shitaya, Asakusa, Kanda, and Honjo; it is not known how many times he moved. Today he lives in Honjo. Some say that he lived in one place roughly three years, though as might be expected, he had not moved recently before the lead up to his death. He had a number of pupils, but Chikashige, Chikaharu, and others have already passed away; the remaining student Yōshū Chikanobu is well known and the Kyoto master Utagawa Kunimatsu also studied with Kunichika.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

The precise meaning behind Iijima’s statement ‘as evinced by past praises’ is not elaborated upon but it would appear that Iijima, himself a scholar and collector of woodblock prints, was a qualified voice in his assessment of the artist. It is perhaps telling that he characterises Kunichika as one of ‘great artists of early-modern ukiyo-e’ (kinsei ukiyo-e), and not Meiji nishiki-e. Certainly by the Meiji era, Kunichika, as one of the last surviving print designers and yakusha-e specialists to have trained in the bakumatsu period, would have been free to fashion relatively unchallenged his own ‘self-myth’: ‘artists who have long lives have

\textsuperscript{25} ‘Toyohara Kunichika hyōzen satte yuku tokoro o shirazu’ (‘Toyohara Kunichika has suddenly upped sticks, his whereabouts unknown’), 3.

\textsuperscript{26} A reference to the areas of Shinano (modern-day Nagano Prefecture) and Echigo (modern Niigata Prefecture).

\textsuperscript{27} Kyokugai Kanjin, ‘Ko Toyohara Kunichika no seikō’, 4.
more chances to enhance their reputations. Rivals in the field of Meiji yakusha were his own students, Yōshū Chikanobu 楊州周延 (1838–1912), Morikawa Chikashige 守川周重 (act. 1860s–early 1880s) (fig. 24), Toyohara Chikaharu 豊原周奉 (1848–before 1900?), and Toyohara Chikayoshi 豊原周義 (act. late 1870s–before 1900) (see students Appendix II). Others hail from the Utagawa school, print designers such as fellow Kunisada student, Kunimas (Baidō Hōsai) (fig. 25) and Kunimas’s student Kokunimasa 小国政, Tsukioka Yoshitoshi and his student Migita Toshihide. Artists active in the field from other lineages include Adachi Ginkō and the Torii school artists Kiyosada 清貞 (1844–1901), Kiyomitsu, and somewhat later Kiyotada IV 清忠 (1875–1941) in Tokyo, and Issen Reisan 一川礼山 in Osaka. As noted by Iijima, Chikashige predeceased his teacher and Chikanobu, although initially interested in kabuki theatre, would later focus on the depiction of women. As already mentioned above, Baidō Hōsai is the subject of the following segment in the Yomiuri ‘Meiji no Edokko’ series after Kunichika. Tentative research results by this author suggest that Hōsai’s actor print output was certainly not as prodigious as Kunichika’s, even though the Yomiuri shinbun interview with Hōsai comprises sixteen segments, compared to the four allocated Kunichika (see Chapter Three). It is intimated that Kunichika felt it was Hōsai’s pupil Kokunimasa and not Hōsai who would be more capable to assume the mantle of the Utagawa school after his death, an indication that Kunichika knew both men personally:

Kokunimasa, known as an eccentric (kijin) of the Utagawa school, is a pupil of Baidō Hōsai and has released hundreds of Sino-Japanese War prints. Even the renowned master Toyohara Kunichika believes that after his death the mantle of the Utagawa school should be placed on Kokunimasa…

The virtual absence of the interviewer’s (extradiegetic) voice throughout the interview imbues us with the sense that Kunichika has become the narrator of his own history, himself becoming the extradiegetic narrator, and thus able to influence the making of his own self-image through personal recollections. In effect, the interviews work on two temporal planes: a ‘real present’ in the actual first-hand recounting of events and a ‘real past’ in which Kunichika as narrator interlaces dialogue that reconstructs events in his life.

Kunichika’s cultural identity: a paradigmatic Edokko inhabiting Meiji?

The narrativity of self-image expressed in the Kunichika interviews is reinforced by the context of the anecdotes themselves. At first glance, they appear disparate, presented as

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28 Halbwachs (Coser), On collective memory, introduction, 31.
29 ‘Gaka Kokunimasa no kiheki’ 畫家小國政の奇癖 (‘Strange habits of the artist Kokunimasa’), Yomiuri shinbun (7 April 1896), 3.
30 Taken from Lamarque, ‘Narrative and invention’, 133.
‘chronicles’, processes from ‘unprocessed historical records’, to borrow the words of philosopher Hayden White.\(^{31}\) However, when read together they render more comprehensible a record that can be understood as an individual weaving together his life’s experiences. In a broader sense, they act as a narrative of a cultural history for an audience—here, it is a Meiji-era newspaper readership of which many may not have experienced Japan under the Tokugawa shogunate. Seen as a whole, therefore, the sequence of stories become a symbolic narrative of Kunichika’s life; the factual accuracy of the story-lines assumes secondary significance as we shall see in greater detail below and in Chapter Two. The interviews formulate a picture of how Kunichika wished to be perceived within his own cultural sphere, as a representative of a sphere of popular culture corresponding with the later Edo period when he was trained and his artistic persona cast, and as a willing participant and member of the coteries of authors, poets, raconteurs, and artists who likewise belonged to this milieu. Kunichika intimates that he is a true ‘Edokko’ by stressing that he is the third generation of the family to reside in the city; more specifically, he refers to himself as a Kyōbashikko (‘child of Kyōbashi’) and as hailing from a working-class background:

I’m a total eccentric. This is from my old man; it’s unusual for sure. I don’t know what my grandfather called himself, but he was a carpenter in Yushima. . . . So, my dad—his name was Ōshima Kujū—was the owner of a house in Sanjikkenbori 7-chōme, in the Kyōbashi district. My mom, Oyae, was the daughter of the teahouse proprietor Arakawa Sannōjō. I was born in the Sanjikkenbori house . . . [and] this makes me a child of the ‘low city’ area of Kyōbashi—a Kyōbashikko.

Kunichika’s birth in 1835 and his childhood and apprenticeship as a nishiki-e artist under Kunisada from the late 1840s until the latter’s death in 1864[1865] coincided with the closing years of the Edo period. The urban culture of Edo informed his art and contributed to his life-long identification of himself as an Edokko. This is suggested in the reporter’s prefatory remarks, as well as in Kunichika’s own definition of himself as a child of the Kyōbashi, the area that merged to the north with Nihonbashi and spanned south of the Kyōbashi, or ‘Capital Bridge’, from which it derived its name. It was part of the ‘low city’ or ‘downtown’ (shitamachi 下町; literally, ‘town below’ Edo castle), that quarter of the city between the Tokugawa shogun’s castle (during the Meiji, the emperor’s residence) to the west and the Sumida River on the bay to the east.\(^{32}\)

Constituting around one-eighth of the city’s total area, the bustling, densely populated shitamachi was principally inhabited by merchants, labourers, craftsmen, and artists that were

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\(^{31}\) White, Metahistory, 5.

\(^{32}\) Before the Meiji era, the shitamachi was viewed as the thin strip situated along the east bank of the Sumida River; with the advent of the Meiji, however, the Nihonbashi, Kyōbashi, Kanda, and Shiba Wards covered this area within the fifteen wards.
collectively known as the chōnin 町人, or ‘townspeople’. The chōnin were the agents of
Edo’s urban cultural life, shaping the ‘aesthetic of the metropolis’ and the shitamachi was the
ideological and cultural heartland of the Edokko.33 And it is the shitamachi that comes to play
the principal role in the birth of ukiyo-e prints, paintings, and books, and provides the
backdrop to Kunichika’s own artistic training.

The shitamachi stood in stark contrast to the yamanote 山の手 (uptown, or ‘upland’) situated among the verdant setting of the Musashino hills. It comprised approximately two-thirds of the city’s area and was the location of the Tokugawa’s castle, the residences of the daimyo and minor retainers. The Englishman Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809–97) delights in the area, writing in 1863:

. . . even in the city, especially along the ramparts of the official quarter, and in many roads and avenues leading thence to the country, broad green slopes, and temple gardens, or well-timbered parks gladden the eye, as it is nowhere else gladdened within the circle of the city.34

By contrast, Alcock’s view of the shitamachi was quite different:

On crossing the bridge, we traverse one of the most densely populated of the commercial quarters, through which, indeed, we can only ride slowly, and in single file, amidst pedestrians and porters with their loads. Bullock-cars, Norimons [norimono, palanquins], and kangos [kago] are all here, jostling each other in contending currents . . . As we emerge from this defile, we pass through a long line of booths, where a sort of daily bazaar is held for the sale of gaudily-coloured prints, maps (many of them copies of European charts), story-books, swords, tobacco pouches, and pipes, for the humbler classes. . . 35

What would become the city of Edo was originally a small, isolated, yet strategically situated, fortress town on the headland of the Musashino plateau, almost five hundred kilometres east of the historical capital of Kyoto. This fortress town, once the site of a castle, was awarded to the feudal lord Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), who in the early 1600s orchestrated a reunification of Japan under a military regime following a tumultuous century of internecine war. Ieyasu successfully established the primogenitive practice that would secure the hereditary Tokugawa right to the title of shogun (sei i tai shōgun 征夷大将軍), or supreme commander of Japan’s military. The era of relative Pax Tokugawa that endured until the Meiji ishin was cemented by Ieyasu and his heirs through a politically astute system of ‘manipulating daimyo, managing the imperial court [in Kyoto], controlling foreign relations, and sacralizing the Tokugawa legacy’.36 Under Tokugawa rule, daimyo were subject to absolute control by the shogunate, administered through regulations that required them to

33 Nishiyama, Edo culture, 55.
35 Ibid., 113.
adhere to a system of alternate attendance (*sankin kōtai* 参勤交代), whereby they were obliged to reside part of the year or longer in Edo and part on their lands, leaving their families behind in the capital. The expense of having to keep multiple residences weakened and thus ensured acquiescence on the part of these vassal lords.

With establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in the early seventeenth century, the country’s economic, political, and eventually cultural landscape would shift away from the old imperial capital of Kyoto to the new shogunal seat. The fledgling *de facto* ‘Eastern capital’, or Tōto, as Edo also came to be called, witnessed unprecedented land development. Areas were excavated and drained, land reclaimed, a system of sinuous canals and quays constructed, all enveloping the surrounding bluffs and continuing to the sea. The city was the paradigm of the new shogunal authority, not least of which was embodied in Edo castle’s domination of the city, whose spatial structure underscored the political and hierarchical social configurations set into place by the shogunate. The shogunate envisioned a social order that was modelled along Confucian lines and today current scholarship suggests that the country’s populace was grouped into samurai (*士* shi), rural (farmer) (*百姓* hyakushō, which comprised artisans if they lived in the country and not limited to farmers) and townspeople (*町人* chōnin, which comprised artisans if they lived in cities). Not included were Buddhist/Shinto priests, court nobles (*kuge*), and the ‘outsiders’ *eta* and *hinin*. This social structure was resonant in the city’s evolution, and in the formation of the *shitamachi* and the *yamanote*.

The trajectory of this urban growth suggests that the demographics of Edo during the seventeenth century were overwhelmingly male and thus the urban environment catered to their needs and desires: ‘In the fledgling town of Edo’, the verse went, ‘brothels brim with beauties . . . and at night, they switch men. . .’37 The city, was, to borrow the words of scholar Kobayashi Tadashi, an ‘unnaturally male-dominated, brutish sort of town’, one that would have been considerably less conventional and staid than an established urban centre like Kyoto.38 It was also a city coloured by the mix of newcomers from around the country who would have spoken their own provincial dialects. It would not be until the later eighteenth century that a uniform sense of ‘Edo’ urban identity would be articulated. At this time, the image of the endearing, but boisterous, Edoite was encapsulated in terms like *Edo umare* 江

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37 From Santō Kyōden’s *Kokei sanshō* 古契三娼, translated by Robert Campbell as *Three madames and their dirty tale*, in vol. 10 of *An episodic festschrift for Howard Hibbett* (Hollywood: Highmoonoon, 2002).
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戸生まれ，Edojin 江戸人，and Edomonon江戸者。39 The later term ‘Edokko’ 江戸っ子 (兒) is thought to have been first articulated in a senryū verse from 1771: Edokko no / waranji o haku / rangashisa 江戸っ子のわらんじをはくらんがしさ。40 In essence, the verse tells us that the Edokko is so impatient that his has no time to tie even his straw sandals, the noisy flapping of his sandals announcing his arrival. Hints at the Edokko character surface in another verse—Edokko no / umare sokonai / kane o mochi 江戸っ子の生そこない金をもち (Only one not born as an Edokko has money)—that Kunichika adapts in his interview (see Chapter Two)。41

As Edokko, which in its broadest definition refers to those whose families had lived in the capital for several generations, these residents identified deeply with their city and took pride in their unique place in the urban landscape of the Edo period。42 An immediate Western analogy might be the literal definition in the public imagination of the Londoner ‘Cockney’ who was born within earshot of the ‘Bow Bells’. The popular writer and man-about-town Santō Kyōden (1761–1816) described the Edokko as someone who is, among other things, neither attached to money nor stingy, differs from country bumpkins (yabo) and has refinement (iki), and strength of character (hari)—‘a straightforward, coolly gallant manner that resisted all compromise, conciliation, and undue social adroitness or tact’。43 As will be demonstrated in this thesis, Kunichika fully identified with and embraced this image.

At the bottom of the social ladder during the Edo period, the Edokko townspeople were forced to create a livelihood based on their own ingenuity and pluck. The proportion of townspeople expanded over the course of the Edo period, and with the gradual growth of a cash-based economy many became increasingly wealthy compared to the economically disadvantaged samurai whose stipends were paid in rice not cash. It is not surprising that these continuously more literate chōnin began to shape the prosperous urban cultural milieu that enveloped them—the theatre and the red-light districts—spawning dramatic forms like

40 From Karai Senryū 村井川柳, Senryū hyō mauawase 川柳評万句合 (Meiwa 2, 明和 2 年 1～梅 4) (Tokyo: Ko Sennyū Kenkyūkai, 1987).
41 From Yamazawa, comp., Haifū Yanagidaru 謝風柳多留 (Poems of the willow barrel), vol. 2, 112. A notation following the poem indicates that it was recorded (or composed) in An’ei 2 (1773) and originally appears in Goryōken Arubeshi 呉陵軒可有, Haifū Yanagidaru, 1765, published serially until 1840. Also Haga, Edo no utsuri kawari, vol. 3, 176–77, and Nishiyama, ‘Edokko no bunken’, 31.
42 It should be noted that the nuance of the term Edokko changed over time: during the Tenmei era (1781–1789) the term Edokko referred to high and middle-ranked merchants (shōnin) born in the Nihonbashī area. By the Kansei era (1789–1801) it included lesser merchants and tradesmen born in Edo and thereafter the Edokko was characterised by his/her frank character; see Nakamura, Okami, and Sakakura, Kadokawa kogo daijiten, vol. 1, 501.
the *aragoto* 荒事 (‘rough stuff’) style of kabuki acting, literary forms like *kyōka* 狂歌 and *senryū* 川柳 poetry, *gesaku* 載作 literature, and visual modes like *ukiyo-e*. Soon ‘Edo envisioned itself, and was increasingly coming to be envisioned by others, as *the* cultural center to be emulated’. 44

Aspects of ‘Edokko-ness’ were instilled in characters like Kunichika whose personality was subsumed by the construct of the *Edokko*. It informed his artistic identity and became essential to his self-making narrative, which was defined by how he related to others and the cultural realm he inhabited: ‘we gain the self-told narratives that make and remake our selves from the culture in which we live . . . we are virtually from the start expressions of the culture in which we live’. 45 To be an *Edokko*, or more particularly in Kunichika’s case a *Kyōbashikko*, set him apart from other non-native inhabitants in the city. 46 His prints—*Azuma nishiki-e* (full-colour prints of the ‘East’ or Edo)—reinforce this cultural identity, make sense of his own place in Meiji Japan, and can be seen to reconcile the cultural diaspora he certainly experienced by clinging to the past.

The use of Kunichika’s colourful language to recount urban tales conveys a bravura that reifies the spirited *Edokko* character as described over a century earlier by Kyōden. For example, Kunichika rallies against a *shinzō* (courtesan’s attendant) when he believes she takes him for a country bumpkin, or boor (*yabo*), only to gloat in her later realisation of his identity when she entreats him to sign his painting: ‘I was saying to myself, “so now you get it, you know who I am—you must have been surprised when you found that out!” Anyway, I felt a little vindicated . . .’ (*MNE* 22). The obstreperous pride of the *Edokko* character translates into Kunichika’s firm conviction not to be outdone by others, nor to compromise his own style or opinions, ‘I am . . . the type that really hates to lose’ (*MNE* 22).

In both his comportment and behaviour, Kunichika also projected a stubborn sort of fearlessness in his disregard for social convention, regardless of the consequences, and a pride in not being outdone by others or in compromising his own style or voicing his opinions. This is echoed in Iijima’s aforementioned obituarial text (‘It is difficult to think that a popular, famous artist would live in a place like this’), as well as descriptions in newspapers like ‘wearing an old summer kimono old man Kunichika . . .’ or in the interview itself. 47 On one occasion, for instance, he mentions receiving clothing (*MNE* 21). This self-confessed lack of

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44 Kern, *Manga*, 34.
46 It appears that by narrowing down his affiliation with the city even further, he is drawing distinct lines of cultural affiliation. This is likewise seen in other areas of the *shitamachi* like Kanda; see Matsumura Akira, ed., *Daijirin* 大辞林 (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 2006).
47 ‘Kunichika _ASCII:Kófuru_yukata_o_kite___’ (国周翁古浴衣を着て…), in ‘Mita_bakari_de_wa_wakaranu_mono’, *Yomiuri shinbun* (13 August 1891), 3.
interest in material wealth and financial gain is also remarked upon by Iijima, ‘He always struggled with household finances’. As might be imagined, this side of Kunichika’s character was sensational grist to the media mill. A number of newspaper items predating the 1898 Yomiuri interview give accounts of incidents that reinforce the artist’s dissolute image. In a Yomiuri article from 19 October 1892 regarding the painting commission for the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition it is observed that he had so little money that he could not even afford to buy the materials to produce the piece.\(^{49}\)

In the interview Kunichika shows little hesitation in boasting about his tattered finances. This is most vividly expressed in the third segment (MNE 22) when he recounts being swindled by the mountebank kagatobi (firefighter) Uta following Kunichika’s bankruptcy: ‘for whatever reason it [the bankruptcy] was the second time this happened to me’. The episode resulted in part from the artist’s lavish, but unsuccessful, attempt to outdo a party hosted by the kabuki actor Nakamura Tokizō (Karoku III, 1849–1919). Kunichika’s disdain of kabuki actors is clear when he adds ‘Gee, these actors put on airs like they are so important’. It ends with Kunichika being bailed out by a patron, who then writes a kyōka verse for him and adds ‘For whatever reason, Kunichika has come to appreciate what it is like to live freely, and I can really understand where he’s coming from’. Kunichika responds with a version of the tried-and-true Edokko maxim noted earlier:

> Somehow or another it was not a particularly impressive verse, but I was grateful that my debts had been paid off, so I took it, saying *Only one not born as an Edokko builds a storehouse* [author’s emphasis]. Because I flaunted my worldly desires, I made a mess of everything. I’m not saying I regret it, no, but being without money is a lot easier and, listen, even if there is no money, you will not go short of rice or sake.

It could be conjectured that Kunichika manipulated the rebellious Edokko image to explain his own personal failings, including those listed above and in particular his apparent alcohol dependency. Reports in newspapers decry the sobering effects of his excessive drinking, one describing him as being ‘dead drunk all night, openly having a taste for sake’ and that he was ‘poor as a church mouse’. In the same report his (estranged) daughter Hiroko is recorded in one report in the Yomiuri from 19 October 1892 as saying ‘Father’s taste for sake has really aged him’.\(^{50}\) His contemporary, the kabuki actor Onoe Matsusuke IV (1843–1928), observed that the artist often needed a drink by his side in order to work: ‘I thought, as

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\(^{49}\) ‘Kunichika-ō mata arawaru’, 3.

\(^{50}\) Ibid.: 父上の御酒癖殊には御老体の今日となって.
did others, that Kunichika’s appearance was very poor and he seemed to be someone who
could not possibly make his fortune’.  

Kunichika’s love of sake is another recurring theme in the interview, brandished as if
a badge of honour: ‘. . . since I had drunk too much I went upstairs to take a nap’ (MNE 21), or
‘I am really a great drinker’ (MNE 22), or ‘I drank from sunrise to sunset’ (MNE 23). In the
third segment (MNE 22) before Kunichika speaks about his career as a nigao-e artist we learn
from the reporter that ‘beaming with delight he sets his sake cup on a tray’. We can only
imagine that Kunichika’s disposable income was not necessarily spent on art materials or
material comfort, but rather on drink, as mooted in the Yomiuri report on the Chicago
commission. Despite what we imagine might be a difficult personality—alcoholic, rebellious,
outspoken, even at times anti-social, an Edokko infant terrible—Kunichika must still have
been respected enough and considered talented and affable enough to continue to receive
commissions. And it could be conjectured that his Edokko image and ‘art was a private
conversation to keep [him] sane’.  

Newspaper reports confirm that Kunichika was sought after for commissions, not only
by domestic patrons, but also for international exhibitions like the aforementioned 1893
World’s Columbian Exposition. That he was esteemed for his work is hinted at by the
mention of patrons in the interview. At one point he is treated to a night out in the Yoshiwara
licensed pleasure quarter by the big spenders Kaneko and Suda, ‘. . . wealthy men; the year
before they had commissioned work from me’ (MNE 22), at another moment he lives ‘at the
expense of someone named Takino’ (MNE 23) before going off to take the cure in Kusatsu
and landing a lucrative two hundred yen commission from a sake brewer in Iwatsuki, ‘I could
always anticipate about this much for a fee; I think that being in straitened circumstances is a
cowardly or spineless excuse’ (MNE 23).

While we cannot know with certainty, it seems very likely that Kunichika would have
been aware of the newspaper reports about him. In one sense he was already playing a type-
caste role to the Yomiuri readership—creating his own realm, inhabiting it imaginatively, and
remaining fully aware of his own unique position. Therefore the contrived, or ‘imagined’,
ideal of the Edokko, as embodied in Kunichika, his stories and the lively language that he uses
to tell them, additionally demonstrate that his narrative discourse is as much ‘performative as
it is constative’. His narrative gift of gab provides us access into a rich cultural milieu of the
late Edo and Meiji periods that would not be out of place on the raconteur’s stage. It is this
‘narrative gift that gives us access to culture’s treasury of stories’, to borrow the words of

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51 Cited in Kure, Toyohara Kunichika yakusha-e senshū, 3, and in Iwakiri, ‘Kindai no yakusha-e’, 35.
Account in Iwakiri originally published in Kunieda, Matsuake geidan.
52 Modified from Alex Miller, Lovesong (Allen & Unwin, 2009).
53 White, The content of form, 178–79.
Jerome Bruner. In the fourth instalment (MNE 23), for example, he spins an uproarious tale about his receipt of the commission during the aforementioned Kusatsu trip, which he describes as ‘a rain shower after a drought’, for a votive painting by the head of a sake brewery in Iwatsuki (see Chapter Two). But more than a straightforward chronicle of an artistic commission, which adds to our understanding of how Kunichika worked, the artist weaves into the story bouts of drinking, a fire and a raucous, drunken trip home to Tokyo during which time he manages to lose the cask of sake he had received before leaving the brewery.

Kunichika’s anecdotes serve on one level to reinforce his image as the paradigmatic Edokko; as entertaining narratives they entice the audience into believing the image on offer. However, they also unfurl another cultural layer of meaning through Kunichika’s association with other artists. What is striking regarding Kunichika’s accounts is the mix of people—artists, writers, wealthy merchants, and performers—and that he was connected to these figures based on his training/students (Chikanobu), fans, competition/friendship (Kyōsai), and patronage (Takino, Kaneko, Suda). It represented a form of ‘cultural capital’ (see Chapter Two for annotations). Kunichika needed patronage, he needed friends with like interests, he needed fans, and he needed good professional contacts, especially with publishers and kabuki actors. Such affiliations would have been crucial to his existence and his survival in a fiercely competitive urban and technologically shifting environment, and their appearance is therefore not surprising. But Kunichika’s name dropping of many celebrated icons of popular culture also connects him to a cultural fraternity that typified a generation trained in the late Edo, who came of age during the early Meiji and were now revered as masters in fields linked to ‘traditional’ Edo culture: kabuki, ukiyo-e, popular gesaku literature, and kyōka poetry.

His first-hand dealings with noted personalities provide an engaging narrative. Many of these celebrities were household names during the Meiji, men like the kabuki mega-stars Ichikawa Danjūrō IX and Onoe Kikugorō V, others like the nishiki-e artists Kyōsai, Chikanobu, Kuniteru, and Yoshitsuya or the popular writer Shinoda Senka. But this extensive network also locates Kunichika as an ‘insider’ member of this coterie, suggesting that he too should be viewed through the same lens: ‘much of self-making is from outside in—based on the apparent esteem of others and on the myriad expectations that we early, even mindlessly, pick up from the culture in which we are immersed. Narrative acts of self-making usually guided by implicit unspoken cultural models of what selfhood should and should not be’. Thus by allying himself with other figures he also nourishes, massages, and augments his own image. For example, he allies himself with Kyōsai ‘like with me, sake is not good for Kyōsai’.

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54 Bruner, Making stories, 100.
55 Ibid., 65.
during a scene at Kunichika’s house-warming when an inebriated Kyōsai begins to trash Kunichika’s house (MNE 21). He counters Kunichika’s plea, ‘Look, Kyōsai, you baldie, you’re doing a terrible thing, please stop’, by painting the artist’s face completely black. Kunichika’s student Chikanobu is also seduced into the fray, but eventually Kunichika and Kyōsai reconcile their differences. In other of his anecdotes, however, Kunichika’s affiliations assume a less than conciliatory tone, as in the most frequently cited of all the segments in the interview. This involved an incident regarding the actor Ichikawa Danjūrō IX, and the kerfuffle caused by Kunichika’s design of him with ‘bulging eyes’ as the character Oguri no Umakichi (MNE 23). Kunichika also states quite openly his opinion of this kabuki star.

A closer reading of this text reveals that the sequence of events does not match up (i.e. the images appear to have been published in reverse order; see Chapter Two for an analysis). The significance of the passage is thus not in the factual historical accuracy or ‘truth’ of the actual events. Rather, its ‘truth’ lies in what Paul Ricoeur refers to as ‘symbolic meaning’, since historical narrative—of which Kunichika’s interview is an example—takes as its subject events created by human actions. It does ‘much more than merely describe those events: it also imitates them, that is, performs the same kind of creative act as those performed by historical agents’. (In the interviews Kunichika becomes both the historical agent and the subject.) The symbolism in this passage signals several things: first, that Kunichika saw himself and wished to be seen as a nigao-e artist; secondly, that the rapport between Danjūrō, unquestionably the most powerful kabuki actor of the Meiji era, and Kunichika was an uneasy one. We know that despite their personal relationship the two men continued to work together. After all, Danjūrō does recognise that ‘It’s a given that all these print artists make actors rich by doing their portraits’. But, by setting himself against an actor of Danjūrō’s stature, Kunichika adds his own riposte, painting a portrait of himself as the quintessential Edokko, questioning authority. In doing so, he endows his own existence with further meaning and identity: ‘we nourish our identities by our connections yet insist that we are something more as well—ourselves’. This is seen clearly enough in his play of one-upmanship vis-à-vis Hokusai or even his teacher, when he attempts to assert himself as something more. The meaning of history (narrative) in his life becomes in effect the need to imbue his own life with meaning, establish his rightful place as an actor nigao-e artist, and in the process place himself symbolically within his own nishiki-e tradition.

56 Ricoeur explained in White, The content of form, 178.
57 Ibid., 178–79.
58 Bruner, Making stories, 100.
Kunichika adeptly creates his own narrative in the *Yomiuri* interview. He similarly images a form of self-narrative in his actor prints, and the actors he portrays become agents in this narrative (and represent his legacy) as they too are effecting their own narratives.
CHAPTER TWO

Establishing memory: the Kunichika ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interviews—an annotated biography

*Historical narratives without analysis are empty, while historical analyses without narrative are blind*
Hayden White, *The content of form*, 5

> So, to his story then. I soon began to realise that it was, in its way, a confession. But isn’t that what all stories are? Confessions? Aren’t we compelled to tell our stories by our craving for absolution?
Alex Miller, *Lovesong*, 2009

The October *MNE* segments move from Kunichika’s childhood and training to anecdotal snippets from his life as an artist. They are crucial in constructing an image of the artist that I argue was one he himself wished to convey and wished to be remembered by. Any discussion of Kunichika therefore must include a closer reading, annotation, and contextualisation of these instalments in order to (re-)create a more precise picture of the cultural (*Edokko*/*Meiji*/nostalgic) milieu that he inhabited.¹ Factually, they do not always bear up to closer scrutiny, and at times we are left with little sense of the chronology of the stories.² However, the most intriguing aspect of Kunichika’s anecdotes lie not so much in the exactness of the story-lines, in his skill as a storyteller, or in even chronological precision, but in the personalities of those involved. These, in turn, reveal much about Kunichika’s own personality. Equally significant they tell us something of the art, theatre, and literary spheres that he frequented. Only by delving further into the personalities mentioned, other contemporary accounts, and the prints themselves can we construct something of a reliable representation of events. And, as discussed in the previous chapter, the interviews show that he was fabricating his own myth of self by projecting a character that bespoke the stereotypical sharp-tongued, outspoken *Edokko*.

¹ The various segments of the *MNE* were discovered by scrolling through microfiches at the NDL, Tokyo; today they are available in English based on this author’s translation of them (and often on the internet without permission). At the time of this writing, the interviews could not be located on the *Yomiuri* database without a manual search (i.e. not a digital search).
² More recent writers like Hagiwara Osamu have attempted to order the interview episodes chronologically. Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p. Japanese scholars have subsequently drawn from this without question. Mukai, ‘Meiji jinbutsu’, 385–86, asserts, as I have, that there were a number of errors by the transcribers of the *Yomiuri shinbun* or by the artist himself.
Continuing the legacy of Utagawa Toyokuni, Toyohara Kunichika has become a star of nigao-e masters. His common name (tsūshō) is Arakawa Yasohachi. This year he is sixty-four. A third generation Edokko, he is an interesting character. While his life-long career has been as brilliant as that of ‘brocade pictures of the East’ (Azuma nishiki-e), he leads a transient life (ukiyo) with an extreme lack of concern for money. He now resides in a corner of Honjo’s Omote-chō, and it would appear with little money. His home is situated on the northern side of Kumagai Inari-higashi 2-chōme; he occupies the middle of a terraced house. There is a newly cleaned lattice upon which is hung a nameplate and letterbox. Across from a shoe rack measuring about 1 ken 3 jaku [2.75m] is a dirty space the size of a single tatami; it is furnished with a long unsightly hibachi and also with a decorated Buddhist altar. The humble interior, the size of two tatami mats, is cluttered with a desk. It is difficult to think that a popular, famous artist would live in a place like this. At first, it was strange to realise that this is the residence of a great artist. . . Looking around with a penetrating gaze and stroking his white beard—just six or seven sun [18 or 2 cm] long—he talks about the heyday of the Edokko.

The reporter remarks on the bleakness of Kunichika’s living quarters, and Kunichika’s impoverished circumstances are intimated throughout the interviews, despite his obvious success as a print designer. This could be blamed on his clearly spendthrift nature and perhaps too in keeping with the Edokko image he wished to promote as someone unconcerned with material wealth. The artist lived in the Honjo district (present-day Sumida Ward) in a munewarinagaya, a type of terraced or partitioned tenement house that he presumably rented. In the late Edo period, the Honjo was a mixture of plebeian areas and aristocratic enclaves. But by the late nineteenth century, when Kunichika’s interview was recorded, the face of Honjo was fast changing. The shabbiness of Kunichika’s residence was mirrored in the ambience of the quarter as a whole, as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927) reminisces in an essay written after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923:

In the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth, Honjo was not the region of factories that it is today. It was full of stragglers, worn out by two centuries of Edo. There was nothing resembling the great rows of mercantile establishments one sees in Nihonbashi and Kyōbashi. In search of an even moderately busy district, one went to the far south of the ward, the approaches to the Ryōgoku Bridge. . .

Following the reporter’s poignant introduction, Kunichika begins his own narrative:

I’m a total eccentric. This is from my old man: it’s unusual for sure. I don’t know what my grandfather called himself, but he was a carpenter in Yushima.³ He was a follower

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³ Writing fifteen years after Kunichika’s death, Sōitsurō notes in ‘Ukiyo-e shi sōboroku’, 27, that Kunichika died at a temporary residence in Yoshiwara Dote-shita in 1900. This suggests that he moved from Honjo, his residence at the time of this interview.
⁴ Seidensticker, Low city, high city, 216.
⁵ The text here clearly states that his grandfather (he uses the term ‘jijii’) was the carpenter; other writers state that Kunichika was the second son of the Yushima carpenter Ōshima Kujūrō. A slight
of the Ikkō sect so his grave is at the Honryū Temple in Imado [present-day Taitō Ward]. My mum wanted us to have a good upbringing, though; my dad worked and was a life-long follower of the Hokke sect. That makes me a mix of Hokke and Ikkō. So, my dad—his name was Ōshīma Kujū—was the owner of a house in Sanjikkenbori 7-chōme, Kyōbashi district. My mum, Oyao, was the daughter of the teahouse proprietor Arakawa Sannojō. I was born in the Sanjikkenbori house . . . this makes me a child of the shitamachi area of Kyōbashi—a Kyōbashikko. (fig. 26a–d)

Kunichika continues:

I am a little shy about having to talk about this and I myself don’t understand it, but because my dad had a kappa tattooed on the back of his thigh pointing upwards towards his backside, he was known as ‘Kappa no Kujū’—boy, he was totally unsuited to be the head of the household, yet he cut a really dashing figure. Well, when my mum was young she fell for my dad at first sight; it goes without saying that they set up house together. I was the second son; my elder brother was named Chōkichi. Since my dad was called Kujū and my mum Oyao, I was given the name Yasohachi and the reason why I had the name Arakawa Yasohachi—my dad’s name being Ōshīma—is quite odd really. When I was thirteen or fourteen years old there existed the practice of myōji gomen; at that time my elder brother was named Ōshīma, a name which he didn’t like because it didn’t have much pull socially, so we decided to take on the name Arakawa from my mum’s own family. The entire family then became known as Arakawa. Well, from then on it was changed in any case, so I am not your average bloke.

Kunichika’s recollection of his father and mother’s meeting suggests that theirs was not an arranged marriage—his mother seemingly infatuated by his father’s otokodate-like tattooed appearance—and that his own name ‘Yasohachi’ (八十八, ‘Eighty-eight’) was derived from his father’s name ‘Kujū’ (九十, ‘ninety’) and his mother’s ‘Oyao’ (お八十, ‘eight/one hundred’).

variation is also Ōsōttsūrō’s claim that Kunichika was the second son of the bath-house proprietor. Ōshīmaya of Kyōbashi Gorōbei-chō; Ōsōttsūrō, ‘Ukiyo-e shōboroku’, 25. Gorōbei-chō is relatively close to the Sanjikkenbori area that Kunichika mentions. A reference to his father would be more logical; it could be that the characters in the article for jijii (祖父) was the interviewer’s misinterpretation and should read jijii (爺, ‘old man’).

6 While the characters in the text would be read Ikkō-shū 一向宗, the gloss indicates ‘Monto’, a reference to the Ikkō sect of the esoteric True Pure Land Buddhist tradition, Jōdō Shinshū, a small antinomian sect founded by Ikkō Shunshō (1239?–87?). Ōsōttsūrō, ‘Ukiyo-e shōboroku’, 27, writes that the sect is more specifically known as the Shinshū Ōtani branch of the Honryū Temple in Imado; he notes that he visited the original grave in 1915, which he describes as unkempt. Ōsōttsūrō includes a sketch of the gravestone having the Ōshīmaya name inscribed along the base (fig. 26d). Kunichika’s posthumous Buddhist name ‘Ōun’in shaku Kunichika koji’ does not appear on this stone, but he claims that Kunichika’s student, the hagoita mensōgaki Yukawa Chikamaru, had a grave marker erected next to the main temple hall on the anniversary of his death. Kunichika’s grave/grave marker was apparently destroyed in the Kantō earthquake; today there is a grave marker inscribed on the base with ‘Yashima itchōme Ōshīmaya Ihei’. Kure, Toyohara Kunichika yakusha-e senshū, 14, reports that the priest of the temple explained that a family gravestone had dated back to 1694, listing sixteen family members. Okamoto, ‘Tsutaerata Kunichika no shōzō’, 44, states that Ōsōttsūrō is Saitō Shōsendō 齊藤松扇堂 and that the surviving family reportedly had a new memorial marker erected in 1974 with Kunichika’s jisei.

7 The Hokke-shū 法華宗 is a sect of Nichiren Buddhism founded by the monk Nichiren (1222–82).
Kunichika describes Kujū as being a ‘house-owner’ (*ienushi*), and his mother the daughter of what appears to have been a middle-class merchant family named Arakawa who were teahouse (*sukiya*) proprietors. Kunichika admits that his early life was relatively comfortable. The fact that his father was characterised as a ‘house-owner’ and that his mother belonged to mercantile family owning their own business may explain why the family was able to change their surname under the practice of *myōji taitō gomen* 苗字帯刀御免, whereby farmers, small-scale landowners/country samurai, and townspeople of good lineage or of respectable social standing were permitted to use a surname and carry a sword. For whatever reason, Kunichika’s elder brother Chōkichi felt his mother’s family name, Arakawa, wielded more social clout than Ōshima. This in itself is a little unusual; nevertheless, the name ‘Arakawa Yasohachi’ is seen on prints after 1875 when censorship responsibilities were transferred to the Home Ministry and government regulations required that publishers list their full names and addresses. Further investigation is needed into Meiji prints to understand whether artists were likewise obligated by law to include their family names and addresses.

Kunichika remembers his father as cutting a dashing figure, with the image of a *kappa* tattooed on his thigh pointing towards his backside. A creature from folk legend, the *kappa* (also *kawatarō* or *suiko*) was a water spectre measuring some 20 centimetres to over a metre tall, and distinguished by the cup-like depression in its head encircled by hair and containing fluid that, when drained, robbed the creature of its power. *Kappa* were known to take humans and animals in the water. That the *kappa* stole a human’s *shirikodama* (‘arse jewel’)—perhaps evolving from the fact that drowned victims had distended anuses—might be why Kunichika’s father opted for the location of the tattoo that he did. It could also be that it was related to the sensational incident described by Miyatake Gaikotsu (1867–1955) in his *Omoshiro hanbun* (Half in jest) when, during the Bunsei era (1818–30), a woman stripped naked before the Daimaruya dry goods store to try on new clothes. To the bystanders’ surprise, she was generously tattooed, the most striking motif a *kappa* on her thigh pointing towards her backside.

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8 According to Leupp, *Servants, shophands, and laborers*, 148: ‘in most urban wards, house-owners (*ienushi*) or caretakers (*yamori*) in their employ constituted 10 to 30 percent of all registered households.’

9 Before the ninth month of 1875, publishers requested permission from local *nanushi*, and not the central Home Office. Publishers were obliged to list the sale price on a print, demonstrating that many publishers kept prices low, perhaps to recoup investment by selling in large quantities. It must be pointed out that many prints after 1875 were published without censor seals or with ‘falsified’ date seals (i.e. predating 1875), perhaps due to the inconvenience of requesting permission from the Home Ministry and that publishers felt that publishing with falsified date seals was relatively low risk. It should be noted that preliminary investigations reveal that Kunichika listed his name ‘Arakawa Yasohachi’ and address on prints from 1875 to around 1886.
It could also have been that Kujū’s choice of design and location was inspired by this comical local tale. The tattoo of the water-associative kappa does not seem out of place with Kujū’s responsibility as a bath-house owner. His tattooing would have secured him status within his own social group, ‘in response’, writes W.R. van Gulik, ‘to the understanding that those who were not tattooed, had no influence on others’, or in other words ‘could not cut much of a social figure in the world’ (haba ga kikanai). Kunichika uses the same turn of phrase, ‘haba ga kikanai’ 巾が利かない, when describing his brother’s feeling towards the Ōshima name. It is apparent that Kunichika felt that Kujū’s character was not commensurate with his social position—again explaining why his brother sought his mother’s name—and that his character was one that Kunichika blames for his own eccentricity. The interview continues:

From the history of his grandfather he gradually moves on to talking about his own life. . .

Well yeah, during my old man’s life things were good for us all; he opened a bath-house called Ōshiyā in [Nihonbashi] Tōri 3-chōme, but for whatever reason his heart wasn’t in it and because of that he turned over the business [to someone else]. My brother had an osheiya in Minami Tenma-chō in the Nihonbashi district and I thought I’d try my hand at oshi-e, so I became a student of Ichiyūsai Chikanobu, but once I had the basics down I became a student of Toyokuni III. Toyokuni II did the illustrations for the Inaka Genji; he was the one referred to as ‘the master Toyokuni’. I trained there for exactly seventeen years. I heard later that my teacher was also at the studio of Toyokuni I for seventeen years so I thought, ‘This was really quite bizarre’. But if I could just put that aside, [I’d like to mention] that I have moved 117 times until now since leaving my place of birth. I am not bragging, but during his lifetime Hokusai moved eighty times, so as far as moving goes I have one up on Hokusai.

In a series of articles from 1929 and 1930, Kojima Usui praised Kunichika as ‘the premier actor artist since Sharaku’ (see Bibliography under ‘Kojima Usui’). As mentioned in the Introduction, Kojima was the first author to examine Kunichika’s life and art in depth. His research informs the studies of Kunichika by subsequent writers, although interest in Kunichika had already surfaced in the aforementioned writings of Sōitsurō (1915) and Iijima Kyoshin (1894/1900), as well as the publications of Higuchi Niyō (Futaba [also seen as Higuchi Tsuginobu], 1863–1930) (1926), Ansei Rōnin (1929/1931), and somewhat later Inoue Kazuo (1933). Noteworthy in the work of these early scholars are the biographical details about Kunichika not included in his interviews. Their often unsubstantiated sources of information can at times create a conundrum for scholars in reliably recounting facts surrounding Kunichika’s life and artistic career.

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10 In Van Gulik, Irezumi, 76; originally in Miyatake (Haisei), Omoshiro han bun, 93.
11 Van Gulik, Irezumi, 57, is drawing from Morita, Irezumi, 117.
12 Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p., suggests this occurred in 1845.
Kojima writes that Kunichika was born on the fourth day of the sixth month of Tenpō 6 (1835) and that as a youth he worked at an itoya (thread/yarn store) called Yamagataya on Nihonbashi Tōri 2-chōme, a fact not included in the interviews.\(^{13}\) If such a store existed at this location, it would have been in close proximity to his father’s bath-house, Ōshūya, in the adjacent 3-chōme. However, Kojima states that the bath-house (he calls it Ōshimaya) is located in Kyōbashi Gorōbei-chō, some ten city blocks removed and across from the Kajiya Bridge.\(^{14}\)

Kojima provides the account that Yasohachi showed little interest in his work, preferring instead to produce doodles of actor heads: the claim that an artist ‘enjoyed drawing from an early age’ is well-hewn description used by Japanese writers and thus does not necessarily distinguish Kunichika. Kojima maintains, as do Sōitsūrō and Higuchi, that as a youth Kunichika became a student of the hagoita (battledore) master Chikaharu 近春 in Yokkaichi 四日市. Moreover, they state that during his apprenticeship to Chikaharu, Kunichika principally made designs for the hagoita shop Meirindō 明林堂 in Sukiyagashi, Kyōbashi. The Sukiyagashi area is further along from the Kyōbashi Gorōbei-chō and adjacent to the moat near the Sukiya Bridge, the next bridge after the Kajiya Bridge. An established hagoitaya (hagoita shop/producer), the Meirindō participated in the Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai (National Exposition for the Promotion of Industry) of 1877 and was among the first hagoitaya to export pieces.\(^{15}\)

While he does not allude to the Meirindō, Kunichika does include the intriguing aside that his elder brother Chōkichi ran an oshieya in Minami Tenma-chō. (Minami Tenma-chō was situated next to Nihonbashi Tōri 3-chōme.) He intimates that it was his brother’s business that led him to try his hand at oshi-e (raised padded designs) as a student of Ichiyūsai Chikanobu 一遊齋近信. When he explains that ‘I thought I’d try my hand at oshi-e’, he probably means that he was an oshi-e mensōgaki (押絵面相描き)—in other words, he produced the drawings (shita-e) of actors’ features that were used for oshi-e hagoita. Higuchi, in fact, declares that at this time Kunichika ‘progressed in mensōgaki’.\(^{16}\)

It is unfortunate that Kunichika reveals nothing further about Chikanobu’s identity or the whereabouts of his studio. Iijima identifies Chikanobu as the artist Kano Chikanobu 狩野親信 (1819–?),\(^{17}\) while Kojima claims that he was Ichiyūsai Chikanobu 一遊齋近信.

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\(^{13}\) His birth is variously given as the fourth or fifth day. The latter is today generally accepted.

\(^{14}\) Kojima, ‘Toyohara Kunichika hyōden’, 244.

\(^{15}\) Kobayashi Sumie writes that many Meirindō objects were exported to England and France, indicating the popularity of oshi-e with these audiences. Kobayashi, ‘Oshi-e no bi o saguru’, 7.

\(^{16}\) Higuchi, ‘Toyohara Kunichika’, 178.

\(^{17}\) Iijima, Ukiyo-e shi Utagawa retsuden, 297–98.
Kojima points out that one theory states that Kunichika entered Chikanobu’s studio when he was fifteen (fourteen) and that there he spent his time producing actor mensōgaki. This essentially tallies with Kunichika’s account. But it was at this time, too, that Kojima asserts that Kunichika took up the artist’s name ‘Katsunobu’ 勝信. Kunichika makes no reference to this name in the interview.

It seems most likely that Ichiyūsai Chikanobu was in fact the minor artist Toyohara Chikanobu 豊原(近)周信 (not to be confused with Kunichika’s pupil Chikaharu 周春), about whom nothing is known outside of his activity as a hagoita artist. Perhaps he was exclusively a mensōgaki, which might explain why data about him is so scant. It might also be conjectured that writers like Higuchi and Sōitsurō, who do not mention Chikanobu, assumed that Chikaharu and Chikanobu were the same artist, even though such suppositions are difficult to substantiate.

Chikanobu’s exact identity remains unresolved, as does the question of his role, if any, in Kunichika’s training; nevertheless, the stylistic and compositional influence of Kunichika’s formative training as an actor mensōgaki on his later yakusha-e should not be underestimated. The role that hagoita publishers and producers—Meirindō and others—had in promoting his efforts as a young inexperienced designer likewise merits further consideration. (Unfortunately, it is impossible to know if his brother facilitated an introduction to businesses like the Meirindō.) Higuchi Niyō comments that while designing oshi-e under Chikaharu, Kunichika:

. . . polished his skills using the tehon [manuals] of Kunisada, but that initially the tonya [publishers] patronised ‘Yaso-san’. . . It is not clear when Kunichika stopped producing ordinary hagoita; certainly as he became proficient in hagoita there was little satisfaction in doing them and he wanted to try his hand at the nigao-e that would have appeared in nishiki-e, but no matter how many hagoita he did, he could not create a name for himself. Sacrificing fee paying work and freeing himself from the tonya, he became a student of Kunisada.

Hagoita were traditionally given to girls at birth to ensure their good health and were sold during the twelfth month at the Sensō Temple, Asakusa, in Edo/Tokyo as a new year’s
game. The incorporation of the *hagoita* as a compositional frame in printed *ukiyo-e* actor portrait was already established by the Bunka/Bunsei eras (1804–30) in both Edo and Osaka. For instance, Utagawa Toyokuni I’s manual for the drawing of actors, *Quick instruction in the drawing of actor likenesses* (1817; see Chapter Four, fig. 62a–b) ends with twenty-four full-page portraits in a framed truncated *hagoita* format (twelve double-page spreads). (It would be tempting to think that perhaps this is the ‘*tehon*’ that Higuchi is referring to above and not in fact a *tehon* by Kunisada.) Kunichika’s teacher, Kunisada, produced *oshi-e hagoita* inspired prints in the c. 1823 set of ten *Fashionable oshi-e hagoita* (fig. 27), as did Kunisada’s contemporary Kuniyoshi in his slightly later set, *Oshi-e hagoita* (variously written おしゑ羽子板, おし絵はご板, おし絵葉古板, 押画はごいた, c. 1844–48). Iijima Kyoshin, who contributed Kunichika’s obituary for the *Yomiuri shinbun*, wrote a series of three articles on *hagoita* in the same newspaper on 9–11 January 1901 entitled ‘Thoughts on *hagoita*’. He advanced this art form as one worthy of historical study:

... *nishiki-e hagoita* made these days do have standardised sizes, and among these are very large sizes and these *nishiki-e* are mostly actor likenesses (*haiyū nigao*); even the patterns on the robes are quite beautiful... they are unwieldy and many are used as decoration inside the home and most standard *hagoita* are mostly *nishiki-e* of actor likenesses.

Actor *hagoita* were all the more striking when rendered as *oshi-e*. In his chronicle, *Morisada mankō* 守貞謫稿 (1837–53), Kitagawa Morisada remarks on the popularity of *oshi-e hagoita* at this time: ‘*hagoita* in Edo exclusively used paulownia wood... the backs are entirely given over to half-length portraits of actors. We also had *oshi-e* in Kyoto and Osaka from the time of my youth’. Köbayashi Sumie believes that the popularity of *oshi-e hagoita* in Meiji Tokyo was due to three factors: 1) the continuing popularity of kabuki in the Meiji era; 2) the appearance of accomplished print designers like Kunichika and Kunimasa (Baidō Hōsai) who produced drawings for them; and 3) the artistic tradition and appeal of *oshi-e* itself (fig. 28). In an examination of Kunichika’s prints, including his elaborate set of *hagoita* prints *Spring parody pictures, hagoita hits*, with extant *oshi-e hagoita* (fig. 29), Kusano Mizuho elaborates on Köbayashi’s second point and attempts to show that Kunichika’s influence on the design of *oshi-e hagoita* was considerable. Her argument is extremely compelling, but unfortunately *shita-e* by Kunichika that would directly corroborate

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22 Yamada Tokubei writes that by the Edo period *hagoita* were popular with the general public; initially ornamented with landscapes, birds and flowers, only later did the illustration of faces, including actors, become common. Yamada, *Hagoita*, 1–2; he has Kunichika as the head of a list of *hagoita* masters, n.p.  
23 Kyokugai Kanjin, ‘*Hagoita kō*’.  
this link have not been documented. Nevertheless, it underscores the need to delve further into the world of print designers like Kunichika and their involvement in other popular visual art forms like hagoita.

Kunichika states—and this is reiterated by Higuchi—that once he was proficient enough in oshi-e he entered the studio of ‘Toyokuni II’. This was the studio of Toyoshige (1777–1835), the son-in-law and pupil of Toyokuni I, who became titular head of the Utagawa school and succeeded to the name ‘Toyokuni II’ upon the death of the latter in 1825. Kunisada refused to acknowledge Toyoshige’s right to the name and proclaimed himself ‘Toyokuni II’ when he assumed the name in 1844, nine years after Toyoshige's death. The Inaka Genji that Kunichika refers to is the popular serialised novel Nise Murasaki inaka Genji 修紫田舍源氏 (A rustic Genji by a fraudulent Murasaki, 38 vols., 1829–42) by Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783–1843) and illustrated by Kunisada. (The name of Tanehiko’s student, Ryūtei Tanehiko II [1804–68], surfaces relating to an event early in Kunichika’s career; see below).

Shindō Shigeru conjectures that Kunichika, too, aspired to the ‘Toyokuni’ name, but since this proved impossible he opted for ‘Toyohara Kunichika’, the first two syllables of each name derived from ‘Toyohara’ on his later work was taken from his first teacher, Chikanobu.

Kunichika’s apprenticeship to Kunisada is incontestable, and it is noteworthy that he compares himself with his teacher regarding the length of his apprenticeship. Seventeen years appears an inordinately long time for an apprenticeship. It is more likely that Kunichika is speaking figuratively, that his obligation to his teacher was unbroken from the time he entered Kunisada’s studio until the latter’s death in 1864, even though he was already publishing works and probably independent before this. But what was meant by becoming ‘independent’ from one’s teacher, particularly one of Kunisada’s stature? What were the economics and the politics of doing so? We still have little understanding of how this functioned with bakumatsu and Meiji print designers like Kunichika. As can be gleaned from Kunichika’s own experience, however, there was a certain pride and responsibility in belonging to the Utagawa school. ‘Belonging to a recognised lineage or tradition, artistic family, school, or

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25 Kusano also discusses the apparent association between Kunichika and Katsubunsai IV (1835–1908), a recognised oshi-e artist who participated in Japan’s first Naikoku Kaiga Kyōshinkai (National Exposition for the Promotion of Painting, 1882). That Kunichika retained ties to this world is also underlined by the fact that the artist who had erected his memorial stone, Chikamaru, was a hagoita mensōgaki.

26 Personal communication with Oikawa Shigeru 2010.

27 This author would like to thank Ellis Tinios for his correspondence on this understudied topic (31/1/2007); he notes that Kunisada was operating independently from 1812/1813. Kunisada entered Toyokuni’s studio in around 1800. According to Sebastian Izzard, the year 1808 corresponds with Kunisada’s introduction to the public in the frontispiece of Kagamiyama homare no adauchi (鏡山誉仇討) by Santō Kyōzan (1769–1858), even though Izzard maintains that Kunisada would have entered Toyokuni’s studio earlier. Izzard, Kunisada’s world, 20.
faction’, writes Christine Guth, ‘was so important that even those who subsequently broke away to form independent studios continued to be identified in relation to the master under whom they had first studied’. It was also during his time as a Kunisada student that he would have acquired the skills necessary to survive in his métier.

If Kunichika’s recollections are correct, it would mean that he became Kunisada’s apprentice in around 1848/1849, when he was thirteen or fourteen. No works by Kunichika from this period are documented. This might indicate that Kunichika began his apprenticeship somewhat later and his recollections are incorrect; that none of his work from this time survives; or that he was not permitted to publish straight away. The first two points are indeed possible, but it is equally conceivable that Kunichika, having served what appeared to be a short apprenticeship under Chikanobu, entered Kunisada’s studio in his later teens. Earlier writers like Kojima subscribe to this view; he believed Kunichika was seventeen (sixteen) at the time of his apprenticeship. Higuchi, on the other hand, felt that Kunichika was older than twenty when he entered Kunisada’s studio, but this can be discounted because known pieces by Kunichika exist before 1855.

Once in Kunisada’s studio, Yasohachi would have eventually received the name ‘Kunichika’ from his teacher. His first published works are illustrations of popular novels (gōkan)—a common practice for apprentice woodblock print designers—with the earliest believed to date to 1851. Kunichika’s position as a Kunisada student is evidenced in his signatures from this period on prints indicating his ‘monjin’ (pupil) status. Among the earliest of these are two examples from Kunisada’s 1852/1853 set, The glories of the provinces of Japan, with the main compositions by the master and inset designs by his students. Kunichika’s contributions have the signature ‘Monjin Yasohachi ga’ 門人八十八画 (fig. 31; the other is of the actor Bandō Shūka I as Jingū Kōgō paired with Bingo, no. 48 in the set, 9/1853). These suggest that he was still using his Yasohachi name at this time. ‘Monjin Kunichika’ 門人国周 appears on the print Hour of the cock from the 1856 The twelve hours of spring entertainments, another set with main images by Kunisada and inset compositions by his pupils (fig. 32a–b), and a more specific affiliation on the triptych Night crossing on the

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28 Guth, Art of Edo Japan, 41; see also Jordan, ‘Copying from beginning to end?’, 42.
29 Kojima, ‘Toyohara Kunichika hyōden’, 244; he also states that Kunichika eventually received the name ‘Ichiōsai Kunichika’ and that his early works were also signed ‘Ittō Kunichika’ 一桃国周. This is borne out in examples like the 1863 triptychs Genji no kimi Ōmi hakkei yūran no zu 源氏乃君近江八景遊覧乃図 http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko30/bunko30_b0220/index.html and Night view of Nihonbashi beauties (fig. 30).
30 Kunichika’s earliest work in illustrated books appears to be the 1851 gōkan by Rakutei Saiba, Igagoe adauchi 伊賀越仇討, perhaps his introduction to the public. Kunichika’s illustrated books are catalogued on the online database of the NIJL’s Nihon kokusho sōmokuroku (under 歌川国週), (base1.nijl.ac.jp/~tkoten/about.html), including the book of erotica, Dodōetsu iro no yogatari 度々悦色の世語 (1864) signed ‘Ichibobosai Kunichika’ 一ぼゝ斎国智 not listed online.
The twelve hours set, which also include the students, among others, Kunihisa, Kunitoku, Kunimaro, Kunikiyo, Kunitsune, Kuniaki, and Kunishige. Kunichika also identified himself as ‘Monjin Ichiōsai Kunichika’ on Kunisada’s shini-e of 1864.


Kunichika concludes the first published segment of his interview with the oft-cited interjection that he moved over 117 times. In 1980, Ōe Naokichi conducted a sampling of Kunichika’s work from 1876 to 1880 to ascertain the veracity of the artist’s claim. Although he does not say how many works he viewed, Ōe deduces that Kunichika lived at only seven addresses during this time (see Table II). Ōe additionally asserts that Kunichika did not

Table II. Comparison of addresses on Kunichika prints (1875/1876 to 1889) by Ōe (1980) and Newland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Ōe</th>
<th>Newland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hongoku-chō 4-chōme 35-banchi</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>1875/1876*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ueno-chō itchōme 12-banchi</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>1877/1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asakusa Kojima-chō 25-banchi</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asakusa Shinhatago 12-banchi</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanaka Shimizu-chō itchōme</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fukagawa Higashimoto-machi 12-banchi</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1880/1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asakusa Umamichi 7-chōme 1-banchi</td>
<td>1880–89</td>
<td>1877,1880–86**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This author has also seen ‘34-banchi’.

**Newspaper articles occasionally provide clues (e.g. Kanasugi-mura, Shitaya, and Fuyuki-chō, Fukagawa in 27 July 1891 Yomiuri article) or his obituary (Honjo),

move from 1880 to 1889 based on the same Umamichi address on prints from 1880 and on a triptych from 1889 (he does not specify the works). To test Ōe’s theory and to determine the credibility of Kunichika’s story, I undertook a sampling of a few hundred prints dating from the years 1875 to 1885—which conveniently coincides with Kunichika’s maturity as an artist—and noted addresses on prints from different months in each year. While this only represents a fraction of Kunichika’s work over a decade, the search revealed essentially the same addresses as recorded by Ōe. But it should be pointed out that Kunichika was less inclined to include his address on prints after 1886, perhaps indicating a relaxation of the

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34 Kojima attempted something similar with works from 1867 to 1887, listing only five addresses (Hongoku, Ueno, Asakusa Kojima, Yanaka, Asakusa [Umamichi]). Kojima, ‘Toyohara Kunichika hyōden’, 256. Higuchi, ‘Toyohara Kunichika’, 183, states he moved only eighty-three times, dying in Honjo Banba-machi and not Yoshiwara Dote-shita, as suggested by Soitsuruō.

35 This sampling was taken from Newland, Time present and time past, the on-line database of the Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan and vols. 3–10 of Kokuritsu Gekijō Chōsa Yōseibu Shiryōka, Kokuritsu gekijō shozō.
It is also possible that the relatively few prints from after 1886 with the artist’s address were earlier completed, yet unpublished, designs that were pulled from the publisher’s stock and issued later.

Kunichika’s claim leans towards the apocryphal if we assume that he lived at a single address with his family until he was in his early teens, then resided with his teacher Kunisada, and that this documented ten-year period was typical. Nevertheless, what might have been the artist’s seemingly peripatetic nature is even remarked upon by members of the Katada studio of blockcutters, who stated that his constant mobility sometimes caused consternation among publishers in that they were not always sure where to locate him. Perhaps Kunichika is instead referring to his overnight dalliances with prostitutes and/or it might also be that the addresses supplied on the prints were only done so for the censors as an ‘official’ residence, but it is more likely the result of his attempts at evading tax registration and debt collectors (see Chapter One, Appendix III: *Yomiuri shinbun*, 6 April 1896). It is clear that he is validating his own place as a print artist by comparing himself not only with Kunisada and Toyokuni before him, but also in an overt gesture of one-upmanship in his comparison with Hokusai.

*Number 21, 25 October 1898*

Well, the first time I set up house was in Hanshirō Yoko-chōin Yanagishima with a woman named Ohana, but it was then that I made my biggest blunder. At that time Shinmon Tatsugorō had a lot of clout. Problems occurred when degata [theatre ushers] trashed a theatre located on 2-chōme after having confronted denbō [gate crashers]. The Kyōbashi publisher Shimizuya Naojirō came and commissioned me to depict the brawl, so I designed and then had published an image of Shinmon’s followers in a parody nigao-e of Hikosaburō, Kikugorō, and Tanosuke brandishing sticks and of people clad in black fleeing from them. Shinmon declared that it was his followers who were shown being defeated and running away, and so a huge gang [of his followers] came to my house, making a racket and roughing things up. They also went and wreaked havoc at [my] teacher’s house in Itsutsume; it not only surprised me but also had teacher worried. [My] teacher’s student Yoshitsuya was there, and since he was a Shinmon follower, I tried to mediate. Due to my efforts, well, we luckily arrived at a reconciliation. At that time my works were selling well . . . coming from me this might seem odd, but my work was doing better than my teacher’s, so as a punishment he took the name ‘Kunichika’ away from me. There was nothing to do about it, so thereafter I designed prints with the name ‘Ichōsai’ but my teacher went to the publisher’s and refused to let them use even this name in that it just wouldn’t do. And then Shinoda Sengyo—he later took on the name ‘Kazuhiko’—stepped in on my behalf and the name ‘Kunichika’ was eventually given back to me. It was a real blow to me for a time.’

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36 Kondō, ‘Katada Hori chō to Kunichika’, 7–10, calling into question the practice of artists listing their names and addresses.
Kunichika’s move to Yanagishima may have been an indication of his completed apprenticeship (and independence) from the Kunisada studio. Hagiwara Osamu suggests that this move occurred in 1861, which according to conversations with surviving members of Kunichika’s family, was the same year his daughter Hana was born. Kunichika acknowledges his association with Yanagishima in the rare signature ‘Yanagishima Kunichika ga’ on the left sheet of Picture of Hōryū pavilion: the tale of Satomi and the eight dogs (6/1862) (fig. 39a–b). The association of his master with Yanagishima is known in the public sphere as seen in the Yomiuri shinbun report of 13 November 1893 (see Chapter One).

The figure of Shinmon Tatsugorō (Nakamura Kintarō, 1800–75) features prominently in this account. A celebrated fireman and ‘street-knight’ (otokodate), his name ‘Shinmon’ (‘New Gate’) Tatsugorō was reportedly derived from the fact that he was caretaker of the new gate at the Denbō-in at the Sensō Temple (Asakusa). In his capacity as a fireman and after 1817 as head of the ‘Wo Company’ (Wo-gumi) of firefighters, Shinmon attracted a great many devoted followers—estimates are given as up to as many as two thousand adherents. He assumed responsibility for the popular street-art performances and exotic displays called misemono and was to exercise a virtual monopoly on those held within the Asakusa Temple precincts. The Asakusa Temple misemono ‘spectacle was the perfect choice for those thirsty for the exotic’, crowded with exhibits of strange animals, human freaks, storytelling, and circus/acrobatic performances. Merchants also set up booths to lure in customers (see iainuki below).

Firemen and their adherents like Shinmon and his Wo Company were notorious for the spontaneous quarrels, fights, and brawls that flared up during fires and festivals. Such brawls, or kenka, were part and parcel of Edo life, so much so that such outbreaks of violence became the stuff of urban legend. Flamboyant firefighters and their tales were dramatised in the kabuki theatre and in nishiki-e, including images of Shinmon by Kunichika (fig. 40). In early nineteenth-century Edo, the expression ‘kaji to kenka wa Edo no hana’ (‘Fires and fights are Edo’s flowers’) encapsulated this milieu. The brawls among groups of firefighters were not simply punch-ups, but they also spawned creative and colourful epithets that crowds of onlookers listened to with interest. Moreover, the manner in which fires were controlled in Edo by organised groups of firefighters was in itself a spectacle. Fights and fires exemplified

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38 For further information on Shinmon Tatsugorō, see http://design-signal.co.jp/tokyo-meibutsu/tatsugoro/index.html and Alan Pate, ‘Iki ningyo: living dolls and the legacy of Matsumoto Kisaburo’ (http://www.antiquejapanesedolls.com/pub_artinfocus/pub_iki/iki.html); also Inui et al., Nihon denki densetsu daijiten, entry ‘Shinmon Tatsugorō’, 480.
39 Hur, Power and play, 60.
40 For further reading, see Markus, ‘The carnival of Edo’, 499–541.
the harsh-tongued Edokko, who had no reservations in criticising whatever they considered was not ‘correct behaviour’.

The bakufu authorities generally turned a blind eye to these tussles by firefighters so long as no one was hurt, but as reported by one seemingly exasperated official:

Firefighters . . . get into fights among themselves. They conspire and form gangs. They arm themselves with bamboo spears and sharp tools, and then plunder each other’s homes and belongings. When this happens, we carry out an investigation and verify the facts, but the leaders of the firefighters or some eloquent person from the neighborhood will mediate between the two sides and arrange an agreeable settlement. As long as no one is killed, the matter does not reach the shogunate’s courts.41

The settling of scores by firefighters extended to any seeming transgression against them, including the unfavourable depiction of a kenka, both in image and in word. Moreover, the swift and unprovoked reaction by the Wo Company towards Kunichika and his teacher may have not been particularly unusual. Robert Leutner, for example, describes one incident involving the writer Shikitei Sanba (1776–1822), who published a thinly veiled fictional piece about a kenka between two rival fire companies. The compatriot company of someone involved was outraged by the account and attacked the houses of both Sanba and his publisher. The city magistrates intervened on this occasion, ordered jail terms for the firefighters, fined the publishers, and sentenced Sanba to fifty days in manacles.42

In Kunichika’s account, an equally grave fight was caused by a group of at a ‘ni[2]-chōme’ theatre. Here ‘2-chōme’ (‘second block’) is a reference to the Nakamura Theatre located in the second block of Nihonbashi Avenue. The presence of the gate crashers may have been enough to fuel a fight by Tatsugorō and his valiant Wo Company firefighters. The incident even receives mention in the Kabuki nenpyō, which contains an addendum relating to the Nakamura Theatre that on the twenty-eighth day of the fifth month 1862:

Item: This evening, at the 2-chōme theatre, members of the Wo Company came by and there were problems. A mediator interceded and took charge to deal with it, yet before anything could be done about it, there was a recurrence and a large group of the Company wrecked the wooden gate along the main street and a group moved on to break up two houses. A demand for justice was immediately brought before the city magistrate shogunal administrator at the monthly mediation process and the arresting officer was placed on duty; this resulted in an official visit at around the seventh hour on the morning of the twenty-ninth, and an official enquiry was requested.

Item: As pertains to the above, at around the fifth hour in the evening the Company members were made to gather before the theatre and an inquiry was sent to the duty station magistrate’s office.43

Kunichika explains that Shimizuya Naojirō, a wholesaler of books produced in Edo (jihon sōshi tonya) and located in Shin Ryōgai-chō itchōme (present-day Ginza), approached him to illustrate a ‘parody’ (mitate) composition of the kabuki actors Onoe Kikugorō V, Bandō Hikosaburō V (1832–77), and Sawamura Tanosuke III (1845–78) in what was interpreted by Shinmon Tatsugorō as a derisive allusion to his followers and the kenka. Kunichika depicted each of these actors throughout their respective careers and certainly in prints leading up to the 1862 kenka, so their selection is in itself not remarkable.

An initial examination of Kunichika’s prints has not uncovered any examples portraying all three actors in the type of composition Kunichika describes, even though the artist claims it was published. This print, if published, would most likely have been released shortly after the kenka, therefore sometime towards the end of the fifth month or early part of the sixth month of 1862. A further search of Kunichika designs is required to determine that no copies of the work survive, or that they and the block were destroyed as part of the mediation process.

Events escalated when the unruly Shinmon gang caused a disturbance at both Kunichika’s and Kunisada’s house—the group of angry followers brandishing staffs was probably not unlike the account given above by the Edo official. The ‘eloquent mediator’ in our account was, not surprisingly, Kunichika himself, his go-between being the Shinmon follower Yoshitsuya and according to Kunichika a student of the ‘Itsutsume teacher’.

But it is here that the retelling of events becomes slightly confused, perhaps due in part to the nature of Kunichika’s recollection of events that had occurred over thirty-five years earlier, or an incorrect transcription by the newspaper reporter and transcriber. Most likely the ‘Itsutsume teacher’ (Itsutsume shishō) Kunichika is referring to is his own, that is, Kunisada. Kunisada did have a residence in Kameido near Itsutsume, a strip of riverbank near the Honjo area (Kunisada’s father ran a ferry from Honjo Itsutsume). However, Kunisada is believed to have given his Kameido house to his son-in-law Kunisada II in 1852 and moved to a compound in Yanagishima (seen in the Ansei kenmonshi, see fig. 34). Technically speaking, Kunisada was not in Itsutsume when the kenka occurred. At the time of the kenka, Kunichika states that he was living in Yanagishima, the same area as Kunisada after 1852. It would be tempting to think that he indeed had finished his apprenticeship by 1861 and out of convenience or loyalty decided to set up house close to Kunisada’s own residence. It is

44 The publisher Shimizuya was active from the Kōka to Meiji eras. He issued nishiki-e by Kuniyoshi, Yoshitora and other works by Kunichika. Genshoku ukiyo-e daihyakka jiten Henshū linkai, ed., ‘Yōshiki, choshō, hannya’, 139.
45 The non-existence of this work is confirmed by the Kunichika collector Makuuchi Tatsuji; email correspondence 5 March 2007.
46 Izzard, Kunisada’s world, 36.
possible, then, that Kunichika’s reference to ‘Itsutsume’ as Kunisada’s earlier residence was
done out of habit—that is, that Kunisada was referred as such by his pupils who began their
apprenticeships there. It is less likely that he is referring to Kunisada II.

An additional inconsistency concerns Yoshitsuya. It is unclear whether he is referring
to Yoshitsuya I (1822–66) or Yoshitsuya II (active 1860s–70s). Yoshitsuya I was a student of
Kuniyoshi and Yoshitsuya II his student, and therefore affiliated with the Kuniyoshi branch of
the Utagawa school, not with Kunisada as intimated in Kunichika’s anecdote. Does this mean
that the Yoshitsuya in question was associated with Kunisada (or Kunisada II) after the death
of Kuniyoshi in 1861, in the same way that Kunichika’s student Chikanobu moved between
the Kunisada and Kuniyoshi studios? Or is this an error on the part of the interviewer?

The difficulties and the loss of face that were associated with this affair were, as
Kunichika explains, enough to have his teacher revoke his name ‘Kunichika’. (Kunichika also
asserts quite boldly, considering the public nature of the interview, that ‘teacher’ was equally
put out because Kunichika’s own works were selling better than his.) Kunichika believed that
in the interim period he would be permitted to use the name ‘Ichōsai’. But this, too, seems to
have been forbidden. Furthermore, Kunisada was clearly angered enough by the incident to
intercede directly with publishers. Would the damage done have been enough to sour his
future relationship with Kunisada, who clearly felt that Kunichika needed to be taught a stern
lesson regarding the types of commissions he agreed to take on as a representative of the
Kunisada branch of the Utagawa school? There is no indication of this. But was knowing
what or what not to accept as commissions/work part of a student’s rites of passage towards
independence?

Based on Kunichika’s account, one has the impression that he was designing prints
under another name after the incident, in other words, after the late fifth month or early part
of the sixth month of 1862, if the chronology of events we have established above is correct.
But, if that were the case, what name did he use? He states that the name ‘Kunichika’ was
rescinded, as was the name ‘Ichōsai’ soon thereafter. We must look to the prints themselves
for possible answers. A perusal of his actor prints for 1862 shows that Kunichika apparently
employed the signature form ‘Kunichika ga’ and ‘Ichōsai Kunichika ga’ up until the sixth
month. There are comparatively few actor prints by him dating to the sixth month. Another
example issued at this time with these signatures, the aforementioned *Picture of Hōryū pavilion: the tale of Satomi and the eight dogs* above, was signed ‘Yanagishima Kunichika
ga’, ‘Kunichika ga’, and ‘Ichōsai Kunichika ga’.\(^47\) However, this is not an actor print.

\(^47\) The ‘Ichōsai Kunichika’ signature is certainly known on his prints until at least 1866 (e.g. Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan: 500-3201/500-3202/500-3203/500-3204;
201-4987).
There is little work in the actor genre by Kunichika again until the eighth month, at which time he published prints signed ‘Ōsai ga’, ‘Ōsai Kunichika ga’ and ‘Kunichika ga’. This includes examples such as the 9/1862 triptych portraying Kawarasaki Gonjūrō I (later Ichikawa Danjūrō IX) as Banzuin Chōbei, Nakamura Shikan IV as Teranishi Kanshin, and Ichimura Uzaemon XIII (later Onoe Kikugorō V) as Shirai Gonpachi that carries the latter two forms (www2.ntj.jac.go.jp:11063). Makuuchi Tatsuji believes the ‘Ōsai ga’ signature was one used by Kunichika during the period when his art names of Kunichika (and Ichīōsai) were banned, although one would question why he used the combined signature ‘Ōsai Kunichika ga’. Hagiwara Osamu maintained that the name ‘Kunichika’ signature was returned to the artist by the ninth month. The suggestion is that Kunichika was not designing actor prints during the period; however, it should be remembered that there were no performances recorded in the Kabuki nenpyō in Edo after the end of the fifth month until the twenty-ninth day of the eighth month (an intercalary month in 1862) with the performance of the play Toki wa ima yakko ukejō 時皞握虎券 at the Nakamura Theatre.

Kunichika was clearly at an impasse, and it is not clear how his career would have advanced had it not been for the intercession by Shinoda Sengyo. In the past scholars like Mukai Nobuo assumed that Shinoda was Ryūtei Senka (Tanehiko II), himself a pupil of Ryūtei Tanehiko who is mentioned above as author of the Inaka Genji. But the Shinoda family name (Ryūtei Senka’s was Takahashi) instead points to Senka’s pupil, Shinoda Hisajirō 篠田久治郎 (1837–84), who is the writer Shinoda Senka 篠田仙. Senka is listed in a colophon in the 1879 book, Meiji eimei hyaku eisen 明治英名百詠撰, Kunichika contributed designed illustrations to Senka’s publications, such as the 1876 Sennari hyōtan 千成瓢箪, and therefore it is likely that the two were acquainted. Senka also worked with Utagawa Yoshitora, Utagawa Yoshiharu (1837–88), Kunimasa (Baidō Hōsai), Yamazaki.

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48 Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p., states that the return of the ‘Kunichika’ signature was in the ninth month on the Genji print, Shunshoku shuchū hanaasobi 春色酒中花 (viewable: http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/bunko30/bunko30_b0219/bunko30_b0219.pdf)
49 Senka became a student of Ryūtei Tanehiko around 1829 and was releasing works as a Tanehiko student by 1832; see entry ‘Ryūtei Senka’, in Nihon koten bungaku daijiten, vol. 6, 228. Mukai states that Kunichika’s recollection of Sengyo having used the name ‘Kazuhiko’ is an error on Kunichika’s part or the transcriber’s, because this name would more correctly be associated with Ryūtei Senka (Mukai, ‘Meiji jinbutsu’, 385–86), but it is still my opinion that Kunichika could be referring to Shinoda Sengyo and not Ryūtei Senka.
50 See http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/778778. Also known by the names Mangokutei Tsumimaru 万石亭積丸, Mangokutei Sengyo, and Kintarō Senka 禁多楼仙果. He was thought to have prospered as a head of the publishing house Kyōshūsha 興聚社, which published the satirical magazine Tsuki to supponchi (15 issues, 1878–1880); see entry ‘Ryūtei Senka’, in Nihon Rekishigakkai, Meiji ishin jinmei jiten, 1080.
What is intriguing is that a writer, not a print designer, intercedes on Kunichika’s behalf, further evidence to the seemingly fluid association between writers and print designers at this time. The reporter, and then Kunichika, continue:

At this time he continued to relish the taste of sake offered to him by women, and as such he became the life of the party

After that I moved to a new home in Otowa-chō in Nihonbashi; the place was pretty good, and the plants were given the names of all the geisha. Because the house was just finished, there was a house-warming party, and Kuniteru was noisily scattering chirashi drawn with images for gakudō on printed single-sheets of hōsho paper. For whatever reason many okappiki live in Otowa-chō, and I was much indebted to the private detective Mr. Mameoto. I had received clothes and so on, so I made the rounds to thank everyone and by the time I had returned a number of people had gathered at the house: Mr. Tsutō, a wealthy man from Yamashiro Riverbank, Shōjō Kyōsai, Ishii Dainoshin, a practitioner of iainuki no hanuki from Ueno Hirokōji, and Hashimoto Sakuzō of the Sakakibara lineage, today known as Chikanobu. But since I had drunk too much I went upstairs to take a nap and had just dozed off when for some reason or another I heard this clatter that woke me from my slumber. A drunk Kyōsai had stripped off Tsutō’s brown-white overcoat (hifu) and painted on it by dunking it in a porcelain bowl (donburibachi) full of the kind of ink used to draw announcements. Tsutō made a face, then Kyōsai pulled Tsutō’s overcoat out and drew a kappa in the middle of it. Like with me, sake is no good for Kyōsai. Everyone looked at him strangely and this time he drew something on Chinese-style paper (karakami) and grunted in satisfaction.

The two or three racks of the tatami maker’s were lined up in a row in the garden and on it were the new ganseki paper fusuma (sliding doors) to be installed at the entrance to the second floor—a geisha stood holding the ink while Kyōsai painted a picture on it. That was all well and good, but then he stomped on the newly installed sliding door and opened up a gaping hole in it. I can seldom look upon violence as just a spectator, so I went up to him and said ‘Look, Kyōsai, you baldie (bōzu), you’re doing a terrible thing, please stop’, but since I said this abruptly—I, too, was drunk—Kyōsai took the brush he was holding and painted my face completely black. I also became angry. The dentist Ishii Dainoshin then boasted, ‘Because you’ve got buck teeth, you baldie Kyōsai, let me yank them out for you’, and then Chikanobu, that is Hashimoto Sakuzō, drew his sword and jumped into the fray. Surprised, Kyōsai ran away through a hedge, but at this time the former Momoji stream in Nakabashi had become a gutter. Kyōsai fell in and looked totally like a sewer rat, and there I was with my face painted in black—I laughed as retribution. But afterwards Kyōsai came to my place and in our own way our friendship was patched up—Kyōsai should at least be admired for that. But because Chikanobu drew his sword, boy, that was a bit much and afterwards Kyōsai’s relationship with Chikanobu was broken off.

51 For the Sennari hyōtan, see http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/884960.
52 Ganseki (or gansen, ‘rock/stone’) or ganseki karakami is a type of paper manufactured from mitsumata and kōzo paper fibres (also known as maniai-ganpi shi) and produced at this time in dimensions of six by three shaku (c. 180 x 90 cm); it is so called because the paper is mixed with pulverised stone powder. Thanks to conservator/paper expert Shiho Sasaki for clarifying the use of the term; communications 28 July 2006.
With an ‘after that’ (sono ato), Kunichika begins this next segment, and intimates that the events described thereafter were comparatively soon after the Wo Company incident of 1862. Yet, an entry in the daybook Saitō Gesshin nikki by Saitō Gesshin 斎藤月岑 (1804–78) dating to the fifth day of the sixth month of 1867 informs us that this was more likely five years hence:

The ukiyo-e master Kunichika moves from Maki-chō to Otowa-chō and today opens up his new house. Kyōsai is drunk on sake and there is a fight. Yamashiro Riverbank Yūjirō’s and Sadanosuke’s robes are dunked in ink and painted with a brush.53

Otowa is located near the bridges, Nihonbashi and Kaizoku, and Kunichika paints the area as one populated by okappiki, a type of secret police or government detective. He seems to have been in Mameoto’s debt, since he had received gifts of clothing from him. Following his rounds to thank him and others for their generosity, Kunichika finds the house filled with guests.

One can easily imagine the scene of the house-warming on a summer’s day—Kunichika’s fellow student Kuniteru I has arrived early to decorate chirashi sheets of paper for distribution that would have been offered as a gesture of well-wishing towards the new occupants. The guests begin to arrive. There is a Mr. Tsutō, who is most likely the protagonist in the later historical tale, Saiki Kōi, written in 1917 by Mori Ōgai. Saiki Kōi (1822–70)—also known as Tsunokuniya Tōjirō (II) and by the abbreviated version of this name, Tsutō—was, as Kunichika describes, a great man of wealth, a ‘big spender’ (daijin). He was hailed as a patron of Yoshiwara establishments and courtesans, and recognised for his acquaintance with famous sumo wrestlers, kabuki actors like Ichikawa Danjūrō IX; poets like Shin (Kikakudō 其角堂) Eiki 晋永機 (1823–1904), who produced poems for Kunichika’s One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō and One hundred roles of Baikō; writers like Kanagaki Robun; and clearly with artists like Kunichika.54 The name in the interview ‘the big spender Yamashiro Riverbank Mr. Tsutō’ (Yamashiro gashi daijin no Tsutō) is a reference to the area where the family ran a sake shop.55

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53 Cited from Ukiyo-e 47 (July 1977), reproduced in Kawanabe Kyōsai Kinen Bijutsukan, Kyōsai to Kunichika ten, 16. Gesshin also chronicled the events in the capital in his Bukō nenpyō 武江年表 (Chronicle of the Musashi-Edo district). This was extensively supplemented by Kitamura Nobuyo (1783–1856) and Sekine Shisei (1825–93); reprinted in Kaneko, Zōtei Bukō nenpyō, 2 vols.
54 Ōgai does not mention Kunichika or Kyōsai in his story, but the identity of ‘Tsutō’ is undeniable. Ōgai mentions other painters/print designers, e.g. Shibata Zeshin, Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, Miyagi Gengyo, and Torii Kiyomitsu, and states that the Yamashiro Riverbank shop went bankrupt in 1862. Thereafter Kōi handed over the shop to his stepmother from whom he received an allowance. For an English translation of the text, see Dilworth and Rimer, The historical fiction of Mori Ōgai, 353–84; the Japanese text can be viewed at www.aozora.gr.jp/cards/000129/files/4459_18093.html (accessed 11 October 2014).
55 The name Tsunokuniya Tōjirō (Tsutō) appears in conjunction with an announcement of a shogakai that coincided with a house-warming of Kunichika’s new house (it is not clear whether this is the same
Ishii Dainoshin is described as an *iainuki no hanuki* from Ueno Hirokōji. During the Edo period, ‘broad alleys’ (hirokōji) like Ueno Hirokōji, which ran down the southern slope of Ueno’s Shinobigaoka hill and were backed by the Shinobazu Pond, were originally cleared as firebreaks. Eventually they became the location of various vendors and businesses including anything from teahouses to wonder drug shops, as well as street performers of every description. Together with Asakusa, Ryōgoku, and Edobashi Hirokōji, the Ueno Hirokōji was one of capital’s four *sakariba* (‘crowded plazas’/‘amusement quarters’).  

The mercantile bustle of Ueno Hirokōji does not seem out of place for an *iainuki* practitioner. *Iainuki* was a type of street sword art, with its devotees demonstrating their skills perched atop tittering, stacked trays. It was used by merchants to lure in potential customers before delivering a commercial spiel about the wondrous workings of their various elixirs or tooth powders. In his insightful discussion of *misemono*, Andrew L. Markus singles out the celebrated figure of Nagai Hyōsuke who, operating near Asakusa, ‘... solemnly lectured on the martial specialty of *iainuki* 居合抜, the “quick draw” of swords, and proceeded to unsheathe with a lightning hand swords ten feet and longer. This noble exhibit, however, was itself only the prelude to hawking a line of toothpastes and denture accessories’. There might well be an association between this display of swordsmanship and dentistry, as in the case of Ishii Dainoshin, which is borne out by the wordplay on ‘nuku'抜く (‘to unsheathe’ or ‘to extract’, as a tooth), and thus the connection to Dainoshin’s almost comical offer to deal with Kyōsai’s buck teeth (fig. 41). It is possible that Ishii Dainoshin was a ‘dentist’ (in the loosest sense of the term), first and foremost, and that Kunichika’s refers to him as such to show how over the top his dentistry techniques were.

Little is understood about the exact identity of this Ishii Dainoshin. The name is singled out in segment twenty-seven of the serialised ‘*kanmoji*’ 閑文字 (miscellaneous jottings) entitled ‘Suzumidai’涼み臺, which appeared in the *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* on 26 August 1902. It indicates his location in front of Ueno’s Jōraku Temple, one of the famous ‘Six Amida’ (Roku Amida) sites in greater Tokyo. ‘An interesting man’, it notes, ‘one could see him as an intimate of figures like Kanagaki Robun’.

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56 For a discussion of play in such areas, see Hur, *Power and play*, 98–102.
57 On *iainuki*, see Kikuchi, *Ehon Edo fūzoku ōrai*, 237–39, Mitani, *Edo shōba zue*, 238–39, and in English Markus, ‘The carnival of Edo’, 515. The sale of tooth powders is also mentioned in sources such as the *Edo kaimono hitori annai* (江戸買物独案内, 1824) and *Edo meibutsu shi* (江戸名物詩, 1836); see also Uehara, *Shōnin meika kaimono hitori annai* (1890).
The other two guests mentioned are much better known to us: Hashimoto Sakuzō of the Sakakibara house is a reference to Kunichika’s student Chikanobu. Chikanobu (Hashimoto Naoyoshi) was born into the samurai Sakakibara house of Takada in Echigo Province (part of present-day Niigata Prefecture). During the Edo period, the Sakakibara family maintained a castle in Takada and a residence in the capital Edo, as was dictated by the system of alternative attendance (sankin kōtai). As retainers, Chikanobu and his father would have accompanied the daimyo in attendance. Chikanobu’s obituary from 2 October 1912 in the Miyako shinbun newspaper chronicles the connection with Kunichika and the Utagawa line:

Previously he had studied with the Kano school, and later changed to ukiyo-e. He studied with disciples of Keisai Eisen, and then entered the school of Ichiyūsai Kuniyoshi, taking the name of Yoshitsuru. After Kuniyoshi died, he studied with Kunisada, and then later studied nigao-e with Toyohara Kunichika. He was called Ichishunsai Chikanobu and also Yōshū . . . regrettably after the death of Kunichika and Chikanobu Edo-style painting (Edo-e) has come to an end.60

Chikanobu is thought to have begun his study with Kuniyoshi in the 1850s, transferring to Kunisada’s atelier after Kuniyoshi’s death in 1861. Chikanobu most likely began his study with Kunichika sometime in the mid-1860s, even though Chikanobu was only three years Kunichika’s junior.61 Chikanobu’s role in Kunichika’s story does not specify whether he had already entered his studio.

Shōjō Kyōsai is a less common art name for the well-known Meiji painter and print designer Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831–89), who briefly apprenticed with Utagawa Kuniyoshi before qualifying as a Kano school artist.62 It is not exactly clear when Kunichika might have met the slightly older artist. Oikawa Shigeru believes that it might have occurred when Kyōsai collaborated with Kunisada on the 1864 triptych, Fine view of the Tsukiji breakwater (Tsukiji namiyoke shōkei 築地波除勝景) from the Edo meisho series (MFA Boston collection: 11.41029a-c/11.45279a-c).63 This could be accurate if the house-warming event did in fact occur in 1867.

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60 Coates, Chikanobu, 11.
61 Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p., suggests that perhaps Chikanobu’s debut was on the print Yoshiwara tanbo no yoru no ame 吉原たんぼの夜の雨 from the series Eight views of Edo (Edo hakkei no uchi) with signature ‘Keshiki Chikanobu hitsu’, from new year 1867, with figures by Kunichika. Coates, Chikanobu, 19, by contrast, states ‘only a few prints by Chikanobu are extant now from the early 1870’s’; clearly further research is needed. The 1867 work (date seal reads new year 1867) is viewable online: http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/bunko30/bunko30_b0239/bunko30_b0239.pdf.
62 The name Shōjō was a reference to the sake loving sprites of mythology. Jordan, ‘Strange fancies’, 240–51. Kyōsai also worked with other Kunisada pupils, including Kunisada II and Kuniyoshi.
63 Oikawa, ‘Kawanabe Kyōsai and Toyohara Kunichika’, in Newland, Time present and time past, 39.
The incident recounted in the interview by Kunichika belongs to the lore surrounding both artists, neither of whom it seems ever played down his propensity towards drinking and drunken behaviour. When the two men collided, the result could be explosive, as here when Kyōsai’s inebriation led to him defacing a paper door, which in turn resulted in a fracas between Kunichika, Kyōsai, and other members of the group. But Kunichika maintains that he and Kyōsai restored their friendship in their own way and the men certainly continued their professional relationship, collaborating on a number of print projects together. The same reconciliation does not seem to have befallen Kyōsai and Chikanobu, who subsequently seem to have had no further contact; no collaborative projects solely between the two men have been documented.

Number 22, 26 October 1898

The third interview is prefaced by the reporter’s words:

_Seated at ease, wearing a broad grin, he [Kunichika] gradually speaks in a lively manner_

This funny thing once happened to me—it was when I was living in Mukōjima. The doctor Kaneko of Hitachi and a ‘big spender’ named Suda came to my place together. Both were wealthy men; the year before they had commissioned work from me. ‘Where shall we go drinking?’ they said, so we went up to the Chōdatei in Shinobazu. Well, we drank and ate our fill and as they said, ‘Let’s go “buy” (engage) a prostitute’, I said, ‘yeah, that’s okay by me.’ So, with me as a guide we pushed on from the Hatsuneya in Nakano-chō to the Shinagawarō. The woman I engaged was a very pretty, second-rank oiran named Kinshū. She was haughty, and because I played ken and told jokes she must have thought that I was some kind of _nodaiko_. She had a stuck-up air about her and once she left I went on to the room alone; it was just summer so I climbed under the mosquito net. Then Kinshū and her _shinzō_ arrived and said quite abruptly, cheeky enough to cause offense: ‘Who are you?’ Knowing that if I were to lose my temper I would be seen as a _yabo_, I said ‘Who am I? I’m an artist, you know’, to which Kinshū said, ‘An artist, huh? If that’s so, then draw me a picture.’ She ordered the _shinzō_ out and she returned with beautiful paper that had gold flecks in areas of red; I then poked my neck out of the mosquito net. . . .

_without show he makes as if to tuck up the mosquito net in both hands_

. . . . so then she says, ‘All right, mix up the ink’, the _shinzō_ did so making a scratching noise, and when I took up the brush, Kinshū saddles up to me, making out as if to say ‘show me your stuff, since I don’t think you can’. I was thinking that she was a pain in the neck but then thought ‘wait a second’, if I draw a [figurative] picture it won’t be interesting’, so I filled my brush with ink and brushed the character ‘no’ (の) on the

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64 Such anecdotes emerge, for example, in one of the first serious artistic biographies by a Japanese scholar, the 1890s manuscript (NDL, Tokyo) by Iijima Kyoshin, _Kawanabe Kyōsai-ōden_; see Jordan, ‘Strange fancies’, 240, and Clark, _Demon of painting_, 18.

paper, and then the verse:

\[
\begin{align*}
noshi no mama & \quad \text{The wrapper still on} \\
kaze kokoromiru & \quad \text{testing the breeze—} \\
uchī wa kana & \quad \text{a flat round fan.}
\end{align*}
\]

Seeing as I had improvised, the work wasn’t great. Then Kinshū said ‘Dear me, is this supposed to be a joke, you’re really uncouth, you know!’ This cut short any good time that I might have had there, so I went home on my own before anyone else. Only three days later, I happened to overhear an older woman of forty-five or forty-six at the next-door neighbours asking, ‘Where is the house of Mr. Kunichika the art master?’ Just as I was saying to the wife, ‘Ohana, there is someone next door right now asking about us, perhaps she is the debt collector, if she comes by tell her I’m not here’, all of a sudden the woman opens the outside door and comes into the entryway. I couldn’t hide so when I asked ‘Where are you from?’ she responded ‘Oh, is that sensei?’ It was the shinzō from the Shinagawarō. She laid out a large box of sweets: ‘This is a gift from ‘oiran’; she requested that I send word and ask that you accept her apology for the other night in her complete failure in not recognising you. Please accept these and we entreat you, in all seriousness, to please come round again—please by all means and on no account will you have to pay for anything . . . sensei, even tonight you’d be welcome.’ She probably thought ‘damn, he is some kind of country bumpkin and is trying to make a fool of me.’ When an Edokko is invited to call on prostitutes, he generally had to pay double or triple the amount of money . . . but not saying this, I said nonchalantly, ‘Yes, in any case, if I have a chance’—the wife beside me was in a miff. Then the woman pushed forward something wrapped in a furoshiki, saying with delight, ‘After showing the work you had done for us the other day to the head of the house, there was no doubt that this could only be a work by Kunichika-sensei. Sensei has done many pictures, but because those with characters are truly unusual we thought it best to treasure it by having it mounted and so for that reason we had it done like this without any further ado.’ Then she unwrapped the furoshiki and I saw my wildly written characters in a beautiful mount. I was saying to myself, ‘so now you get it, you know who I am—you must have been surprised when you found that out!’ Anyway, I felt a little vindicated. Bowing on both hands, she says ‘Well, it is certainly a pity that sensei’s seal is not included on this mount, at the same time please excuse me, but if you could seal it we would be most grateful. . . ’ and this time I said ‘All right, that’s fine, that’s fine’, then with an arrogant air I sealed it with a red seal that I had on hand. After that, I don’t know why, but it goes without saying that Kinshū would very much have pined for me.

It is probable that Kunichika’s move to Mukōjima followed his time in Yanagishima but before 1875 when prints record his address at Hongoku-chō 4-chôme. Mukōjima, like the former Honjo district where Kunichika was residing during the time of the Yomiuri interview, is today part of the Sumida Ward. Less than a decade after the interviews, a description of the area appeared in a 1907 metropolitan guide:

Under the old regime the district [Honjo] was occupied by townsmen and the lower ranks of the aristocracy. It was also the site of the official bamboo and lumberyards. Today is it mostly industrial. To the north, however, is Mukōjima, a most scenic

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66 It has also been noted that at this time he also lived in Himono-chō 南檜物町, in Nihonbashi’s south, in 1865. Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p.
district’, to which Edward Seidensticker adds that it was ‘a pleasant little cove ... it was a good place, remote and serene, to take a geisha.67

Kunichika is recorded to have released a print in 3/1867 of beauties returning home from flower-viewing in Mukōjima, but this may or may not have referenced his residence there in the same way as the signature ‘Yanagishima Kunichika ga’ noted above connects him to Yanagishima.68 It could be that Kunichika was following his teacher in associating his name with a place (e.g. ‘Gototei Kuniyada’ linking his teacher to the Gototei ferry).

The two men in this vignette are described by Kunichika as wealthy patrons. The otherwise unknown Mr. Suda—like Mr. Tsutō in MNE 21—is singled out as a ‘big spender’. Equally little is understood about the doctor Kaneko from Hitachi, then one of the eight provinces of the Kantō region and today the area corresponding to Ibaraki Prefecture. It is possible that this Kaneko was related to Kaneko Genpei, a powerful, wealthy landowner in Hitachi and a manufacturer of soy sauce, and that the use of the title ‘doctor’ may have been a term of respect as much as an indication of his profession as a medical doctor. Kunichika’s tendency to name-drop throughout the Yomiuri interview would suggest that they too could have been known to a wider audience and were also carefully chosen by the artist so as to construct a particular image of himself before the Tokyo public.

Kunichika, Kaneko, and Suda set off to paint the town red, calling in first at the Chōdatei (Chōjatei) in Shinobazu, a restaurant located on Benten Island in Ueno’s Shinobazu no ike (pond). The Chōdatei was also the venue for shogakai (calligraphy-and-painting parties) that would have been hosted by artists and writers.69 Restaurants like the Chōdatei and the equally famous Nakamurō held a central place in the popular cultural life of Tokyo, ‘developing carefully nurtured affinities with the world of kabuki actors’ and others.70

Shogakai regained popularity in the 1870s after a period of declining patronage around the Meiji ishin and remained popular until the 1880s. These ‘parties’ were held in large restaurants with banqueting rooms for hire; they were publicised and open to the general public, and continued from the afternoon late into the evening. Guests would pay an entrance fee, then purchase tickets for the banquet and drinks; they could request works from the participating artists in exchange for a modest financial ‘token of thanks’.71 The organiser invited painters, calligraphers and writers, and scholars; even ukiyo-e artists like Kunichika

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67 Seidensticker, Low city, high city, 217–19.
68 This work is listed in Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p., but I have not been able to locate it, nor is it clear if Hagiwara’s source ‘Takichi’ is the 1929 article by Ansei Rōnin, ‘Takichi ippa no horishi’ in his bibliography. This 1929 source does not discuss this work.
69 For a discussion of the cultural and commercial implications of shogakai, see Markus, ‘Shogakai’, 135–67. Other locations included the Manpachirō in Yanagibashi and the Shōgenrō in Ueno.
70 Mansfield, Tokyo: a cultural history, 136.
71 Buckland, Painting for the nation, 14.
‘attended’ shogakai. Shogakai frequently coincided with special events, or as in Kunichika’s case, a ‘shogakai’ might be a convivial occasion to meet (and compete) with friends, but it was also an opportunity to earn payment for potentially a large number of works, and to maintain one’s artistic status.\(^{72}\) One shogakai given by Kunichika at the Nakamurarō, one of the top establishments for rental facilities for shogakai from early nineteenth century onwards, appears in the Yomiuri shinbun on 8 September 1877:

The celebrated artist of actor prints, Mr. Toyohara Kunichika, will ‘attend’ a shogakai at the Nakamurarō in Ryōgoku on the 16th of this month; on display at the gathering will be rare pieces 書籍 特別 珍物 called gekijō kyōrankai 劇場興覧会 associated with the theatre . . . (p. 3)

The Chōdatei may or may not have been a regular stop for Kunichika en route to the Yoshiwara, the pleasure quarter that he frequented. By this time, areas like Yanagibashi and Shinbashi outstripped the Yoshiwara in popularity: they were ‘the places to go, and their geisha contributed much to their splendour. The downtown crowd came to both for entertainment and the nineteenth-century equivalent of power parties, and there many decisions of state were made’.\(^{73}\) (Yanagibashi and Shinbashi geisha were the last word in entertainers for hire, as seen in the anecdote following and in MNE 23.) As a figure seemingly rooted in the past, however, Kunichika preferred the more traditional milieu of the Yoshiwara, even though by the Meiji era—and certainly by the 1880s and 1890s—the district was in decline and paled in comparison to the heady days of its history in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Its appearance too little resembled earlier days. It was divided by wide streets and multi-storied brothels; the iconic ‘Great Gate’ (Ōmon) was replaced by an iron structure in 1881.

In keeping with the quarter’s protocol, Kunichika and his patrons call in at a hikite-jaya (‘lead-by-the-hand teahouse’), where guests to the Yoshiwara would gather and drink, and if desired, would be met and escorted to high-class brothels (ōmise, or a first-class house). Until the Prostitute Emancipation Act of 9 October 1872 the Yoshiwara was the only location where such teahouses were used as an intermediary for brothel visitors.\(^{74}\) Hikite-jaya also provided entertainment by geisha and male entertainers (taiko). Kunichika, Suda, and Kaneko call in at the hikite-jaya, Hatsuneya. Maps of the Yoshiwara of the 1870s and 1880s indeed document a Hatsuneya on the Nakano-chō.\(^{75}\) Yoshiwara saiken(ki), a type of annotated

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 14, 67–68. Also Naritasan Shodō Bijutsukan and Kawanabe Kyōsai Kinen Bijutsukankan, Yotte sōrō.

\(^{73}\) Marks, ‘The geisha’, 64.

\(^{74}\) Segawa Seigle, Yoshiwara, 223.

\(^{75}\) De Becker, The nightless city, 40, however, includes the hikite-jaya Hatsuneya on the Sumi-chō.
guidebook to the quarter, from the 1880s further corroborate its existence on the Nakano-chō. Moreover, they record that a one Nakamura Shinkichi managed it.\footnote{Yoshiwara saikenki began publication in the seventeenth century; for saikenki relevant to this discussion, see Fujita, Yoshiwara saiken, n.p.; Nakamura, Shin Yoshiwara saikenki, n.p.; Ida, Shin Yoshiwara saiken, n.p., lists Hatsuneya as a hikite-jaya (these sources are viewable on the NDL site). There is some inconsistency in the characters used for the name, Hatsuneya; it appears to have been interchangeably as 初音屋/初子屋.}

After visiting the Hatsuneya, the men carry on to the brothel, Shinagawarō. Located on one of the quarter’s main avenues, the Shinagawarō apparently moved from the Shin-Shimabara to the Yoshiwara in 1871.\footnote{Mukai, ‘Meiji jinbutsu’, 386. The saiken appear to list the addresses variously as Edo-chō or Ageya-chō for Shinagawarō.} The author and journalist Miyatake Gaikotsu wrote that it was one the top five houses in the quarter.\footnote{Yoshiwara no godairō 吉原の五大樓 (‘The Yoshiwara’s five great houses’), in Miyatake, Meiji kibun, 116.} \textit{Yoshiwara saikenki} of the 1880s rank the Shinagawarō as an ōmise managed by one Kutsuki Sōkichi 朽木莊吉 and its prostitutes numbered among the highest paid in the Yoshiwara, receiving a fee of 1 yen.\footnote{Fujita, Yoshiwara saiken, n.p.} An account of the Yoshiwara roughly contemporary with Kunichika’s interview by the English lawyer and self-styled sociologist Joseph Ernest de Becker (1863–1929) states that in 1899 the Shinagawarō was still operating as an ōmise.\footnote{De Becker went to Japan in 1887, setting up his practice in Yokohama in 1894 and later moving to Kobe where he remained until his death. Listed as an ōmise in de Becker, The nightless city, 23.} If Kunichika’s companions were indeed ‘big spenders’, it is not surprising that they would be visiting such a ‘first-class’ establishment.

Kunichika’s acquaintance with the Shinagawarō is referenced in his prints, in particular, \textit{The beauty Seishi of the Shinagawarō} from the 1881 set \textit{The erotic thirty-six immortal poets} illustrating named Meiji prostitutes and geisha with verse by the satirical writer Mantei Ōga 万亭応賀 (1818–90) that are parodically linked with the classical canon of the ‘thirty-six immortal poets’ (fig. 42). Seishi, for example, is tied to the poet Ki no Tsurayuki (872?–945?). A number of images from \textit{The erotic thirty-six immortal poets} also have inset compositions by Kunichika’s pupil Chikaharu, who as we will see in the next \\textit{Yomiuri} instalment contributed to a set of votive paintings commissioned to Kunichika in 1882.

By the time of their arrival to the Shinagawarō, Kunichika, Kaneko, and Suda would have been sufficiently plied with food and drink. Kunichika’s hosts engage a prostitute at the Shinagawarō for him—a ‘very pretty, second-rank’ oiran (prostitute)—who he explains is named ‘Kinshū’.\footnote{The text uses the characters chūsan 畫三 (‘three bu per day’), although the gloss reads ‘oiran’ 花魁, which by this time was a general term for a prostitute.} His use of the term ‘second rank’ (nimaime) points to her rank below the
top courtesan of the house; it could be that the top women at the brothel, perhaps including Seishi, were reserved for Kunichika’s patrons.\(^{82}\)

An examination of *Yoshiwara saiken* from the early 1880s reveals that ‘Kinshū’ was not employed at the Shinagawarō, rather the ‘Kinshū’ name (either 金洲 or 金州) is listed under several different brothels in *saiken* from 1886 and 1889.\(^{83}\) The Shinagawarō did employ other women whose names are prefaced by the same ‘Kin’ character, however, and Mukai Nobuo believes that the prostitute in Kunichika’s anecdote is the Shinagawarō prostitute Kinryū.\(^{84}\) Contemporary documents substantiate this view. The *Yoshiwara saiken* from 1881 lists Seishi as the top-ranking *oiran* at the Shinagawarō, followed by Kinryū.\(^{85}\) This fits with Kunichika’s description of her as a *nimaike*, or ‘second-rank’, courtesan, and supports a date for the incident of around 1880/1881.\(^{86}\) Images of the two women also appear in the *saiken* from 1882 (fig. 43),\(^{87}\) and in the 1883 *saiken* Kinryū headed the list of women at the Shinagawarō. It must be remembered that with the Prostitute Emancipation Act prostitutes’ debts were cancelled and at least officially women were not sold into service as had earlier been the case. Those still in Yoshiwara could leave, although social stigma and economics often prohibited this. Seishi’s absence from the 1883 *saiken* suggests that she had either left the quarter, remained but was no longer ranked, or had died. Nevertheless, it again calls into the question the accuracy of Kunichika’s recollections regarding Kinshū (Kinryū) or of the newspaper reporter and transcriber. The important point to recognise here is that Kunichika was of the standing that patrons would call upon him and would be willing to spend the considerable amount of money necessary to engage such women.

Kunichika’s admits that his play of *ken* (equivalent to the Western game of ‘rock, paper, scissors’) creates the impression that he is a *nodaiko*, ‘rustic’ or talentless *taiko* (or

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\(^{83}\) E.g. in the 1886 *saiken*, the name Kinshū (金州) under Sumiyoshirō and Sumihachibanrō with names/dates Yamaguchi Kiku (b. 2/1869) and Hirabayashi Saku (b. 1/1867), respectively, and Kinshū (金洲) under Naritarō as Aki(?) Tsuru (b. 1/1858)—presumably three different women: http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/768099 (spreads 12, 16, 19, respectively).

\(^{84}\) Mukai, ‘Meiji jinbutsu’, 386.

\(^{85}\) The 1886 *Yoshiwara saiken* (spread 18) records that Kinryū (Ibuki Tsuya, b. 3/1867) was from Hongō district. Mukai, ‘Meiji jinbutsu’, 386, states that her name is Mori Ai (one *saiken* lists her as Mori Sute, slightly different from above). She appears first in the 1883 *saiken* (Fujita), sixteenth in 1886 (Nakamura) and eighth in 1888 (Ida); we cannot know if this is the same person as courtesan’s names were often passed down as *myōseki*.

\(^{86}\) If Kunichika’s use of the name ‘Shinagawarō’ is accurate, it would date his anecdote to sometime after 1883, when *Yoshiwara saiken* record a name change from ‘Shinagawaya’ to ‘Shinagawarō’. However, it is more likely that Kunichika is simply using the Shinagawarō name current at the time of the interview.

\(^{87}\) Yasuda, *Shin Yoshiwara saikengi*. Seishi’s name does not appear in the listings under Shinagawarō from this *saiken* hinting that she is no longer there at the time of publication. Taga Jingorō 多賀甚五郎, *Zensei kurawa no nigai* 全盛廓の賑ひ, of 1880 lists Seishi fourth (her actual name Hasegawa Ryō); there is no Kinryū: http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/900356; spread 15.
taikomochi, ‘drum carriers’). Taiko were professional male entertainers who provided companionship to visitors to the pleasure quarters. Early in Yoshiwara history, there was a surplus number of taiko, which gave rise to amateur, often talentless taiko (nodaiko) who were penniless or jobless clients, or just poor friends of daijin, and whose:

. . . position was precarious because he had no income. But at least he could tag along with a rich man and eat, drink, tease shinzō and kamuro, and perhaps bed down with a shinzō at his patron’s expense. Such a man was a professional sponger, a nodaiko (talentless taiko). Nodaiko occasionally received tips and gifts of clothes from their patrons. . . . Wealthy merchants frustrated by the strictures of the official social hierarchy welcomed opportunities to feel generous and important. They especially like to have a large entourage to show off at the Yoshiwara, and it suited Yoshiwara operators to encourage daijin spending. Thus the number of untalented taiko increased.88

The courtesan perhaps could not be faulted in thinking that Kunichika, in the company of two big spenders and with his buffoonish behaviour, was a talentless taiko. This would go some way to explain her aloof stance towards him. The perception of Kunichika as a talentless taiko likewise connects with the perception of him as a yabo (boor), an uncouth type who contrasted with the cultured sophisticate (tsū). Even in Kunichika’s day, when the Yoshiwara had greatly deteriorated in standing, the notions surrounding yabo and tsū were still very much entrenched, albeit in a diminished form.

Kunichika describes the courtesan’s shinzō as being an older woman, which might indicate that she was a courtesan who may have chosen to remain in the quarter after 1872 as an attendant to a higher-ranking prostitute. Her statement about the rarity of Kunichika’s calligraphic pieces contains an element of truth, since to date it appears that all documented paintings by Kunichika are figurative or landscape compositions. The existence of any calligraphic compositions has yet to be verified. Kunichika admits at the beginning of this instalment that he worked on commission and, as in seen in the next instalment, he was able to fetch relatively high prices for his art.

The reporter of the Yomiuri interview then hints that Kunichika has been drinking throughout the interview before the artist launches into the next anecdote:

Beaming with delight he sets his sake cup on a tray

I am really a great drinker, the type that really hates to lose. At one time I was living well in Manabegashi—again it was just summer and the actor Tokizō had two or three yanebune [roofed pleasure boats] launched on the Ōkawa River.89 An absurd amount of

88 Segawa Seigle, Yoshiwara, 118–19.
89 Manabegashi 間部河岸 (written as 真部河岸 in the article) is a riverside area stretching from the Ōkawa Moto-Yanagibashi 大川端南柳橋 to Minami Kazu-chō 南数町 (present-day Nihonbashi Hama-chō itchōme). Hamada, Edo bungaku chimei jiten, 441.
money was spent for the event, and twelve or thirteen Yanagibashi geisha were also engaged. The merrymaking was so loud that I heard it from my house. Gee, these actors put on airs like they are so important! Even though I don’t have any money, I was not in the habit of being outdone, so we made a beeline for Tokizo’s boats; we boarded and left on five or six boats. Really top-class geisha and taikomochi gathered together and noisily competed with each other. How an artist could ever beat an actor at spending, I don’t know. No matter, we celebrated in grand style, but in two or three days I had a heap of debts. In the end I was beaten, though, and bankrupt—I had lost everything. Kitaoka Bunhei gave me 300 ryō as security against my house. I was asking for other loans to pay other debts but I was broke, and for whatever reason it was the second time this happened to me in Tōkei. At best to settle it, I paid out 1 ryō 3 bu for a written bankruptcy order and offered a gomadakebō (bamboo) votive plaque; it hung ostentatiously before the house. It became the subject of talk, and the house was really popular. This bankruptcy did not just have to do with the Tokizo affair, but it certainly contributed to it. At that time the mistress of Hayashi Daigaku no Kami lived in Ikenohata; her big brother was the extremely well-known kagatobi performer Uta. For no rhyme or reason, this guy spread the rumour that I, Kunichika, had been sent to jail. He collected and used money from Sōjūrō, Kodanji, Hanshirō, and Kikugorō. He was a nasty piece of work. I am one who does nigao-e of actors, so he used that fact to swindle money out of them. When I later heard this I was gobsmacked. Uta seemed like a nice guy, so I thought that he wouldn’t be the one responsible. When I made the rounds to return the money to the actors, Sōjūrō refused to take the money back. Well, because that’s way the things go and as I had to bear the brunt of this Uta affair, trays of sushi were delivered around using this money—with this and that, then, all the money that had been borrowed went towards food and drink. But having said that, I also received a loan from Ogawara Kengyō of Yushima. Ogawara Kengyō is not blind, but he is still a bit of an oddball. He had a high opinion of himself because he had piles of money, and had even met the emperor (kintei-sama 禁廷様). He liked to brag, but when he heard that I displayed the notice before my house announcing that I had gone bankrupt, he said he would give me all the money everyone had given to me. He then wrote a kyōka for me on a sheet of Chinese paper, as if to say ‘For whatever reason, Kunichika has come to appreciate what it is like to live freely and I can really understand where he’s coming from’:

yokutoku no
yowataru fune no
kaji shidai
dōse Amida ni
makasu mi no ue

How you navigate through this world
of greed,
depends on your rudder;
in the end our fortunes
lie in the hands of Amida Buddha.

Somehow or other it was not a particularly impressive verse, but I was grateful that my debts had been paid off, so I took it, saying ‘Only one not born an Edokko builds a storehouse’. Because I flaunted my worldly desires, I made a mess of everything. I’m not saying I regret it, no, but being without money is a lot easier and, listen, even if there is no money, you will not go short of rice or sake.

Hagiwara Osamu believes that this incident on the Ōkawa (Sumida) River occurred around the spring of 1880, but ‘Manabegashi’ does not appear on the addresses of prints Kunichika produced at this time.90 It could be that his residency there was short-lived due to

90 Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p.; it cites the Yomiuri shinbun article as the source for this information, which does not give a date.
his bankruptcy, since we know from the following instalment and as corroborated by addresses on prints that Kunichika moved to Umamichi sometime in 1880.

As we have seen, in MNE 20 Kunichika compares himself to Katsushika Hokusai by claiming that he has moved more often than the older master. In this instalment he insists that he will not be upstaged by Nakamura Tokizō (Karoku III, 1849–1919) who, like most kabuki actors we learn in the last Yomiuri instalment, irked Kunichika with their arrogant behaviour. The anecdotes in each of these instalments continually demonstrate that Kunichika thrived on notoriety. The public notification of his bankruptcy, which under normal circumstances might have been humiliating socially, was interpreted by Kunichika as a good crowd-puller.

Many of the names and/or professions that feature in this episode are identifiable. ‘Hayashi Daigaku no Kami’ is a hereditary title for the heads of the Hayashi school lineage of Confucian scholars who operated the official Confucian academy, Yushima Seidō (‘Yushima Sage’s Hall’), during the Edo period. Kunichika is most likely referring to the last in the line, Hayashi Gakusai (1833–1906), who succeeded to the title Hayashi Daigaku no Kami XII in 1859. Following the Meiji ishin and the dissolution of the line, he left Tokyo in 1877 to take up a post in Gunma Prefecture. It would not have been unusual for him to retain a mistress in Tokyo (Ikenohata). It is tempting to think that she was or had been a geisha and/or prostitute. As intimated in the following instalment, a number of such women became the mistresses or wives of political personalities. Unfortunately, her name is not given and therefore her identity cannot be confirmed.

This woman’s brother, Uta, was a tobi, or ‘roofer’. The colourful rough-and-ready tobi were an indispensable part of Edo’s firefighting landscape, as we have seen in the MNE 21 segment above. They and their squads were ‘glamorized by a populace increasingly self-conscious of itself as Edoites . . . fire fighting is richly suggestive of the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of the Edo commoners’ reluctant appropriation of the city as their own’. Kunichika identifies Uta as a kagatobi, or ‘Kaga fireman/roofer’, a reference to the men and their squads who were responsible for the protection of the Edo estates of the Maeda daimyo of Kaga (present-day Kanazawa Prefecture). They were especially admired for their feats of firefighting, including feats of acrobatic bravura atop ladders and poles, and their

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91 The lineage’s founder, Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), was an advisor to the first four Tokugawa shoguns; he settled in Yushima where he and his descendants operated a Confucian academy. The Hayashi lineage was permitted the title ‘Hayashi Daigaku no Kami’; the position remained hereditary until the end of the Edo period. Elements of the school continued to around 1888 when they were integrated into Tokyo University. Kokushi daijiten Henshū Inkai, Kokushi daijiten, vol. 1, 3, and Shitanaka, Nihon jinmei daijiten, vol. 1, 5, 169.

striking regalia. Their feats were such that the kagatobi became the basis of a kabuki play by Kawatake Mokuami, *Mekura nagaya Ume ga kagatobi*, which revolves around a ‘brawl’ between them and firefighters in the service to the city of Edo. (It was first staged in March 1886 at the Chitose Theatre and illustrated by Kunichika; fig. 44). The kagatobi were engaged to protect Maeda clan estates, as well as the Yushima Seidō. Though only speculation, it may have been through this Yushima connection that Kunichika met Uta, or perhaps through his sister, if at one point in her career she had been an entertainer. (It is unclear why Kunichika refers to him as a kagatobi, since by this time daimyo estates would have been dissolved; perhaps he was, as Kunichika intimates, merely a performer and public firefighter.)

Kunichika uses the colourful expression to describe Uta’s deception—‘akai ifuku o kiseru’ (to don a red robe)—but the reason behind Uta’s decision to exploit the news of Kunichika’s bankruptcy is not known. Nevertheless, it was clearly a brazen move to extort money under the ruse of concern from the celebrated kabuki actors Sawamura Sōjūrō VI (1838–86), Ichikawa Kodanji V (1850–1922), Iwai Hanshirō VIII (1829–82), and Onoe Kikugorō V. Conspicuous by his absence in this list, however, is the actor Ichikawa Danjūrō IX who, as we will discover in the following instalment, appears to have a tepid relationship with Kunichika.

That such acclaimed actors were willing to bail out Kunichika reveals the high regard in which Kunichika must have been held as a designer of nigao-e (*MNE* 23). This respect likewise extends to a wider artistic and cultural coterie that included the entrepreneur and financier Kitaoka Bunhei and the performer Ogawara Kengyō. Both lent Kunichika money so that he could resolve his financial difficulties. Kunichika is grateful for the latter’s assistance, reciting the ditty, ‘Only one not born an Edokko builds a storehouse’, as a justification for the course that events have taken. Hayashi Daigaku no Kami XII is connected to Yushima. Kunichika’s father’s family hailed from there and the link is further extended to the magnanimous Ogawara Kengyō and the unscrupulous Uta.

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95 The mention that Ogawara was not blind suggests that this was an important distinction, since the suffix kengyō 検校 would indicate someone allied with the highest tier of blind court musicians. This would be in keeping with Kunichika’s opinion that Ogawara may have had an audience with the emperor. The religious connotations of his verse suggest that he might have been a follower of Amida Buddha, perhaps even a monk.
96 Kunichika’s verse, *Edokko no umare sokonai kura o tate*, is a variation of the more generally known verse *Edo no umare sokonai kane o mochi*; see Chapter One.
Speaking of going short of rice and sake, there is this funny story. When I had used up the money, I was living at the expense of someone named Takino at Umamichi 7-chôme, but I found this boring, so I went to take the cure at the hot springs at Kusatsu in Jōshū. There I became friendly with Suzuki Yoshisaburō of Iwatsuki in Bushū, who was a big sake brewer and he said to me, ‘I want to offer a votive plaque (ema) with a detailed illustration of the sake brewery to the Narita Fudō-sama, so would you mind coming to the house and doing a painting for me?’ Thankful for this rain shower after a drought, I jumped at the opportunity; the brewery was a large place with at least one hundred workers going about brewing sake batch after batch. ‘Well, sensei, please come this way’, saying that, I was directed to the best room in the house and was treated like a guest. The ema that I did is even today in Narita. The day before returning I drank from sunrise to sunset—perhaps even as much as five to six shō [roughly 8 to 9.6 l] of sake. The lanterns were then lit and I had another bout of drinking, and when the trays were changed, the owner [Suzuki] brought out three-cup set of sake cups, the lucky numbers of three, five, and seven [three gō, five gō, seven gō; respectively, 540 ml, 900 ml and 1.26 l]. First, the smallest three cups were filled, and I drank a viscous aged sake, then I had the group of five and seven cups, and I drank them all with great skill—even the owner was surprised at the amount I drank. Well, I received two hundred yen for the work and I was thinking of returning to Tōkei—my daughter was tired of waiting for me and so forth—when I fell into a deep sleep. A fire then broke out and even I carried out tatami mats. The fire had little effect because it was such a large place, and later I was found somewhere else really nice to stay. Anyway, as I was getting ready to leave in the morning, the owner said, ‘Sensei, because you like sake please take this’ and he gave me a sake cask weighing about 1 to 5 shō [about 27 l]. I was thankful for this, and I put it on the bottom of a hand-drawn cart where it dangled around—it looked just like a festival float. After we had gone just one ri [about 3.8 km], I was able to draw out two cupfuls from the cask tap. The cart driver and I drank; you can imagine the results, quite interesting—I danced on the top of the cart, humming a tune while I noisily marked the time . . . tap, tap, tap. Passers-by thought this funny and waved at us, and a group of kids gathered around and followed behind—it was a good atmosphere all around. We noisily made our way to Ōsawa but a number of ropes on the cask broke and we lost it. I had thought that I had taken great pains to dance back to Tōkei in style, and well, it just wouldn’t do that I would have lost this expensive sake. The driver retraced our tracks, to no avail. We reported the incident to the police and came up with this ridiculous argument: ‘I have just come from Iwatsuki and on the way we lost a cask of sake. Naturally, if it is a question of money, it is quite trivial—this sake made one exceedingly drunk, as you can see. The proof is that I drank it and acted like a madman. The worst-case scenario would be if by chance someone drank it and did something violent; I would feel responsible and that is why I reported its loss. The police thought this funny and snickered, saying, ‘If it is found on the road and turned in, I’ll make sure to let you know straight away’, but in the end this didn’t happen. So, I had given Tōkei the cold shoulder, went to Kusatsu where I made a friend and had great fun working for a month for which I received two hundred yen. I could always anticipate about this much for a fee; I think that being in straitened circumstances is a cowardly or spineless excuse, but the only time I really regretted it was when I lost the sake cask.

Following his second bankruptcy and with his finances in ruins, Kunichika appears to have accepted the patronage of an unidentified Mr. Takino. It is not clear whether the Umamichi 7-chôme address was the Takino household or whether Kunichika and his family
were living there independently. Addresses on Kunichika’s prints indicate that he lived in Umamichi on two separate occasions; first in 1877, as recorded on pieces such as the triptych of Ichikawa Sadanji as Giheiji, Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Danshichi Kurōbei, and Ichikawa Sadanji as Issun Tokubei (fig. 45), and then again from 1880 to at least 1886 (see Table II).

Kunichika appears to have grown tired of his arrangement with Takino. He escapes to Kusatsu in Jōshū Province (Kōzuke Province, present-day Gunma Prefecture), a popular hot-spring (onsen) destination even today. While there, Kunichika met the manager (zamoto) of the sake brewery in Iwatsuki, Bushū (Musashi) Province. This ‘eminent’ brewer commissioned Kunichika to paint a votive painting (ema) as an offering to the guardian deity Fudō Myōō at the Naritasan Shinshō Temple, and at the time of the interview Kunichika maintained that the ema was still located there. Today the ema is housed in the Narita Reikōkan, a museum affiliated with the Naritasan Shinshō Temple. Mounted in a frame, inscribed with the names of those involved in its creation, along with the title, Shujō isshiki no zu 酒醸一式の図, this work illustrates the various stages of the sake brewing process in sixteen vignettes (no. 11 no longer exists; no. 3 is badly damaged). It is believed that the then manager of the brewery, the Niigata-born Suzuki Yoshiei (erroneously given in the interview as Suzuki Yoshisaburō), moved the factory to its present site, then of some 6,600 m², in around 1874 or 1875. Even though the ema was commissioned some time after this move, its commission in 1882 might have been a propitious offering so as to ensure the continuing or future prosperity of the brewery.

The surviving images of the Naritasan ema reveal the types of commercial work that Kunichika did apart from woodblock prints. The signature on the fifth image in the set, Washing the rice (Maisen 米洗), demonstrates that he also engaged his student Chikaharu on this project (fig. 46). It is noteworthy that Kunichika chooses not to mention Chikaharu in the interview segment. Does the appearance of Chikaharu’s name on the ema mean that

97 Although acknowledged for its healing powers since the medieval period, Kusatsu’s healing waters were brought greater recognition due to the efforts in the later nineteenth century by the German internist and anthropologist Dr. Erwin Otto von Baelz (1849–1913), who is associated with the eponyms Baelz disease and Baelz cheilitis. He arrived in Japan in 1876 to teach medicine at Tokyo University and remained there until 1905.
99 Iwatsuki today corresponds with Iwatsuki Ward in the eastern part of the city of Saitama; during Kunichika’s day it was a stopover on the onaridō, the route used by the shogunate when making pilgrimages to the Tokugawa mausoleum, Nikkō Tōshōgū.
100 Based on the existence of the Naritasan ema, the 1882 dating is difficult to contest. Hagiwara Osamu in ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p., incorrectly lists that the incident occurred in the autumn of 1880. Mori Senzō erroneously questions whether the ema actually existed; Mori, ‘Kunichika to sono seikatsu’, 240–61.
Kunichika travelled together with Chikaharu to the hot springs, or once having received the commission, did he send word for his student to join him? In either case, it implies that Kunichika may have considered Chikaharu one of his better pupils at the time, even though Chikaharu ultimately had little success as a print designer. He was to be eclipsed by the more senior, talented, and prolific Kunichika pupils Chikashige and Chikanobu, who presumably began their apprenticeships with Kunichika in the 1860s. That Chikaharu would have known Chikanobu is evidenced in a rare extemporaneous work on a kimono by them and Kunichika, perhaps produced during a drinking party as described in MNE 21. The back of the kimono, brushed by Kunichika, depicts the courtesan Jigoku and Enma, the god of the underworld, while the front has figures by Chikanobu and Chikaharu; it has the signatures ‘Ōju Toyohara Kunichika hitsu’ (with square seal), ‘Yōshū Chikanobu (with toshidama seal), and ‘Chikaharu ga’, respectively (private collection, Tokyo). By the time of the Iwatsuki commission, Kunichika would have had a new generation of students, and it seems that Chikaharu entered Kunichika’s studio sometime in the 1870s.

A scroll painting of the courtesan Takao (Takao-dayū) has come to light that proves that Kunichika’s residence in Iwatsuki was not devoted entirely to the production of the Naritasan ema. Dated to 1882 and signed ‘By order, the brush of Toyohara Kunichika for Iwatsuki’, the painting demonstrates that Kunichika did undertake commissions other than commercial prints (fig. 47). It also reveals his skill as a painter, not only in this example but also in such works as striking paintings of Danjūrō IX in the Shibaraku role in the British Museum (fan painting; 2006,0414,0.1) and in a private collection (hanging scroll). Moreover, judging from the rather naïve style of some of the ema paintings, it could be that Kunichika left the less important aspects of the ema project to Chikaharu while he was engaged with other commissions like the Takao painting, not to mention the bouts of dedicated drinking that he colourfully describes in the interview. The wife (Chiyoko) of the fifth generation head of the brewery conveys the particulars of Kunichika’s stay, which had been passed down through the generations:

. . . Kunichika came during the time of the third generation [head of the brewery]. . . he was given a new kimono and he worked in a separate studio . . . He liked his sake and would drink over two shō a day . . . he was keen about his work and he was there for three months . . . he produced the shita-e in his studio and created the sixteen images; the faces of the workers were the faces of the famous actors of the day—after all he was a nigao-e master . . . these paintings were offered to Naritasan and they were

101 Other art names: Kaiōsai 魁鶯斎/Kunshū Chikaharu 薫州周春; he lived in Shitaya Kanasugi.
Genshoku ukiyo-e daihyakka jiten Henshū Inkai, ‘Ukiyo-e shi’, 123.
taken to Narita on a jinrikisha and installed at the Ema-dō. Because they were damaged by pigeons the ema were moved to the Narita Shiryōkan.\footnote{Reprinted in Yoshimura and Mori, ‘Nigao-e shi Toyohara Kunichika’, 17. Kunichika was not the only artist of his day to offer images to Naritasan: Yoshitoshi is recorded as having presented it with a picture of the Fudō Myōō in 1885. Segi, Saigo no ukiyo-e shi, n.p.}

His time at the brewery, therefore, appears to have been eventful. He made the ema, the painting, and even survived a minor fire. Then thinking that perhaps his daughter is impatient for his return,\footnote{Hagiwara Osamu indicates that Kunichika’s eldest daughter Hana was born in 1861 and reports that this information is taken from discussions with Yoshida Jinzō and his wife Ito (the latter Kunichika’s granddaughter, d. 1993?). Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p. However, it is believed that he had three children: Hana died on 28 February 1899 while giving birth to her second daughter Ito (Yoshida Ito above), but writing in 1915 the author Sōtsurō states that Kunichika’s second child, a son, and his other daughter did not appear to visit the artist’s grave so there were doubts whether they were still alive at this time. Sōtsurō, ‘Ukiyo-e shi shōboroku’, 25–27.} Kunichika sets off. He is dispatched with a large cask of sake, and it is no surprise that he soon taps into it. The drinking leads to an uproarious public display of song and dance. Kunichika spins a tale about a lost sake cask, an incredulous, bemused policeman, and his regrets about losing the cask in the first place.\footnote{The town of Ōsawa that Kunichika is most likely referring to is today that is part of Mitaka city in Tokyo Prefecture to the west of the capital of Tokyo; Mitaka was one of the post-stations along the Köshūkaidō. The third station before Nikkō on the roughly 146 km Köshūkaidō is called Ōsawa, but it is unlikely that this is the Ōsawa that Kunichika is referring to.} That the ema reportedly depict the faces of actors is difficult to substantiate without further research.

Kunichika explains that he was paid two hundred yen for the ema, and this tells us something about the fees he was receiving at the time. A comparison of salaries of roughly the same period reveals that in 1881, for example, a professor at Tokyo University could expect to receive a monthly salary of anywhere from 300 to 400 yen, an assistant professor from 100 to 150 yen.\footnote{Drawn from the Tōkyō teikoku daigaku (6/1881), included in Umetani, Gaisetsu, 94.} A look at the earning potential of Kunichika’s contemporaries like his drinking mate Kyōsai shows that the latter, for instance, earned as much as 163 yen or as little as fifty-three yen in 1887.\footnote{Gleaned from the March to August 1887 portions of Kyōsai’s illustrated diary, Kyōsai e-nikki, housed in the collection of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku); thanks to Oikawa Shigeru for bringing this to my attention. Also Oikawa, ‘Kawanabe Kyōsai’, 207–25. Fragments of the first three days of January 1881 and from January to October 1884 in the collection of the NDL can be viewed on-line (under the search word ‘Kyōsai e-nikki’): http://rarebook.ndl.go.jp.} Kunichika, it seems, was able to ask relatively high fees for his work, and saiken guides from about the same period corroborate that Kunichika was highly ranked in popularity as a nishiki-e master. In the 1885 Tōkyō ryūkō saikenki he appears fourth after Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, Kobayashi Eitaku, and Ochiai Yoshiiku 落合芳幾 (1833–1904). Kyōsai does not appear in the ranking, most probably because he was normally seen as an adherent of the Kano school, not a nishiki-e artist.\footnote{Ōmagiri, ‘Saikenki ni arawaretaru Meiji shoki no Ukiyo-e shi’, 39. Viewable: http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/768129; spread 15.} It is interesting that the artist Eitaku, who has today received relatively little scholarly attention, was ranked so highly. That

\footnote{\textcopyright 2015 Oxford University Press. Newland Chapter Two.}
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Kunichika was fourth and not second after Yoshitoshi, as might be expected, may, too, be significant (fig. 48).

Although there were sixteen vignettes in the framed Naritasan *ema*, the two hundred *yen* commission would still probably have been more lucrative than the fees he would have received for his single-sheet *nishiki-e* prints (a little over 12 *yen* each *ema* image). Prints do not normally list prices, particularly before the mid-1870s. However, the 1878 diptych *Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Kōmon Mitsukuni-kyō* (fig. 49) and triptych *Parody of three heroes* (see fig. 52; see also note 50, Introduction) list prices of 4 and 6 *sen*, respectively. Presumably Kunichika would have received a flat fee for a design. A publisher would have had to take into account the potential profit margin of a print in his determination of remuneration to the designer, as well as fees to printer and blockcutter, the cost of materials and marketing.

Kunichika’s sojourn must have appealed as grist to the newspaper mill, since two consecutive *Yomiuri* articles from 13 August 1891 report his return there. The first explains that:

This newspaper has recently reported that the artist [old man/master] Toyohara no Kunichika unexpectedly went off, his whereabouts unknown. Departing Tokyo and leaving his daughter with an acquaintance in Yokohama, he arrived alone at the hot springs of Kusatsu, in Jōshū. He called in at the Yuhikorō [run by] Ōkawa Kakuzō, entering the baths [taking the cure], all the while continuing his painting. Currently under commission by the owner [Ōkawa], he is producing a painting [4 x 7 *shaku*] of Murasaki Shikibu, and this painting was begun at the end of last month with an expected completion of the middle of next month; once it is completed he will take it on foot to Aikawa, Sado Province [present-day Niigata Prefecture], and will enjoy himself there for about six months. As an aside, there are about two thousand bathers [visitors] at the moment in Kusatsu in Jōshū, including [such eminent Westerners as] the two messieurs Drs. Berutsu [Erwin (von) Baelz] of [Tokyo] Imperial University and Sukuriipa [Julius Scriba], as well as Dr. Kurafe [Kraffe?], Head of the Yokohama German Hospital, who are also staying there; [they say that] the Fahrenheit thermometer fluctuates about 70° [for the waters].

What follows in this *MNE* segment gets to the heart of Kunichika’s art practice as a *nigao-e* master:

*After that the discussion eventually turns to actors*

I am an artist of *nigao-e* and for that reason, I have kept company with all the actors. From the very beginning I did not take to Danjūrō; once when Danjūrō gave a performance of the character Akatsuki Hoshigorō, I drew him in that role and Kikugorō as Oguri no Umakichi. At that time Danjūrō had gone to Kikugorō’s place and moaned... ‘It’s a given that all these print artists give actors money [make money for actors] by doing *nigao-e*—it might a bit harsh but Kunichika is really arrogant’. He

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108 Prices are not uncommon on prints after c. mid-1870s, which raises the question of the nature of regulation at this time; this is a topic for further research.
really had gone too far, and then when there was a performance of Saigō Takamori, well, I knowingly drew Danjūrō with bulging eyes and I also didn’t include any of Takamori’s young followers from the story. Danjūrō got wind of this, and seeing as he was in such a huff about it, I finally decided never to design a triptych with the single figure of Danjūrō. Regardless of who asked I turned them down. When Arashi Kichirōku—today he is known as Bandō Kichirōku—heard about this he voiced his opinion, and even the publisher said, ‘Well, you should just put up with it and do it’, so I did start doing them [prints] again. This Kichirōku is an extremely shrewd character; he is also a good writer and has some flair. He is quite unusual because of his ability with words, something that I can’t do, and is something limited to actors like Danjūrō and Kichirōku and others like the late Danroku. Danroku was a very charming guy—in fact I supported him to a degree and gave him the poetry name ‘Seishōan Hien’, which is actually from the late actor’s own verse: ‘A jumping monkey, the single green branch of the pine on the summit’ (sarude hitori eda aoshi mine no matsu); it’s a good verse. He had a knack in grasping things, like in the following poem:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{kaze yamite} & \quad \text{The breeze quietens,} \\
\textit{tanishi no ugoku} & \quad \text{the pond snails crawls} \\
\textit{mizuta kana} & \quad \text{in the paddy field.}
\end{align*}
\]

I am not going to explain the story behind this \textit{hokku}, except to say simply that a dog’s birth into the world is easy; it is hard, though, for the pond snail—when a pond snail gives birth, it leaves its shell to lay its young on grasses or on the end of a pole to untangle itself. If the wind is strong, we say that its shell will be scattered and it will have no home to return to. Even though we might understand this, no one would be able to compose a poem like this. A long time ago, Danroku lived in a shogunal area. At that time a fire broke out in the neighbourhood and burnt everything to the ground as far as Ryōgoku Bridge. Danroku was burnt out of house and home, and he trembled with fright next to only the luggage he managed to carry away with him. The teacher Shōrō came and said, ‘So, here you are Danroku, you won’t come up with a good one now, eh?’ and when he heard this Danroku returned to his senses and recited:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{furukusa ya} & \quad \text{The old grasses} \\
\textit{yakete sawarazu} & \quad \text{were charred,} \\
\textit{tsukuzukushi} & \quad \text{the horsetails are unhindered.}
\end{align*}
\]

Even Shōrō was moved [and responded]:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{shirauo no} & \quad \text{Are there tears} \\
\textit{me ni no namida ka} & \quad \text{in the eyes of the whitebait too—} \\
\textit{kono hikage} & \quad \text{smoke from the fires.}
\end{align*}
\]

I thought it remarkable for this type of thing to happen during a fire, and that my efforts would have fallen well short of this. Even Kichirōku had one, but then he is so talented and is really better at witty passages. Around this time, some guests were invited to a restaurant as the \textit{kōshaku} master Nankoku was leaving for Echigo. There was an impressive group of government officials there, and geisha were also engaged. A particular seventy-year-old man swaggered about being in the presence of a high personage.\(^{110}\) Nankoku is wondering ‘Who is this old guy?’, and when he had a good look he realised it was Bandō Kichirōku. He thought this bizarre—this guy is quite

\(^{110}\) Kunichika uses the expression \textit{gozen gozen to iwarete}, which suggests a person of high standing; it could imply a Meiji politician or perhaps, but less likely, someone affiliated with the imperial house.
worldly wise. Kichiroku then calls to Nankoku in the other room ‘Oh, what a rare treat, let’s the two of us drink a cup of sake together for old time’s sake’, so we sat cross-legged and began to drink. Kichiroku lowered his voice and then says, ‘In my case, my daughter has had her name removed from the geisha register and by coming here can move up the social ladder as if a kita no kata’. Nankoku is not the type to tell lies and if so, then Kichiroku’s daughter is without a doubt a former geisha from Shinbashī named Suzume. Anyway, he is a clever man. Danjūrō might be more learned, he can draw a bit, but his many attempts at hokku are undistinguished, and after all is said and done, there is nothing that can be done if he completely stuck up about it [his accomplishments].

The anecdotes in this segment are more personal in tone: he shows a particular fondness for the actors Kichiroku and Danroku, and speaks unreservedly about his relationship with Ichikawa Danjūrō IX, the latter anecdote about whom has been well canvassed in the literature on the artist. It is clear from Kunichika’s own description that the two men had an uneasy personal rapport, no doubt due to the arrogance and pride that each exhibited in equal measure. However, as intimated in Danjūrō’s alleged comments, their working relationship must have been symbiotic.

Kunichika, as actor portraitist, and Danjūrō, as kabuki actor, had a working relationship that extended over some four decades. Kunichika designed hundreds of prints featuring Danjūrō, and he is the most frequently depicted actor within Kunichika’s kabuki oeuvre. He is also, it should be noted, the subject of Kunichika’s last major actor print sets, One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō. It could be thought that Ichikawa Danjūrō, along with Onoe Kikugorō—the second most illustrated actor in Kunichika’s actor nigao-e repertory—supplied Kunichika with his ‘bread-and-butter’ work (nigao-e are discussed in Chapter Four).

The sequence of events in Kunichika’s anecdotes regarding the Danjūrō incident, however, does not bear up completely upon closer scrutiny. The print referred to by Kunichika of Danjūrō IX as Akatsuki Hoshigorō and Onoe Kikugorō V as Oguri no Umakichi could be the triptych dated to 15 October 1878 (fig. 50). This work was released to coincide with the opening performance of the seven-act play by Kawatake Mokuami entitled Jitsugetsusei Kyōwa seidan 日月星享和政談.

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111 ‘Kita no kata’ was historically a reference to the primary wife of a court noble, who enjoyed greater status than other wives; the term ‘kita no kata’ (the northern side) is a reference to northern pavilion that would have been this woman’s domain. The implication could be that Kichiroku’s daughter was married or somehow allied with the ‘high personage’ present. This Suzume might be the figure ‘Osuzu’ illustrated in Kazumasa Ogawa, Types of Japan, celebrated geysa of Tokyo in colotype (Yokohama: Kelly and Walsh, c. 1895); see plate 4: http://www.baxleystamps.com/litho/ogawa/ogawa_geysha105-4-1.jpg.

112 In actual fact, the character of Akatsuki Hoshigorō appears in the play Kiku no en tsuki no shiranami 菊宴月白波, first performed in 9/1821 at Edo’s Kawarasaki Theatre by Onoe Kikugorō III. Ihara, Kabuki nenpyō, vol. 6, 79.
(Disquisition of the political affair of the Kyōwa era) at Tokyo’s Shintomi Theatre. The Shintomi suffered a devastating fire in November 1876; the new theatre opened in June 1878.

Kunichika’s rejoinder to Danjūrō’s criticism is one, or perhaps more than one, nigao-e of the actor in the role of general Saigō Takamori in which he is portrayed with unflattering, ‘bulging eyes’ with no child retainers. The mention of the character of Saigō Takamori (1827–77) and his three child retainers invites an immediate association with the Mokuami play, Okige no kumo harau asagochi 西南雲晴朝東風 (The morning east wind clearing the clouds of the southwest), which dramatised events from Japan’s internecine Seinan War of 1874–77. It debuted in February/March 1878 at the Shintomi Theatre and illustrations of this piece and renditions of the characters dominated Kunichika’s actor nigao-e of those months (fig. 51).

Again, Kunichika does not provide the reader with specific information about which print or prints he is referring to, only that ‘I knowingly drew Danjūrō with bulging eyes and I also didn’t include any of Takamori’s young followers from the story.’ Kunichika did any number of triptychs for Okige no kumo harau asagochi in acts or compositions that illustrate Danjūrō without the three younger retainers (e.g. fig. 52), but these seem to correspond to the February/March 1878 date, therefore before the Akatsuki and Umakichi print mentioned above. Moreover, each of these compositions portray Danjūrō with ‘bulging eyes’. Actor nigao-e characteristically captured actors during a heightened dramatic moment (mie) in a play, and exaggerated and/or crossed eyes were the rule rather than the exception. Moreover, I have not encountered a print that depicts an eye expression any more accentuated than another. It can only be concluded that twenty years on Kunichika is incorrect in his recollections—it would be more plausible to reverse the sequence—or perhaps it is a further error on the part of the newspaper transcriber. Or, was Kunichika using the ruse of spinning and embroidering a good yarn to air his own grievances towards the actor?

It would have been bad business for both actors and publishers had a nishiki-e artist of Kunichika’s stature refused to design prints of one the era’s leading actors. Both the relatively minor actor Bandō Kichirokō (Mori Kichirokō, d. 1902) and publishers encouraged the artist

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113 It ran until 18 November. Ihara, Kabuki nenpyō, vol. 7, 240; Hattori, Kabuki jiten, 120. Although he does not cite his sources, Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p., records that the Danjūrō incident occurred in October 1878, perhaps on the basis of this print’s existence. A Kunichika print celebrating the opening of the new theatre is the Shintomiza honfū shinshuttai no zu 新富座本普請出来之図 (Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan: 007-0750/007-0751/007-0752).
to accept the situation and continue working.\textsuperscript{116} Kunichika’s mention of the actor Bandō Kichirō in connection with the incident may hint at which \textit{Okige no kumo harau asagochi} image he is actually referring to. It seems that only one triptych of the play illustrates Kichirō (see fig. 51). In this triptych he and Nakamura Tsuruzō appear as younger male (but not child) retainers on the same sheet alongside Danjūrō who, not surprisingly, is shown with ‘bulging eyes’. As Danjūrō does not appear alone, could it be that the print demonstrates Kunichika’s earlier decree, ‘I finally decided never to design a triptych with the single figure of Danjūrō’. It might tell us something, too, about the dynamics in actor print compositions: clearly main stars of a performance (or act therein) are frequently allocated pride of place in a multi-sheet compositions through their placement alone on a print sheet.\textsuperscript{117} Would Kunichika’s comment therefore be interpreted as a very obvious slight towards the actor? In either case, Kunichika’s professional rift with the actor does not appear to have been long lived. Danjūrō figures in all the prints of \textit{Okige no kumo harau asagochi} as in those accompanying the \textit{Matsumosaka eichida no shintoku} 松栄千代田神徳, which ran from 10 June to 21 July 1878 at the Shintomi Theatre.\textsuperscript{118}

Kunichika further links Kichirō’s skill with language to an incident involving another kabuki actor, the minor performer, Ichikawa Danroku, and Danroku’s poetry mentor, Shōrō. Danroku was a follower of Ichikawa Danzō (1836–1911). In the mid-1880s, Kunichika designed a number of prints portraying Danroku. The artist describes where the actor lives as gundai 郡代 (a type of shogunal administrator), a hint that the actor may have resided in a gundai yashiki, perhaps in Nihonbashi Bakurō-chō.\textsuperscript{119} Their association is further acknowledged in the short obituary in the \textit{Yomiuri shinbun} from 16 January 1891 that announced Danroku’s death on 4 January from tuberculosis: ‘depicted in actor nigao, starting with Kunichika. . .’\textsuperscript{120} The poet Shōrō is probably a reference to a generation head of the Shōrōan 松露庵 lineage of poets.

\textsuperscript{116} Kichirō is a relatively minor actor, appearing as an auxiliary figure in prints by Kunichika and other contemporaries such as Chikashige, Ginkō, Hiroshige III, Kunimasa IV, and Yoshiiku. His grave and commemorative stone exists at Daisei-ji in Mitaka. It is not clear whether Kunichika is referring to one or more publishers, but prints of \textit{Okige no kumo harau asagochi} were issued by Fukuda Kumajirō, Takekawa Seikichi, Yamamura Kanesaburō, Kurata Tasuke, and Kodama Yashichi.

\textsuperscript{117} This merits further research into factors such as the role in the play, major vs. minor actor/character; sponsorship by the actor, as seen in Chapter Four, actors vied with one another to influence the marketing and publishing of large sets; and personal factors as here.

\textsuperscript{118} Ihara, \textit{Kabuki nenpyō}, vol. 7, 237.

\textsuperscript{119} E.g. Waseda online collection: 100-8014 (1884), 101-8012 (1884), 201-4587 (n.d.), 201-4166 (n.d.), 101-4495 (1885), 201-3764 (1886), 101-2542 (1886), 007-2340 (n.d.) and 007-2343 (n.d.); also Tōkyō-toritsu Toshokan: 5714-C053(01, 02, 03) (1883).

\textsuperscript{120} ‘Yakusha-e no sōdan yaku—Danroku ga shikyo’ 役者絵の相談役・団六死去 (‘An advisor of actor prints—Danroku dies’), reprinted in Uchikawa and Matsujima, \textit{Meiji nyūsu jiten}, vol. 4, 24.
This sequence is set against the background of a devastating fire, and Kunichika’s description suggests that it is conflagration of 26 January 1881, one of the most destructive in Meiji Tokyo. It broke out in the Kanda district, mostly likely the work of an arsonist. Fanned by winter winds it spread to the Ryōgoku Bridge, jumping across the Sumida River to the eastern wards. In its wake, close to 11,000 buildings were destroyed. The artist Kobayashi Kiyochika, whose own home disappeared in the fire, captured the conflagration in his sketchbooks and later turned a number of these images into prints. The disaster oddly spawned a poetry ‘competition’ between Danroku and Shōro, and Kichiroku. (It is amazing to think that Kunichika would be able to recall these lines word-perfect after so many years.)

The actor Kichiroku also features in the following segment, which entails a meeting with the raconteur Nankoku, a master of kōshaku (kōdan), a type of storytelling performed in towns by professional raconteurs. Nankoku’s full name ‘Shibata Nankoku’ connects him to the celebrated raconteur Shibata Nansō (1775–1846), and his name appears in various records from the period, including the Shogei jinmeiroku (Listing of personalities in the arts, 1875) and the Gundankan (A mirror of war tales, 1881). The first lists his residence in Kanda, Kamishira, Kabe-chō, while the latter mentions him in connection with his role as raconteur of the tale of the poetess Ono no Komachi.

Kunichika’s recount of Nankoku and Kichiroku’s chance meeting opens up what appears on the surface an opportunity for idle gossip. Kunichika tells us that Kichiroku’s daughter, Suzume, once a geisha from Shinbashi, was now circulating in the elite circles of Meiji politicians. We are not clear as to the circumstances leading to her presence at these soirees, but it was not unheard for geisha to be released from their contracts and to marry Meiji political leaders. Perhaps one of the better known is the wife of Inoue Kaoru (1835–1915), Japan’s foreign minister from 1885 to 1887. The popularity of Tokyo geisha, particularly those from Shinbashi and Yanagibashi, grew in the face of the continuing decline of licensed districts and prostitutes of the Yoshiwara during the Meiji. At the time of Kunichika’s account the Shinbashi would have been the leading geisha district in the capital, a ‘convenient place for nightly gatherings of nobles . . . businessmen and politicians of the

121 E.g. Smith, Kiyochika, pls. 47–52.
122 Shitanaka, Nihon jinmei daijiten, vol. 3, 266. Nankoku’s name is listed in Nishimura Hayatarō 西村隼太郎, Shogei jinmeiroku 諸芸人名録 (1875), a publication with the names/addresses of performers required by the government for taxation purposes; reproduced in Geinōshi Kenkyūkai, Nihon shomin bunka, vol. 8 (1976), 327, and http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/779805. His name ‘Shibata Nankoku’ appears alongside other Shibata Nansō students, including Nangyoku 南玉, and other presumed Shibata Nansō lineage followers/students, including Nanri 南理, Nankei 南麗, Nankei 南勢, and Nansha 南舎 in Yasuda, ‘Tōkyō Gundankan’ (see http://school.nijl.ac.jp/kindai/SUMI/SUMI-00134.html) and in Noda Shigemasa 野田茂政, Shishū shihō ichiran 己迺四方一覧 (1881); reproduced in Nihon shomin bunka, vol. 5 (1976), 382.
125 See also. Summersgill, ‘The Twenty-four hours at Shinbashi and Yanagibashi’, 60–63.
new Japan’. Consequently, entertainers from the Shinbashi and the Yanagibashi districts were well paid (1 yen) compared to geisha of other areas such as the Nihonbashi.

We are left wondering about the reason behind Kunichika’s ramblings at this stage, unless it was intended as a preface to his final indictment of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX: ‘Danjūrō might be more learned, he can draw a bit, but his many attempts at hokku are undistinguished, and after all is said and done, there is nothing that can be done if he completely stuck up about it [his accomplishments].’ Kunichika uses the colourful idiom, ‘tengu ni natchimacha’ (‘if he turns into a stuck-up tengu, then the hell with him’), a tengu being a type of winged goblin. The expression carries the meaning of being conceited about or very proud of something that one has done.

The interview ends with a brief *nota bene* and *errata*:

[N.B.]: Moreover, from the time of the former government he had the honour of producing masterworks to be sent to places like France, Austria and the United States (this article) (errata) previously, the name of Hashimoto Sakuzō should read Chikanobu (周延) and not Chikanobu (親信).}

While this final footnote distances us from the immediate world of the ‘Meiji no Edokko’, it is nonetheless further evidence of how these artists—Kunichika included—were seen as representatives of a cultural past recast for consumption outside Japan and fitting the image of what was considered suitably ‘Japanese’ (e.g. of an exotic land) and would in turn assist in their own enduring legacy. They were also representatives of a cultural present, even though international exhibition objects were fairly ‘commercialised’ and not of the highest artistic

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124 Marks, ‘The geisha’, 59; Tsukioka Yoshitoshi’s set, The Twenty-four Hours at Shinbashi and Yanagibashi (Shinryū nijūyōji), was published from 1880 to 1881.

125 Ishii, *Meiji jibutsu kigen*, vol. 2, 1197. In Nihonbashi the rate was 80 sen.

126 The Japanese government commissioned many pieces for international exhibitions; the reporter is most likely referring to the Wien Weltstellung (1873); Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia (1876); Paris Exposition Universelle (1867, 1878, 1889, 1900); World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago (1893). As noted in the introduction, it is known that Kunichika contributed to the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle. The *Yomiuri* reports on his participation in the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago; Iriye, *Mutual images*, 37; see 37–46 for a discussion of the Chicago fair. In Japan, a commission was established in 1891 by the emperor to oversee the preparations. Local commissions were appointed to advise exhibitors and to ensure a careful selection in an effort to avoid the criticism levelled as Japan’s previous submissions as overly western-influenced; see Ibid., 38. Kunichika’s contribution to the Chicago fair is followed in the *Yomiuri* in 1892 and early 1893. An article from 24 August 1892 suggests that Kunichika is initially not a willing participant, even though his work and that by others were well received in the Paris show almost thirty years earlier; ‘Gahaku Toyohara Kunichika-ō Sekai Daihakurankai shuppin no kigo o jisu’, 3. A *Yomiuri* report some two months later (19 October 1892) states that Kunichika had discussions with Yamataka Nobutsura (山髙信離 1842–1907), an official who had been involved in the Paris and Vienna world exhibitions. Yamataka eventually convinced Kunichika to finish his commission; see ‘Kunichika-ō mata arawaru’, 3.
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calibre). It is Kunichika’s place as a leading—and surviving—member of the Utagawa Kuniyoshi studio within a cultural milieu seeking to construct an associative and collective cultural memory particularly comes into play when we examine his interview further within the context of the entire suite of ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interviews in the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

‘Meiji no Edokko’: ‘personal memory, collective memory’

. . . I don’t know if it’s the memory or the memory of the
memory that is left. . .’

Spoken by the character Ricardo Morales in the film, *El secreto de sus ojos*, Juan José Campanella, director, 2009

Edokko as cultural trope

On one level, the *Yomiuri shinbun* interview with Toyohara Kunichika contextualises the life of an individual affiliated with the Utagawa lineage of print designers, whose history and stylistic conventions are firmly grounded in the preceding Edo period. His recollections, told in the vernacular voice associated with an older generation *Edokko*, centre on his own life and the coterie of artists, writers, and actors around him. His connection to cultural circles provides a kind of ‘cultural capital’ that would serve to assure his reputation after his death (see Chapter Four). Moreover, his collection of fragmented, yet very personal, memories are intended to perpetuate the unique identity of his *Edokko* persona. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, these stories, upon deeper inspection, are not always accurate recollections. They are, at times, improvised (whether intentionally or not) and embellished in order to secure the investment in his irreverent *Edokko* image.¹

The *Edokko* image as a kind of cultural investment, however, becomes all the more important when we realise that Kunichika’s interview is only one within the serialised feature ‘Meiji no Edokko’, which ran successively from October to December 1898. The *MNE* engages nine men—there are no women—who were born and came of age at the end of the Edo period. By the time of the interview in late 1898, they were now middle-aged to older men (ranging from, according to the Japanese calendar, fifty-four to seventy-one years). As in the case of the Kunichika interview, each contextualised the lives of individuals who were lauded as quintessential *Edokko* and whose varied professions fit the *Edokko* construct that is by and large, of the commoner urban class (*chônin*) and resident in the *shitamachi* area.² They include the fishmonger Fukui Hiyôkichi of Hasegawa-chô, Nihonbashi; Watanabe Matsugorô, formerly the head of the ‘Ha Company’ of firemen, in Tadokoro-chô; the greengrocer Tsuruoka Tatsugorô of Kanda; the tailor Ōdaki Matakichi of Soto-Kanda; a

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¹ This borrows the idea from Claude Lévi-Strauss that we are all *bricoleurs*, or ‘improvisers’, and that we improvise how we talk about ourselves to fit a cultural balance; adapted from Bruner, *Making stories*, 100.

² See ‘Bibliography I. “Meiji no Edokko” articles, *Yomiuri shinbun*’ for the order of their appearance.
neighbourhood doctor (machi-isha) from Saruwaka-chō (Asakusa), Mogami Ryōhei; Miyashita Shinpei, a retired Nihonbashi sake merchant and former sumo wrestler. Only one, Hanamata Masanao, falls slightly outside the orb, but as a soldier from the Shōgitai group of Tokugawa retainers who opposed the Meiji government and fought in the Battle of Ueno in 1868, he personifies a rebellious figure of the old guard resisting the new Meiji oligarchy.\(^3\) The remaining segments are with the nishiki-e designers Kunichika and Baidō Hōsai. That two nishiki-e designers are allocated interviews indicates the cultural weight now given to these artists, suggesting that the nishiki-e tradition was an integral part of Edokko historical memory. In fact, of all the interviewees it is Baidō Hōsai (MNE 28–43) who receives the most coverage, even though both today and during his lifetime he was generally viewed as a minor artist, especially when compared to Kunichika.\(^4\) That a much longer interview is conducted with Hōsai than with Kunichika, who by this time enjoyed greater notoriety as a print designer, raises intriguing questions about their public reception (or individual verbosity). Of the nine individuals, however, Kunichika is today perhaps the best known, no doubt due to the extraordinary large body of surviving tangible objects (woodblock prints, illustrated books, paintings) that epitomises a form of collective cultural property (see Chapter Four).

It might matter little how celebrated any of the nine men were individually, since their interviews, if examined together, can also be read within a broader context as a demonstration of the preservation of collective cultural memory, in general, and as an embodiment of Meiji society’s memory and reconstruction of Edo cultural identity, in particular. The interviews can thus be interpreted as operating on the two levels: personal memory (and therefore autobiographical) and collective (historical) memory.\(^5\) The theory of collective memory and the role it plays was initiated by the French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), who was hailed as the first sociologist to stress that ‘our conceptions of the past are affected by the mental images we employ to solve present problems, so that collective memory and the role it plays was initiated by the French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), who was hailed as the first sociologist to stress that ‘our conceptions of the past are affected by the mental images we employ to solve present problems, so that collective

\(^3\) Although the Shōgitai were enlisted to keep the peace in the capital, they became a source of unrest in the city and a thorn in the side of the imperial army, who eventually opened fire on them during the Battle of Ueno Hill (5th month, 1868). See Steele, ‘Rise and fall of the Shōgitai’, 128–44.

\(^4\) Kunichika is recorded in the Yomiuri shinbun saying that once he was gone that he considered the likely successor to the Utagawa style would be, not Hōsai, rather Hōsai’s son and pupil Kokunimasa (literally ‘Little’ or ‘Junior’ Kunimasa), who is best remembered for his actor and war prints of the 1890s; see ‘Gaka Kokunimasa no kiheki’ (‘The strange habits of the artist Kokunimasa’), Yomiuri shinbun (7 April 1896), 3. The writer on Meiji prints, Higuchi Niyō writes that Kokunimasa later became a student of Iijima Kōga (1829–1900), changing his name to Ryūa in around 1904. The dates for Kokunimasa are traditionally given as 1874 to 1944, but Higuchi states that he died before the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. Higuchi, ‘Yonsei Toyokuni to Takeuchi Hōsai’, 156. In Tōkyō Asahi shinbun, ‘Kunisada no sōzoku’, 3, it is suggested, moreover, that Hōsai’s art is somewhat derivative.

\(^5\) The expression ‘personal memory, collective memory’ is taken from Ricoeur, Memory, history, forgetting, 131.
memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present’. The idea of collective memory is relevant to the discussion of the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interviews as they are symbolic of exchanges operating ‘between the living memory of individual persons and the public memory of the communities to which we [they] belong’ and it is the dialectic of this exchange that counts ‘for us and for whom we count’. In other words, collective memories are not exclusive to us as individuals, since they are shared with other members of our society, thereby making them the product of complex forms of social communication. While collective memory is in the main centred on historical locations (here, the city of Edo and the cultural entity of the Edo period) that mark a defining moment in a country’s history (here as oppositional to Tokyo and the Meiji era), it can also delineate a metaphorical ‘realm of memory’ that incorporates any aspect with which a social group identifies. Collective memory therefore becomes iconic, its expression constituting a ‘mental topography’ that influences cultural, social, and political identity.

For the notion of collective memory regarding a point in the past to exist, however, the past in question cannot be viewed as totally alien, nor, it could be added, temporally distanced. Historically, the Edo period was the most immediate past of the Meiji, meaning, writes historian Carol Gluck, that it (the Edo) was linked in time to modernity (the Meiji) by ‘its beforeness as well as its pastness’. The collective memory of Meiji Tokyoites about the Edo period, in general, and about Edokko and the city of Edo, in particular, revolved around the desire for some sort of historical continuity as well as an understanding of the past in terms of the present. As we shall see, the Edo period was one that stirred feelings of great nostalgia in the third and fourth decades of the Meiji era. In this respect the MNE articles become part of historical collective memory. They are not necessarily the result of a natural process, but rather are ‘socially constructed’ and therefore they represent a constructive process as opposed to one solely based on pure retrieval. According to Halbwachs, ‘While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember . . . Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time’.

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6 Halbwachs (Coser), *On collective memory*, introduction, 34.
8 Saaler and Schwentker, *The power of memory*, 1. Saaler and Schwentker are borrowing from Pierre Nora’s idea of ‘realms of memory’.
9 Gluck, ‘The invention of Edo,’ in Vlastos, *Mirror of modernity*, 262. This notion of continuity with the past in the invention of tradition echoes the writings of Eric Hobsbawn; see, for example, Hobsbawn and Ranger, *The invention of tradition*, 1.
10 Halbwachs (Coser), *On collective memory*, introduction, 22.
11 Quoted from Maurice Halbwachs, *The collective memory*, 48 and 84, respectively, in Halbwachs (Coser), introduction, 22.
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Working under the conceit that the reception of texts is culturally and socio-historically conditioned, the Yomiuri interviews provide an insight into how Edo culture would have been constructed and how it was defined, if not consciously, then unconsciously by a Meiji readership. They become a dialectic discourse—a ‘cultural’ script encouraging a ‘cultural’ memory—for a Meiji readership and how they perceived, or wished to perceive, the Edo period against their own reality. As a result, the articles traverse two cultural spheres that serve to draw upon and romanticise a past (embodied in Edo city’s Edokko) set against a present (the ‘modernising’ Meiji Tokyo) as clearly indicated in the title ‘Meiji no Edokko’. It was an oppositional, yet conflated, relationship, whereby one side was invented and positioned against the other. The dichotomy between the past headquarters of Edo under the Tokugawa shogunate and the modernising ‘Eastern capital’ of Tokyo, the name acquired on 13 September 1868, is keenly noted in 1878 by the travel writer Isabella L. Bird (1831–1904): ‘It would seem an incongruity to travel to Yedo by railway, but quite proper when the destination is Tokiyo [sic].’

Before the Meiji ishin and the ensuing era of enormous political, economic, social and cultural change implied by Bird’s observations, the preceding Edo period witnessed the development of a tremendously sophisticated urban culture on a number of levels and largely buffered from contemporary European trends. However, with the ‘forced opening’ of the country in 1854 and the rush towards modern nationhood, the concept of ‘bunmei’, or civilisation, was equated with the ‘nineteenth-century Western notion of progress based on scientific rationalism’. According to Article 4 of the Charter Oath of 1868, ‘evil customs of the past shall be broken off and everything based upon the just laws of nature’, casting the Edo period as an oppressive, socially shackled ‘feudal’ system in the face of the modern nation state. Within an exceptionally compact period Western technologies, institutional models, and aesthetic theories were imported, creating circumstances in which ‘entire worlds of representation and thought were grafted onto existing indigenous ones’. All of this was done under the rubric of an all-encompassing state ideology of bunmei kaika (‘civilisation and enlightenment’), accompanied by programs and policies that were intended to push Japan into parity with the West. It seemed to one foreign adviser, the German doctor Erwin von Baelz (1849–1913; see also Chapter Two, p. 85), that the Japanese were quick to renounce their own culture before Westerners:

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12 Bird, Unbeaten tracks in Japan, 11. For further reading on the Meiji era, see Gluck, Japan’s modern myths.
14 Quoted in De Bary, Gluck, and Tiedemann, Sources of Japanese Tradition, 672.
15 Ivy, Discourses of the vanishing, 69.
In the 1870s at the outset of the modern era, Japan went through a strange period, in which she felt a contempt for her own native achievements. Their own history, their own religions, their own art, did not seem to the Japanese worth talking about, and were even regarded as matters to be ashamed of.\(^{16}\)

The Meiji government intended that the new capital of Tokyo, as the symbol of the new Japan, serve as its showcase of a progressive, modern city to the international community and to the numbers of foreigners arriving from abroad. To this end, a variety of everyday social practices came under scrutiny, were modified or proscribed, in an age that became overly concerned with external appearances in an effort to jettison customs that were seen as ‘backward’ by recently arriving foreigners and to avoid being laughed at by them.\(^{17}\) Nudity in public (e.g. loin-cloth wearing rickshaw drivers and day labourers), urinating in the gutters before shops (one group of farmers was said to mistake the post box for the new public urinal!), uncovered sacred phallic stones, transporting excrement, and mixed bathing, among others, were proscribed.\(^{18}\) The more ridiculous included a ban on riding a horse through a house. Such ordinances were rich fodder for lampooning as seen in the woodblock print set, *The over fifty articles illustrated*, by Kunichika’s contemporary Shōsai Ikkei 昇斎一景 (act. 1870s–80s) (fig. 53).\(^{19}\)

Strict controls were placed on the public spaces around the approaches to the city’s bridges that catered to a bustling popular urban culture developed by the politically neutered, but economically empowered, merchant class during the Edo period. As the Japanese politician of the period, Nishi Amane 西周 (1829–97), observed:

> At the present time an immense number of European customs are pouring in upon us; it is as though a bottle has been overturned. Clothing, food and drink, houses, laws, government, customs, even all kinds of crafts and scholarly pursuits—there is nothing which we are not taking from the West.\(^{20}\)

Western practices, some quite alien to Japanese traditions, like the consumption of red meat—included in dishes of the day such as the humorously coined *kaika nabe* 開化鍋 (‘civilisation

\(^{16}\) Erwin (von) Baelz, *Awakening Japan*, 72.

\(^{17}\) A newspaper article elucidating public nakedness directed towards these two groups declared ‘you must not be laughed at by foreigners’; see Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 46.

\(^{18}\) A number of these offenses were listed in the *ishiki kaii jōrei* 違式詿違條例 of XII/1872; for a discussion of this ordinance regarding ‘inappropriate’ behaviour, see Haruta, *Ishiki kaii jōrei*, 13, 33–48.

\(^{19}\) For a discussion of Ikkei’s satiric stab at these ordinances, see Oikawa, ‘Manga de oshieta Meiji’, 28–31.

\(^{20}\) Nishi was a member of the Meirokusha (est. 1873), a society of scholars dedicated to ‘bringing the light of Western civilization to dispel the darkness of Japan’s “feudal” isolation’. Quotation originally published in Nishi Amane, ‘Yōji o motte kokugo o sho suru no ron’, in *Meirokusha zasshi* no. 1 (March 1874) (1); translation in Shively, ‘The Japanization of the middle Meiji’, in Shively, *Tradition and modernization*, 93.
stew’)—were encouraged by thinkers like Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901). Fukuzawa was also an outspoken critic of the Tokugawa regime:

We do not have time to wait for the enlightenment of our neighbors so that we can work together toward the development of Asia. It is better for us to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with civilized nations of the West.\(^{21}\)

This wanton aping of Western customs became the subject of ridicule, for instance, by Kanagaki Robun in his collections of parodic sketches entitled *Aguranabe* (Sitting cross-legged at the beef pot, 1871): ‘We really should be grateful that even people like ourselves can now eat beef, thanks to the fact that Japan is steadily becoming a truly civilized country’.\(^{22}\)

Like many of his contemporaries and as noted in the Introduction, Kunichika produced numerous prints of up-to-date customs in the genre of *kaika-e* (‘enlightenment pictures’), recognisable by their garish aniline colorants and touted by Japanese publishers as encapsulating the new, the ‘modern’, and an aesthetic that European and American ‘connoisseurs’ vituperated as degenerate.\(^{23}\) He also acknowledged imported technologies of the period such as photography that would impact his métier (see Chapter Four). However, it appears that Kunichika also shared with the writers and poets with whom he collaborated, including Robun, a willingness to lodge tongue-in-cheek swipes at the adoption of modern mores.\(^{24}\) One such example is from the series *Scenes of the twenty-four hours, a pictorial trope* of 1890–1891 (see also fig. 15), in which an Utagawa-style beauty is shown, quite incongruously, feeding a baby with a western-style glass ‘banjo bottle’ with the verse (and accompanying gloss):

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\(^{21}\) Attributed to Fukuzawa Yukichi, ‘Datsu-a ron’ (‘Saying Good-bye to Asia’), *Jiji shinpō* (16 March 1885), translated in Lu, ‘Good-bye Asia (1885)’, in Lu, *Japan, a documentary history*, 353. However, ‘enlightenment’ thinkers like Fukuzawa Yukichi, author of the bestselling *Seiyō jijō* (Conditions of the west, between 1866 and 1870), were not entirely adverse to drawing upon the Edo period when it suited their needs; even the like-minded Taguchi Ukichi (1855–1905) admitted that cultural developments were encouraging; see, respectively, Dilworth and Hurst, trans., *Fukuzawa Yukichi*, and Taguchi, *Nihon kaika shōshi*, in *Meiji bungaku zenshū*, 49.


\(^{23}\) The subject of Kunichika’s *kaika-e* is thoroughly dealt with in Hinkel, *Toyohara Kunichika* (1835–1900).

\(^{24}\) Fukuzawa was known to attack gesaku authors for what he perceived as an antiquated ‘vulgar’ literary genre; they in turn lampooned Fukuzawa for the praise of the west. For example, Robun produced a satirical riposte to Fukuzawa’s 1869 extended poem *Sekai no kunizukushi* (A listing of the countries of the world), which describes the five continents, their major countries and cities, with explanatory notes. Robun’s work replaces the five continents with the five principal quarters of night entertainment in Edo/Tokyo, naming the main geisha and their houses. See Mertz, ‘Close encounters of the first kind’, 57.
Even if it drinks
only a little cow’s milk
a bottle-fed baby will grow up healthy.

Work by Kaoru (?)\(^{25}\)

Kunichika’s output of more openly satirical prints known as fūshiga 風刺画 is not vast. Most notable of these is the 1866 triptych commenting on the failing economy of the period through a composition of actors flying kites inscribed with the names of commodities that have risen in price, such as paper and cotton (fig. 54).

One could hardly dispute that many of the changes that transmuted Edo into Tokyo result in bettered living conditions for (at least a portion of) its population—improvements, for instance, in the infrastructure of the modern state such as sanitation, transportation networks, including railways as noted by Bird above, along with national compulsory education and nationwide communication. Other hybridised beacons of modernity—in the form of architecture—created a degree of excitement for the resident population and the ambitious building programs ‘reflected the plurality of demands growing out of a mixture of old and new values, in which an admiration for Western structures signalling a new epoch coexisted with an unwillingness to discard trust in castle architecture as a symbol of stable social status’.\(^{26}\) However, the question, certainly by the 1890s, was whether these changes were occurring at the cost of the earlier charms of ‘Edo’, charms that were being forfeited in the hustle for modernity. It was this sense of loss that prompted the writer Nagai Kafū to write years later in his Ame shōshō 雨滲々 (During the rains, 1922): ‘When a city aped the West to the degree that Tokyo did, the spectacle provoked in the observer an astonishment, along with a certain sense of pathos’.\(^{27}\)

Japan’s infatuation with the West and the imitation of its customs at the expense of its own traditions exhibited signs of waning by the 1880s/1890s, and the increasing disenchantment with the aims of materialistic progress and cultural progress is mirrored in the rise of nationalism and the commensurate cultural malaise of bunmei byō 文明病, or ‘civilisation disease’.\(^{28}\) By this time, the bloody struggles of the 1860s (and 1870s) that led to

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\(^{26}\) Jinnai, Tokyo, a spatial anthropology, 141. For an overview of Meiji architecture, see Finn, Meiji revisited and Coaldrake, Architecture and authority, 208–50.

\(^{27}\) Nagai, During the rains, 92.

\(^{28}\) This was voiced, for example, by the journalist and historian Tokutomi Sohō (also Tokutomi Iichirō 徳富猪一郎) in 1894 in his Dai Nihon bōchōron 大日本膨脹論: 腐平の社会と人心とが、文明病に伝染せられてつつあるは、争ふ可らざる事実也 (that the bunmei sickness is continuing to infect
the Meiji ishin were no longer ‘divisive but inclusive’ in nature, becoming a ‘national epic’ and emblematic of a struggle that demonstrated that a state structure could be established that was capable of resisting a foreign threat. 29 The military restoration hero Saigō Takamori, for example, whose exploits had begun with the surrender of Edo in 1868 and ended in his death in the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877, was hailed as a symbol of all things the ‘new’ Japan was not. 30 On 22 February 1889, he received a posthumous imperial pardon and was restored to imperial court rank. The last Tokugawa shogun, Yoshinobu (1837–1913), criticised for his cowardly absquatulation as the imperial army approached Edo and his easy acquiescence to imperial rule, was later allowed to re-establish his own line and awarded a peerage.

Challenged with a modernity that threatened to shake Japan’s social foundations, a modernity that was predicated upon the close interconnection of national character with the concept of ‘civilisation’, or kaika, the past was looked on to offer alternative realities that afforded an explanation of what set them, the Japanese, apart. The culture of the Edo period and the shogunal capital of Edo were thus re-fabricated to create a nostalgia for a former age—the Edo period became not only a historical era of reference but a cultural realm of reference as a ‘repository of traditions (dentō) associated with Japanese distinctiveness’. 31 The storehouse of Edo identity was not, as Gluck points out, primarily based in politics or thought, but in the culture. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries corresponded to a revived interest in tracing, celebrating, and idealising Edo-period arts, literature, and history that had been largely neglected in the first two decades of the Meiji. It was when, according to scholar Suzuki Sadami, ‘. . . topics associated with the Tokugawa period became akin to a cultural boom. People loved the fashion and arts of that time’, idealised as an era of peace and ease in contrast to current realities. 32 The memory of Edo culture, of which the Edokko persona operated as one memory subset, was mobilised ‘as a bulwark against the Europeanisation of Japanese thought and culture’, 33 and as such enabled true Edokko (and the memory of it for peaceful society and human nature is an indisputable reality). Also, for a discussion of the various ways in which dissatisfaction with bunmei was manifested, see Kano, Shihonshugi keiseiki, especially 481–88, 515–31.

30 Ravina, Last samurai, 11.  
31 Gluck, ‘The invention of Edo’, 263.  
32 Suzuki, ‘What is bungaku’, 184. See also, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, ‘Invention and reinvention of “Japanese culture”. This must also be seen against the backdrop of domestic upheaval surrounding the contentious issue of trade treaty reform (and the anti-foreign sentiment that ensued), and the increasing opposition to the oligarchic nature of the Meiji government and the monopoly of the cabinet by members of the Satsuma-Chōshū factions. The rise of nationalism in military might is witnessed with the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–95 and then again in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–5. It is of note that the publication of the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ feature falls between the two. For further reading on the political manoeuvring of the period, see Shively, ‘The Japanization of the middle Meiji’, in Tradition and modernization, 77–119.  
33 Suzuki, ‘What is bungaku’, 184.
those too young to have known Edo) to cling to a period considered uniquely their own. That
gap between the past and the present was akin to what Susan Stewart describes as a ‘structure
of desire’—in this study it would be filled by the re-contextualisation of the *Edokko* as a
cultural icon. It becomes through this re-contextualisation a ‘structure of nostalgia—that is,
the desire for desire in which objects [here the idea of the *Edokko*] are the means of the
generation and not the end’. 34

The recollection of the Edo period was not seen as a “living tradition” or a “return to
tradition” but rather a historical phenomenon being recalled and invested with new meaning,
as in the case of the “invention of tradition”’. 35 The harking back to the past and the
‘invention of tradition’ (accompanied by continuity from the past) to ease an uncertain reality,
therefore, might have served as one inspiration for the *MNE* articles. They eulogise and
allegorise figures, who as *Edokko*, are inextricably linked to a romanticised past. This is to
ease the social and cultural schizophrenia felt on the path to the national modern, urban
context by reinventing, re-contextualising, re-memorialising, and remobilising Edo memory
and identity. In this way, the *Edokko* becomes the symbol of not only a regional identity but
also, if we care to conjecture, an attempt at forging a form of national identity, a ‘Japanese-y-
ness’, as if to say ‘other countries may be ‘Westernised’ but they cannot lay claim to our very
own *Edokko*’. The cocky *Edokko* was as much a part of the collective Meiji memory of Edo
popular culture as were the artists of *nishiki-e*, the actors of the kabuki, and the prostitutes of
the Yoshiwara. 36 In fact, it could be argued that their existence spawned the enormous stock
of popular Edo material culture, as touched upon in Chapter One.

The emphasis on national ideology and the concerns about fitting into a global
historical landscape, albeit one driven by the West, gave rise to an intellectual debate by the
1880s to find a national voice that emphasised Japanese uniqueness. It would engage many
intellectuals at the time and after. This included figures such as Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覚三
(1862–1913), Nitobe Inazo 新渡戸稲造 (1862–1933), Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰 (1863–
1957), Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867–1916), Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 (1875–1962),
Kuki Shūzō 九鬼周造 (1888–1941), and Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960), who were
struggling with how to create a framework that explained Japanese society and culture. 37 How
each came to interpret the past influenced how they viewed the modern.

34 Stewart, ‘Notes on distressed genres’, 74.
36 This codification, or ‘Edo-fication’, of traditions in the Meiji is of relatively recent scholarly focus,
most notably by Carol Gluck.
37 Some scholars like Richard M. Reitan posit that this discourse was closely linked with the notion of a
‘people’s spirit’, a concept grounded in German Romanticism of the late eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries. Reitan, *Making a moral society*, 82. This study will not discuss this aspect.
A persistent question is whether Edokko identity was strengthened due to the growing threat of its disappearance following Japan’s encounter with the West—in other words, a sense of imminent cultural loss became a motivating factor in generating a version of the past. Would the re-contextualisation of the Edokko as exemplified in the MNE articles have been thinkable without the surfacing of the modern state under the Meiji? It could be argued that the Edokko image may not have been ‘resurrected’ had the times been different, since the desire to seek out something so representative of Japanese popular culture (within a ‘structure of desire’) was reinvigorated in response to the ‘threat of domination by European and American powers in the mid-nineteenth century’. It comes to stand for what Rey Chow labels in his discussion of oriental modernity as a sort of cultural self-obsession that can be read as a yearning for a pre-modernity and to a time before the shattering imprint of Westernisation. Yet the hunt for authentic survivors of early modern Japanese identity, seen in the nine unearthed for the MNE, is in itself, according to anthropologist Marilyn Ivy, a ‘modern endeavor, essentially enfolded within the historical condition that it would seek to escape’. The Edokko was the perfect paradigm for this endeavour since it embodied a regional type already firmly rooted in Edo-period culture and often seen in contrast to other areas of the country (e.g. seen in cultural stereotypes of the santo 三都, or the ‘three metropolises’). The Edokko is reinvented within the layering of nostalgia and modernity, embroidered by generational differences and traversing earlier boundaries of region, dialect, and culture to become a manifestation of a fading or lost national culture.

The conceit of the Edokko becomes an appropriated cultural icon that finds expression in the MNE suite of articles, or in the numerous news items that exploited and made associations with the Edokko character type to conjure up a specific, yet readily accessible, topos. Short articles or commentaries from before, after, and around the time of the MNE articles suggest that by the time of their publication the imagining of the ‘rough-around-the-edges’ Edokko character as an emblem of a ‘nostalgic’ cultural identity was already well ensconced. Trawling through contemporaneous issues of the Yomiuri shinbun throws up headlines or reports such as ‘Edokko no kishō 江戸っ子の気象 (‘Edokko culture’, 1 March 1885, 2); ‘Edokko konjō 江戸っ子根性 (‘The Edokko spirit’, 23 December 1889, 3); ‘Kanekashi ga Edokko katagi o arawasu’ 金貸しが江戸っ子気質を顕わす (‘Moneylending

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38 Stewart, ‘Notes on distressed genres’, 74, suggests that in such a situation the ‘negation of the contingencies of their immediate history, also involves a version of the past that could only arise from such contingencies’.
39 Ivy, Discourses of the vanishing, 4.
40 Chow, ‘Seeing modern China’, 27.
41 Ivy, Discourses of the vanishing, 241.
reveals the *Edokko* character’, 20 June 1893, 4); ‘Tochū no nenshōgi ni isamu’ 屠中の年小義に勇む (13 August 1894, 3), which mentions *Edokko* artisans with no money; or ‘Daiku no Garasen Edokko katagi o arawasu’ (19 August 1894, 3), which talks about Ishida Senzō 石田仙藏着 association with a group called *beranme-ha* (*beranme* refers to the rough, working class language of the *Edokko*). *Edokko* as a descriptive term also assumes social or political connotations, as in *Edokko* performers pitching in and helping the poor (‘Hinmin kyūjo no issaku’ 貧民救助の一策; ‘One plan for aid to the poor’, 9 June 1890, 3) or ‘Tōkeijin sunawachi Edokko ha motomo mintō ni katan suru no gimu ari’ 東京人即ち江戸っ子は最も民党に加担するの義務あり (‘Tokyoites, that is *Edokko*, have the greatest duty to support the populist parties’, 16 January 1892, 1).

The Meiji *Edokko* image is codified (and repackaged) imaginatively and was hailed as a cultural entity deserving of preservation. As the *Edokko* evolved, so too it was packaged and commodified as a regional (and national) identity and disseminated to other regions, particularly at the turn of the twentieth century. (Even today, this image of Edo as the apotheosis of Edo urban memory is enduring, mythicised in *chanbara* films and television, Edo themes parks [Edomura], and literature. These served to feed the collective memory, sustaining the image of the *Edokko* through the use of ‘social props’ in the formation of associations, as demonstrated in this announcement of the establishment of the art society *Edokko-kai*, somewhat later in 1906: ‘Members, composed of those originating from Tokyo with the aim of promoting painting and exploring the tastes of the *Edokko*, are soon to plan an...”

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42 There are a number of such titled articles, one humorous letter to the editor maintains that the pride (*yasegaman*) (in taking numerous baths) of the *Edokko* proves poison to the body [June 12 1874, letter to the editor 投書]). Newspapers also reveal the co-existence of the term *Edokko* with that of other terms like Tōkeikko 東京子 or Azuma otoko 東京男子.

43 Societies were formed in an effort to record Edo culture; one of the better known was perhaps pro-Edo groups is the Edo-kai 江戸会, which asserted that during the three hundred years of Tokugawa rule Japanese civilisation witnessed the greatest development; see Ōkubo, *Sabakuhā rongi*, 74–75. The Edo-kai published the first issue of its magazine *Edo-kai zasshi* 江戸会雑誌 in June 1889 in an effort to record Edo culture; it was organised by Kurimoto Joun 栗本鋤雲 (1822–97), Naitō Chisō 内藤耻叟 (1827–1903), Kishigami Shikken 岸上質軒 (1860–1907), Komiyama Yasusuke 小宮山綏介 (1830–96), and others. In the last paragraph of his MNE segment (no. 16), Tsuruoka Tatsugorō つるおか静爾 acknowledges the Edo-kai: ‘Local *Edokko* artists continued to gather [meet], but recently even that [form] little by little became unusual with the association [mixing in] of non-*Edokko*; the *Edokko* spirit also conformed [to this] and gradually it changed’. Whether this repackaging of a regional identity of Edo was also a symbol of the entire nation is a question that awaits further research.

44 In the post-war *Shigurejaya Oriku* しぐれ茶屋おりく by Kawaguchi Matsutarō 川口松太郎 (1899–1985), the protagonist, Mistress Oriku exemplifies the true qualities of Edo that the author implies had become increasingly rare by the Meiji era, i.e. devoted to customers, generosity, and kindness. For English translation, see Tyler, *Mistress Oriku*.

45 Halbwachs (Coser), *On collective memory*, introduction, 34: ‘memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources and is sustained by social and moral props’.
Edokko allegories

In terms of their professions and affiliations as chōnin, their geographical grounding (shitamachi), and their individual personalities, each of the nine interviewed individuals accord with the Edokko figure à la Meiji. Like the Kunichika interview segments in the MNE, the flow of the nine interviews is stream of consciousness, with seemingly no restrictions on form and content. The topics covered are diverse and often touch upon places, institutions, and cultural figures with close associations to Edo culture (and their continuity in Meiji Tokyo). Kunichika’s interviews, as transcribed in the previous chapter, are a collection of anecdotes regarding the figures—artists, writers, and actors—within his own cohort (namely, kabuki actors). They are personal, inwardly directed musings. On the surface, his contemporary and fellow MNE interviewee Baidō Hōsai assumes more the role of a raconteur and engages the reader (listener) in the initial segments with entertaining ghost tales. This is until we realise that Hōsai is defending the long folk tradition of ghosts: ‘I saw a ghost even after the founding of the Tōkei [Tokyo] of the ‘enlightened era’ of Meiji. According to Inoue-sensei, ghosts and monsters are due to the delusion of the mind, in other words, a nervous disorder’. His reference is to Inoue Enryō (1858–1919), who led the way in establishing a companion discipline to philosophy that he called yōkaigaku 妖怪学 (‘monsterology’). Inoue dismissed monsters as a superstition that hindered scientific knowledge and modern learning, and believed that ‘eighty to ninety per cent of all monsters are born of the operations of the mind’—that is, ‘subjective errors of the human mind’. The firefighter Watanabe Matsugoro, for example, includes his experiences of fires in the pleasure quarter, the Yoshiwara. The neighbourhood doctor Mogami Ryōhei explains that his location in the theatre district of Saruwaka-cho meant he was often paid visits by kabuki actors of the...
day, dropping the names Ichikawa Danjūrō IX, Onoe Kikugorō V, Ichikawa Sadanji I (1842–1904), Nakamura Shikan IV (1831–99) and Ichikawa Kuzō III (Danzō VII, 1836–1911) (figs. 55–57). Such references and associations provide links with the popular culture within which Kunichika circulated and with which he closely identified.

Each of the men become a type of ‘urban hero’ in perpetuating the mythic Edo past, and all the MNE interviews begin with a relatively formulaic introduction by the anonymous reporter. As noted elsewhere, these aim to generate a picture of the subject’s physical environment and character, and this is done to reaffirm their image as Edokko. Descriptions of them—none live in overwhelmingly ‘western-style’ environments—and the memories that the articles attempt to conjure up are thus constructed to elicit an emotional response in their recreation of the Edokko cultural milieu. The description of their physical environments finds parallels, for example, in Nagai Kafū’s portrayal of the micro-districts that he cherished and about which he was nostalgic. They had little to do with reality of the dank streets and open sewers of the city’s poorer quarters, and as such was an imagined realm of desire:

Its downright homely sentiments and downright homely way of life come together in every object in the alley—latticed sliding doors, wooden ditch covers, clothes-drying decks on the roof, wooden gates, fence-top spikes. One must admit that the backstreets constitute a world of artistic harmony born amid confusion.

In his reminiscences of ‘old’ Tokyo in Meiji, the artist Kaburaki Kiyokata (1878–1972), strikes a similar cord in his vivid representation of an ezōshiya, a type of publisher/seller of woodblock prints and books, in which, incidentally, he singles out Kunichika:

These days shoppers buy illustrated postcards, but back in the day they bought nishiki-e. They were not just sold at the theatre but also in the bustling city’s ezōshiya. There, single-sheet prints and triptychs, favourite scenes of the theatre, the faces of favourite actors done by Kunichika and Kunimasa also came to be appreciated as ‘pictures’ [art]. Shoppers sat on the ledge of the open storefront, relishing the smell of the newly printed works and the scent of the pigments, and I had the feeling as a print was pulled out from the neat stack and I took it in my hands that nothing had really changed from our forebears of so many generations ago who handled the prints of [Tōshūsai] Sharaku, [Katsukawa] Shunshō, or of [Utagawa] Toyokuni in a shop like this.

The remnants of Edo, rapidly becoming obsolescent in the face of creeping modernisation, are eulogised in descriptions of the sinews of the city, alleyways crowded by shops, of latticed sliding doors, and wooden fence posts. This mood similarly resonates in the MNE introductions with the observations of interiors, people, and the subjects, who the

48 Yomiuri shinbun, ‘Meiji no Edokko: Asakusa no Mogami Ryōhei’, no. 26 (1 November 1898), 3, and no. 27 (2 November 1898), 3.
49 Hiyori geta, in Jinnai, Tokyo, a spatial anthropology, 128.
50 Kaburagi, Meiji no Tōkyō, 74–75.
reporter positions vis-à-vis their qualities of ‘Edokko-ness’, as if to legitimise their inclusion.

He begins with the fishmonger Fukui Hyōkichi (nos. 1–9):

Running a fishmonger’s shop in Shinmichi that also does some catering on the side, he is a dyed-in-the-wool Edokko. The shop frontage is not wide, but the interior is completely wood panelled, flowing into an elegantly arranged display area and grill. The six-mat sized entryway has un-edged tatami from Bingo Province. To the left is a highly polished chestnut-coloured chest, the top of which is decorated with a household Shinto shrine. In front of a large brass hibachi and taking pride of place is a row of shiny tokkuri used for sake offerings. The master escapes to this room in the afternoon.

In the mornings, he is a rough and tumble figure with apron and headscarf, carrying an oval tray or tub, making his rounds. His daughter is extremely elegant, and has an air about her of the ‘big sister’ (ane-san). During the day, she teaches sewing to the children of respectable wives from the neighbourhood and the inner room of the garden partition (ni wagoshiki) paints a completely other world (to the fishmonger’s shop).

Hyōkichi is a bony, burly, and bald-headed guy and is seventy-one this year, and it seems that he may have been a handsome man in the past. In good health, he doesn’t yet need glasses and, even now, he can walk twenty leagues [about 80 km]. As he launches into talking about being an Edokko, his expression becomes more formal.

The following two interviews, Watanabe Matsugorō (nos. 10–14) and Tsuruoka Tatsugorō (nos. 15–16), contain two of the more detailed introductions in the suite of interviews:

Watanabe Matsugorō is the head of the ‘Ha Company’ of firemen and served as the chief of the ‘No. 1’ troop. An Edokko to the core, he is some fifty-six or fifty-seven years old—a dapper old guy with a shaven head. These days in his retirement he works as a consultant for the Daimaru establishment. His house, with a storehouse with earthen walls, is north of Shinmichi, in Tadokoro-chō, some one hundred metres at the end of the road. Its luxurious two-fold lattice door is deliberately not hung with festival lanterns. Three of the nine shaku [about 2.7 m] comprises a refined packed earth area to take off one’s shoes, and it has stepping stones from Nebukawa. The six-mat sized entranceway has un-edged tatami from Bingo Province. The wife, who [the master] calls ‘big sister’ (ane-san), goes to the right of the entrance behind the storehouse and waits at the long hibachi made entirely of paulownia wood. Stylish tea shelves ornament the left and an akade-(red style) Ryū bondō cast iron water kettle appears to be always on the boil. The seat of the master, who they call ‘head’ [or chief] (kashira), is situated diagonally across from a kannon-tobira [double swinging doors]. Behind these is a kitchen that cannot be described as spacious, but it is nevertheless tidy and inviting. A child is receiving modern tuition and his quiet confidence comes from being the son of a fireman chief (tobi-kashira).

Of course, the father, also being the consultant to the large Daimaru store, would never show his gruff Edokko manner. He receives guests graciously, offering a cushion, the evening meal of tofu hot-pot (yudōfu) and sake. These days, when people visit, you will find him relaxing and drinking alone after returning from Daimaru. He places one or two simple dishes on top of a cat-legged tray: yudōfu in ceramic bowls and a bottle for warming sake (kandokuri). Even though quite simple, one sees the care he takes in

51 Ryū bundō is a reference to the Kyoto studio of iron casters founded by the first generation Shikata Ryū bun (Yasuhei) (1732–98).
serving them, revealing his true Edokko nature. The generous helping of gomoku-zushi [a type of sushi salad] in the large bell-shaped teabowl appears a little out of keeping [with the rest], but one sees the wife’s intention in serving the fruits of the first harvest, knowing that this is the correct etiquette demanded in the world of someone who has many dependents [has the responsibility that the ‘chief’ does]. The chief, even when relaxed, still has a dignified air about him. He draws together his pale yellow wide-sleeved kimono with large designs, pushes away his zabuton cushion, makes the formalities of greeting, and before long launches into his unique tale in high spirits that ignites the flowers of Edo. 52

And as relates to Tsuruoka Tatsugorō:

Tsuruoka Tatsugorō is a greengrocer in Tamachi 2-chōme and [the family being] Edokko from the time of his great-grandfather onwards. His shop name is Yorozoya and the name Tsuruoka naturally wields influence not only in the local markets but also throughout the entire Kanda district. He also works as a local [Shinto] shrine representative for the Kanda Myōjin Shrine. His house is located midway along the west side of 2-chōme; in addition to the shop built in the storehouse style there is a sales area and [the entrance] must be seven to eight ken; nowadays the shop is packed in the mornings, selling a great variety of foodstuffs like chestnuts, persimmons, and sweet potatoes. A young couple at the counter oversee the many employees, while Tatsugorō enjoys his retirement. Going along a passageway running from midway in the sales area and connecting the main part of the house, one sees a number of earthen storehouses to the right and at the end there is a low fence (sodegaki) intertwined with bitter gourd vines. [As one] turns and enters, there is a sumptuous detached building in the centre. A tall grape trellis in front of it serves as a sunblind. To the south is a large pond.

The pods of the split lotus leaves on the pond sway high in the wind. A solitary boat, with heavy oars, is moored at the bank on the far side—the elegance of a three-legged stone lantern, the deep evergreen colours, and even the murky water exhibits the profundity of Buddhist vows to save sentient beings; one would hardly think that a realm like this would could exist in a place where money and goods exchange hands. The entrance to the detached building has a six shaku [180 cm] packed earthen floor and what seems to be an entranceway that is two tatami mats in size. The living space is decorated by a variety of hibachi and low tables, and so forth; the room beyond seems to be a guest’s hall (kyakudō), with mats having purple edging—in its entirety it is thoroughly refined workmanship, estimated, if I am not mistaken, at the minimum of the vast sum [fortune] of 70,000 to 80,000 ryō.

Tatsugorō is now sixty-two years old and his large-lobed ears resemble those of a mouse. His hair is cut to a couple of centimetres and he has a long, narrow face. He wears a hand-woven cotton workmen’s livery coat (hanten) over his crimped, pale green-lined kimono has small detailed designs and also has a black Chinese satin apron. Because of the very fact that he wields so much authority, he still has a modest demeanour about him and his language is unassuming and comes across clearly. As we know it projects the image of the village head of old; he calmly begins his explanation of the Edokko spirit…

52 The reporter uses wordplay with the expression ‘flowers of Edo’ (Edo no hana), a euphemism for the many fires that plagued the city of Edo throughout its history.
Significantly, this same Tsuruoka appears in an earlier Yomiuri article from 26 April 1891, confirming that he and Kunichika were acquainted. Was Kunichika also acquainted with the other interviewees and would he have had a hand in their selection for the MNE or them in his? This 1891 article reads:

‘Kunichika attempts large painting(s)’
A certain Tsuruoka, a greengrocer in Tamachi itchōme [sic] Kanda, and his forebears have long been great patrons of the Ichikawa Danjūrō line and possess many samples of their shuseki [presumably a reference to all written materials, including autographs, poems/calligraphy on formats like shikishi and tanzaku]. However, hearing that there is no designer of actor images today who surpasses Toyohara Kunichika, he made a special point to visit Kunichika the day before yesterday, providing him with ten sections of silk (7 shaku long x 4 shaku wide) for a commission of nigao [‘likenesses’] of the generations of Danjūrō that Kunichika gladly agrees to do. Kunichika then introduces Tsuruoka to Ichikawa Yonezō [perhaps Ichikawa Yonezō IV; later Nakamura Jusaburō III, 1834–96], who also happens to be there and is in the same Ichikawa lineage as Danjūrō, and asks Tsuruoka to offer patronage to him too. They talk for a while, and the overjoyed Tsuruoka is soon greatly taken by Yonezō. So before Kunichika undertakes the Danjūrō portraits Tsuruoka commissions the artist to do one of Yonezō, for which Kunichika happily agrees to take up his brush, saying that it was worth introducing the two to each other; he immediately sets about to do an initial image of Yonezō and then creates a large-scale framed painting.\(^{53}\)

For Ōdaki Mankichi (nos. 17–19):
He is a tailor with many apprentices, residing in a shop-front in Kanda Kanazawa-chō. Enclosed by paper sliding doors, the shop is three tatami in length. A low paling surrounds it on the outside. To the right is a latticed entrance door measuring about 90 cm. Shelves for fabrics are placed in the space adjacent. The wife, who has a look that makes one think of Takamura Kōun’s model of Yamauba,\(^{54}\) mainly administers the receipts and expenditure of the dry goods. The apprentices have been dispatched to the second floor and the shop is the master’s own space. This year Mankichi is fifty-seven; he has a shaven head and the thin, black pockmarked face of an old man. He waits inside the shōji door at the wooden worktable where clothes are tailored. The fabrics ordered from the shop are piled up high and the work of wadded cotton clothing advances [as he speaks]—this must be the so-called ‘gentler’ side of the Edokko.

\(^{53}\) His shop trademark is also included. ‘Kunichika daiga o kakan to su’, 3. Unfortunately the whereabouts of these paintings are unknown.

\(^{54}\) The sculptor Takamura Kōun 高村光雲 (1852–1934) was originally from the shitamachi Shitaya area. Noted for his mastery of traditional wood sculptures, he incorporated an interest in the realistic expression of western sculpture and is therefore an instrumental figure in the development of modern Japanese sculpture. He taught at the Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō, was appointed court artist (teishitsu gigeiin), and his work was appreciated in exhibitions at home and abroad (e.g. World Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893), with perhaps his most visible work the statue of Saigō Takamori and his dog in Tokyo’s Ueno Park (1898), and that of Kusunoki Masashige at the plaza east of the imperial palace (1900). It is not clear which work the reporter alludes to, but that this comparison would be made suggests that the association with this theme was something in the public awareness regarding the artist’s work; the Yamauba theme does appear in his work, most notably the later Sanrei kago 山霊訶護 (On the mountain witch; Kunaichō) exhibited later at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle.
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And for Kunichika (nos. 20–23):

This year he is sixty-four. A third-generation Edokko, he is an interesting character. While his life-long career has been as brilliant as that of ‘brocade pictures of the East’ [Azuma nishiki-e], he leads a transient life with an extreme lack of concern for money. He now resides in a corner of Honjō’s Omote-chō, and it would appear with little money. His home is situated on the northern side of Kumagai Inari-higashi 2-chōme; he occupies the middle of a terraced house. There is a newly cleaned lattice upon which is hung a nameplate and letterbox. Across from a shoe rack measuring about 2.75 m is a dirty space, the size of a single tatami; it is furnished with a long unsightly hibachi and also with a decorated Buddhist altar. The humble interior, the size of two tatami mats, is cluttered with a desk. It is difficult to imagine that a popular, famous artist would live in a place like this. At first, it was strange to realise that this is the residence of a great artist … looking around with a penetrating gaze and stroking his white beard—about 18 or 21 cm long—he talks about the heyday of the Edokko.

The introductions to the last four interviews do not make direct references to the term ‘Edokko’. Nevertheless, in his descriptions the reporter alludes to the Edo period, either through locations that would have had deep Edo cultural connotations, such as the theatre district of Saruwaka-chō in the Mogami Ryōhei segment, or popular literary traditions such as Shank’s mare in the interview with Hōsai. The latter is a reference to the enormously successful kokkeibon, Tōkaidōchū hizakurige (Travels on the eastern seaboard, or Shank’s mare, 1802–9) by Jippensha Ikku (1765–1831). One figure, Miyashita Shinpei, was once a celebrated sumo wrestler, a sport closely allied with Edo chōnin culture (it is surprising that no celebrated kabuki actors were included in the interview line-up). Beginning with the doctor Mogami Ryōhei (nos. 24, 26–27 [no. 25 is missing, apparently incorrectly numbered and never appeared]):

Mogami Ryōhei is a neighbourhood doctor from Saruwaka-chō and though an old man of sixty-seven years, he is hale and hearty and in the prime of life. His house, located next to the military police barracks, has an old, modest lattice door. One wouldn’t think of it as an entranceway to a physician’s establishment, but judging from the character of the place he led an extravagant life in his youth. He wears last year’s striped (gomagara-jima) patterned flannel, unlined kimono bound by a new-looking, dark blue Hakata-ori silk obi. His black pongee haori with a ‘three’ crest is also from three to four years ago, and appears as if it has been re-sewn at one point; his head of closely cut grey hair gives the impression of a brave spirit.

Baidō Hōsai (nos. 28–43 [no. 42 is missing, apparently incorrectly numbered and never appeared]) (fig. 58):

Baidō Hōsai’s actual family name is Takenouchi Eikyū. A student of Gototei Toyokuni, he was initially called Kunimasasa, later changing to Kunisada, and finally assuming the name Hōsai. He was born in Asakusa and grew up in Nihonbashi. He is an amusing, unconventional eccentric who designed many nishiki-e zōshi [full-colour woodblock-printed materials]. Recently, he filled in a lotus pond in Senzoku-chō and has built a modest house. At something of a snail’s pace, he has, over time, gradually distinguished himself, thumbing his nose at the world of Meiji ‘sophisticates’ (tsūjin).
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He is today fifty-four years old \(^{55}\) and a look at his life is just like reading Ikku’s Shank’s mare.

The brevity of the final two introductions perhaps points to a shift in editorial practices, a waning in popularity of the feature, or decisions regarding publication. The first is Miyashita Shinpei (nos. 44–45) and then Hanamata Masanao (nos. 46–59):

A retired sakaya at Nihonbashi-tōri 2-chōme, Miyashita Shinpei now resides at the back of a fish [loach] shop (dojōya) in Komagata. While an old man of seventy, in the past he was a powerful ōzeki [sumo wrestler of highest rank]; not only that, with his strong physique, he is bound to be around for another twenty to thirty years. He waits at the small hibachi before a bamboo clothes chest, his shaven head gleaming.

Hanamata Masanao was a brave soldier of the Shōgitai. The troubles caused by the many government forces in Ueno and Hakodate having been suppressed, he now is living in retirement in the vicinity of Komagome-dōzaka. Having served Morita Hōtan,\(^{56}\) he decided not to return to society again after 1878. Today he is sixty-one years old, with dark hair peppered with grey and high cheekbones. To look at him he has the demeanour of a brave soldier, but when the topic turns to things of the past, his sadness and anger meld, his interest piqued.

The inclusion of each of these introductions from the MNE serves to contextualise Kunichika vis-à-vis other surviving and acknowledged Edokko, both by highlighting their similarities as well as pointing out their differences in an effort to demonstrate the richness of the Edokko persona. They provide a framework within which the nostalgia and the sense of loss of the old city of Edo could be explained. The conjuring of the Edokko persona thus assuages a desire to reinvent a notion of the city of Edo, and by extension an entire individual cultural landscape, whose identity was driven by its own history.

Halbwachs’s assertion that collective historical memory is both a cumulative and presentient process also finds relevance in the MNE instalments. The inspiration behind its publication underscores a partial historical-cultural continuity as well as provides new readings of the cultural past/memory, in terms of the present. Operating within the construct of collective historical memory, events are therefore not recollected directly. Instead they are stimulated indirectly, in this case through the reading or listening to readings of the Yomiuri shinbun articles. The newspaper, in effect, becomes the narrator of the storehouse of Edo cultural memory and of its interpretation, enabling the reader or listener (many of whom may

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\(^{55}\) If Hōsai’s age at the time of the interview was fifty-four (fifty-three in the Gregorian calendar), then it would mean that the artist was born in 1844, not 1848, the date usually documented for the artist. It is quite probable that this is an error on the part of the reporter.

\(^{56}\) This might be a reference to Morita Hōtan IX (Morita Jihei 守田治兵衛, 1859–1912). As a merchant, Morita Jihei made his fortune from the sale of prophylactic medicine said to prevent cholera (eventually permitted a license for its sale); his product was promoted in posters, billboards, and the name ‘Hōtan’ also found its way into kabuki and rakugo (http://wp1.fuchu.jp/~seidou/jinmeiroku/morita-jihee/morita-jihee.htm)
not have first-hand experience of Edo culture) to ‘become conscious of itself in counterposing [i.e. oppositional] its present to its own constructed past’. It is a form of cultural preservation in which the remembrance of the Edokko identity was highly dependent on the survivors with an emotional or financial stake in the perpetuation of its reputation. In other words, Meiji society’s perceived needs ‘impel it to refashion the past’ and this was kept alive through the common symbol—the Edokko. The shared image of the Edokko is therefore a composite image, composed of narratives recalled (not always accurately, or intentionally so) and passed on, but an image that has been recovered, embellished (re-contextualised), and reinvented to serve a contemporary cause. To borrow the words of Jerome Bruner:

> . . . we create self-defining stories to meet the situations where we will go on living. . . . We nourish our identities by our connections yet insist that we are something more as well—ourselves. And that unique identity derives in major part from the stories we tell ourselves to put those fragmentary pieces together . . . We are drawn to mythic designs of our times and while we may not quite believe in them, we take them into account as part of our lives. And when they fit new circumstances poorly, we domesticate the bad fit with stories like those that make it ‘reasonable’.

Each of the interviewees, through appearance, location, profession, and the nature of their stories, conform to this living image of the past. They are, in short, replete with social and symbolic meaning.

Kunichika’s inclusion with others in the MNE secures him a place within the fabric of memory of Edo culture. The city of Edo—the urban Edokko as its commoner master and generic topos—became a ‘prime site of cultural nostalgia, a kind of phantasmic counter-Tokyo and a synecdoche of commoner culture’. It was indispensable in the manufacture of the ‘Kunichika image’, one that augments his artistic expression in the actor print genre. (The latter occurs within a very definite cultural setting and it grounds his existence as an Edokko.) Kunichika’s interview influences his present and posthumous image, and his narrative is translated to his métier as an actor specialist. As we have seen, it is this image of the nigao-eshi that he advances. His actor prints, in their illustration of symbols of the past, work towards the preservation of a traditional Japanese performance traditions as well as Kunichika’s own constructed persona. He is, on a number of levels, a sort of living remnant of the Edo past and as an Utagawa artist the ‘visual and textual links between Edo and the Utagawa name exemplify the dominant presence that the school and its artists had with the capital city and its

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58 Ibid., 26.
59 Bruner, *Making stories*, 100. See also, Bernard Lewis, *History: remembered, recaptured, invented*.
60 Gluck, ‘The invention of Edo’, 280.
inhabitants during the nineteenth century. . . . Later artists of the Utagawa school could easily be considered representative of the ideal constituents embodied by the Edokko. . . .61

The nostalgic vision that his work encapsulates allowed his audience to reconnect with the past, to make it live on in the historical present and in the future.62 It is thus the combination of the creative output of Kunichika’s prints and his narrative art in the Yomiuri interview that establishes the parameters for what we remember about him. It equally serves to mould Kunichika and nishiki-e into a type of living Edo famous product (Edo no meibutsu), in the same way that the cultural historian Mitamura Engyo 三田村鳶魚 (1870–1952) believed that the Ichikawa Danjūrō lineage of kabuki actors also ‘became Edo no meibutsu and a symbol of Edo’.63 Kunichika is, for example, included as a nigao-e shi, alongside Torii Kiyomitsu as artist of the theatrical kanban (billboards) among the some 240 names and establishments listed as ‘meibutsu’ in ‘Great Edo’ in the mid-Meiji (c. mid-1890s?) in Comparison of famous fashionable products of Great Edo (fig. 59).64 As we shall see in the following chapter, Kunichika’s association with Ichikawa Danjūrō IX in his role as a nigao-e shi and Danjūrō’s role as arguably the most powerful kabuki actor of the Meiji era present further layers of narrative meaning in our understanding of Kunichika’s persona.

61 Mueller, ‘Creative specialization and collaborative projects’, 53.
63 Engyo, Edokko, 43.
64 Yoshimura and Mori, ‘Ōedo shumi’, 9–12.
CHAPTER FOUR

Creating a visual self-narrative, links to posterity

Everything is autobiographical and everything is a portrait.
Lucien Freud; excerpted from Alex Miller, Lovesong, 12

Since I am tired of doing nigao of people of this world
I will do portraits of Enma and demons
Toyohara Kunichika’s jisei, Honryuji, Imado,
Asakusa, Tokyo (see Chapter Two, fig. 26a–d)

Kunichika’s contribution to the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ interviews in late 1898 facilitated the survival as well as the future identification and entrenchment of his artistic legacy as an Edokko and as a master of nigao-e or ‘actor likenesses’.

The MNE interviews extend and enrich the memories of his Edokko identity, one that fuelled his individual artistic expression, which in turn became a visual ‘chronicle’ of Meiji-era kabuki theatre. He is singled out by writers of the period and in newspaper reports as the eminent nigao-e master (nigao-e shi) of the Meiji. His participation in the Yomiuri interviews reinforces an interpretation that he was considered a representative figure in the creation of a collective memory through the construction of Edokko culture as a trope of a historical past.

It could be argued that Kunichika and his work—either promoted by himself or elevated by others as in the MNE and other newspaper reports—assumes one form of symbolic ‘cultural capital’. Kunichika’s acquisition and projection of cultural knowledge (about kabuki actors and theatre), skills (as a practising nishiki-e/nigao-e artist), and advantages (his longevity and Utagawa pedigree) undergird his place in the Utagawa hierarchy and thus the collective memory. The subsequent decline in his artistic reputation, and that of many of his contemporaries, was therefore due more to the increasingly biased perception of Meiji-era prints by later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars, writers, and collectors. This was not necessarily a purely qualitative issue, rather a dictation of tastes, since the remembrance of his role within the

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1 The English translation ‘actor likenesses’ (nigao 似顔 and kaonise 顔似せ; other terms, nizura [mug-shot], tsuranise)—often more ‘theatrical’ portrayal than factual ‘likeness’—presents certain epistemological problems. However, it has been chosen here for ease of understanding. I refer to Timothy Clark’s succinct discussion of nigao-e (‘likeness’; literally ‘a picture that resembles the face’) in ‘Ready for a close-up’, in Gerstle with Clark and Yano, Kabuki heroes, 36–53. He believes that extant works from the mid-eighteenth century suggests that nigao-e began as paintings before their production in print.

2 The issue of legacy and artistic survival is discussed in Lang and Lang, ‘Recognition and renown’, 79–109.

3 ‘Cultural capital’ was one of the three ‘guises’ formulated by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) and a subset therein was the ‘objectified state’ comprising artworks that can be transmitted in order to convey symbolically the acquired cultural capital; see Bourdieu, The field of cultural production, 7.
history of nishiki-e was heavily reliant on survivors with an emotional (i.e. aesthetic) or a financial stake (i.e. dealers/collectors) in its continuance.

The accounts of Kunichika’s life and career conveyed in the MNE interview and in the numerous reports appearing in the newspapers *Yomiuri shinbun* and the *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* are one aspect in our understanding of his life (see Appendix III). Kunichika’s survival in the collective memory, during his lifetime and posthumously, was also dependent, perhaps significantly, on the survival of a vast tangible body of work that included prints, paintings, and to a lesser degree illustrated books and other ephemera. Their focus was overwhelmingly on the kabuki theatre. While it is difficult to calculate with any certainty the exact number of Kunichika’s kabuki-related single-sheet prints—be they independent or as part of series—it can be estimated that they numbered into the thousands. His work would have been known to any Meiji-era kabuki theatregoer, and generally to the newspaper-reading public.

Even though the accounts in the MNE interview can be viewed at times as embellished, partial, and selective, Kunichika’s art is irrefutable proof of his position as a nigao-e shi. His life narrative is intimately linked to the visual narrativity found in his art: ‘I am an artist of actor portraits and for that reason, I have kept company with all the actors’ (MNE 23). His affiliation with the Utagawa school studio of the influential Kunisada may or may not have proved an obstacle early in his career, as seen in the scuffle over a commission that led to the temporary ban on the use of his art name (MNE 21). Ultimately, however, his place within the

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4 His rendition of kabuki imagery is not limited to conventional media and formats, such as hanging scrolls, and woodblock-printed books (including 18.0 x 25.0 cm frontispieces for the *Mokuami zenshū* available on the Ritsumeikan site), and independent sheets. A private collection in Tokyo, for example, contains a segmented, woodblock-printed rectangular tray decorated with seven actors set against a gold ground, with the actor Ichikawa Danjūrō IX in the role of Benkei from the play *Kanjinchō* at the centre. It is signed *Toyohara Kunichika hitsu* followed by the Utagawa school *toshidama* seal. This writer viewed this work in 2009, but the collector has asked that the work remain unpublished.

5 To date, no precise count has been made of Kunichika’s independent sheets and series. E.g., a search on the Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan, and the Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan throws up wildly different figures: roughly 1,100 and 8,000, respectively. This number does not take in duplicates; moreover, it counts sheets individually, therefore, not taking into account that multi-sheet works are considered a ‘single’ work. Nevertheless, it is quite plausible that the number of his works hovers around the 15,000 mark, if not more. In a comparison with his contemporary Yoshitoshi, this is still considerable; Yoshitoshi’s output is thought to be somewhat over 2,000 works; see Uhlenbeck, ‘The phases in the career of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi’, in Uhlenbeck and Newland, *Yoshitoshi*, 8–24. By contrast, the output of Kunichika’s teacher Kunisada was enormous, and Kunisada scholar Ellis Tinios estimates that his output runs into the tens of thousands (perhaps as many as 45,000; this does not account for his work in illustrated books). According to Tinios, ‘Kunisada was producing printed images (prints and book illustrations) on an industrial scale’. Email correspondence 21 March (preceding quote) and 18 November 2012. Kunichika was not running a studio on the same scale as his teacher Kunisada; he had fewer pupils, due in part to the comparatively smaller number of artists entering the field in the Meiji era and Kunichika’s own less than entrepreneurial and certainly more eccentric bent.

6 The familiarity of the general public with his name is suggested by the inclusion of his name without qualification, thus Kunichika or Toyohara Kunichika, often with a gloss guide to read the name, not an uncommon practice in newspapers of the period.
Utagawa lineage as a Kunisada student added to his credentials as a woodblock print designer and validated his place within the history of nishiki-e. In a similar vein, Kunichika’s ties with leading actors of the day carried weight and cemented his position as a nigao-e shi: ‘any link to important artistic and literary circles or to a political and cultural elite fosters the posthumous visibility of an artist. Association adds to credentials’. This association is most obviously played out in his two most ambitious series of Kunichika’s later career, *One hundred roles of Baikō* (1893–94) and *One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō* (1893–[1903]). These two sets, moreover, represent a pinnacle in the production of Meiji nigao-e (see ‘Layers of visual narrativity’ below).

The image of Kunichika as nigao-e shi
As argued throughout this study, by the late 1890s Kunichika was recognised as one of a declining number of traditionally trained (i.e. apprenticed in a studio) woodblock print designers. Nishiki-e, by this time quite synonymous with the Utagawa school, were labelled *Edo (no) meibutsu* (famous Edo products), an appellation that could be applied to its members, analogous to Mitamura Engyō’s use of the term for the Ichikawa Danjūrō line (see Chapter Three). The elevation to *Edo (no) meibutsu* in the collective memory goes beyond the idea of a regional ‘souvenir’ to demonstrate that objects (in this case prints) connected with a low-brow (popular) cultural status in one period (in this case Edo) are valued as iconic, canonical objects in another (as *Edo no meibutsu* in the Meiji): ‘we value them as high status cultural products, whereas contemporaries often saw them as populist’.

The notion of woodblock prints as one type of ‘symbolic’ *Edo no meibutsu* in the later nineteenth century was similarly reflected in press reports at the time, as in the article ‘Utagawa ha no hanashi’ (‘Chats about the Utagawa school’) from the *Yomiuri shinbun* of 10 January 1898, some nine months before the MNE:

The pictures [prints] of the Utagawa school that are known as *Edo meibutsu* are rapidly on the decline, but one whose technique [art] should be considered is Kunichika. Of younger artists, Kunichika’s student Chikanobu is to a degree commercially successful, but he is said not to be especially interesting. In any case, it is thought that a rough time is on the horizon for nishiki-e, which originated [germinated] in the work of Kōkoku [Kō Kōkoku, 1730–1804] and climaxd in the successes of Utamaro. Today, if we were to look back to earlier times and gather together the expert works of older masters one would generally see that their numbers are too numerous to mention, but today’s surviving works that should be preserved are few. The high reputation of Utamaro, Toyokuni, and others aside, examples of the period of the masterworks of Toyokuni I and his followers are generally as follows . . .

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7 Lang and Lang, ‘Recognition and renown’, 95.
8 Dimmock and Hadfield, *Literature and popular culture in early modern England*, 3. While the original reference deals with European traditions, this position has analogies with nishiki-e as products of popular culture.
After remarks on other illustrious members of the Utagawa line—Toyokuni I, Toyokuni II, Toyokuni III, Kuniyoshi and his stellar student Yoshitoshi—the article continues with an anecdote that comically and perhaps somewhat backhandedly underscores Kunichika’s own image of his stature and position as a nigao-e shi:

A living ‘relic’ (ibutsu) of Toyokuni III is the present-day Kunichika. Kunichika designs ukiyo-e and if one were to compare him with his senior [teacher] he would compare favourably, but his ‘interesting’ character is generally unrivalled. . . Also, some twenty-four or twenty-five years ago, this same person [Kunichika], while ‘window’ shopping at an evening stall on the Asakusa Hirokōji, encountered an old man with a shorn head at a booth, who was selling prints that were largely spread out [before him]. Kunichika stopped and among the goods were about ten volumes of the Inaka Genji. When he asked the price, the merchant answered that they were 1 shu and 100 mon. Kunichika barked, ‘Me, Kunichika, I am Japan’s one and only Kunichika, knock it down to 1 shu!’ to which, without challenge and in the same tone of voice, the merchant retorted: ‘Well, I am Japan’s one and only Ishii Seijirō’, but thinking that this man, this ‘Japan’s number one Kunichika’, was interesting . . .

For Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遥 (1859–1935), the influential writer, playwright, and driving force behind the establishment of the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum at Waseda University (Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan), Kunichika’s standing as a nigao-e shi was irrefutable:

The foremost person in actor prints of the Meiji era is Toyohara Kunichika. Yoshiiku also occasionally has masterpieces. Yoshitoshi’s pictures [also] merit special note. Moreover, Baidō Kunimasa (later Hōsai), Chikanobu, Chikashige, and others also did actor likenesses, but in terms of the quantity of work and looking at the character of the actor nigao-e, it is Kunichika who tops them all. In essence, his work—be it from the early, middle or late periods and even despite great change—remains superior. His masterworks, in other words, at the end of his early period, are images of [Sawamura] Tanosuke III during the actor’s golden years, in other words, those before and after the Meiji ishin. [The use of] line during this period is refined; the mitate-e and so forth have interesting designs and his palette possesses a charm and richness—one doesn’t tire of looking at them. However, with 1870/1871 (Meiji 3/4) and for whatever reason, it changes: the brushwork becomes visibly careless, the printing worsens and the colours also decline. This could be different [since I am working from memory], but from around 1874/1875 (Meiji 7/8) he was again meticulous and one senses a gradual improvement from the Meiji 10s to the 1877–1897 (Meiji 20s). But during his middle and late periods, the lines in his work become thick and strong, as in the Kameido style [a reference to Kunisada]. Thereafter, in his work of the 1887 to 1897 (Meiji 20s)—the period of the rise of katsureki—he portrays Danjūrō, Kikugorō, or Sadanji as a single figure in a triptych format. There are a number of works with a hitherto completely different elegant background scene added, and a depiction of refined forms. The result was that these works at times indirectly rivalled similar designs by Yoshitoshi [see fig. 60].

Kunichika’s method of working is described in Iijima Kyoshin’s obituary of the artist

9 Tsubouchi, ‘Meiji no meiyū to sono nigao-e’, 650.
Newland Chapter Four

(see also Chapter One), with Iijima remarking on how Kunichika brought his in-depth knowledge of the kabuki theatre and printed pictorial conventions to his designs. Iijima felt these aspects justified the singling out of Kunichika as ‘one of the great artists of early modern Ukiyo-e’. As a respected writer on woodblock prints in the Meiji era and contributor of numerous newspaper articles on the subject, Iijima’s role as a commentator on the history of this tradition and his assessment of Kunichika would have contributed ballast:

. . . He excelled the most in actor nigao-e and was skilled [in creating the] coloration of the Utagawa school. This reporter’s acquaintance with Kunichika is long standing and in fact I visited him at his home. He frequently used his ability/skill to draw nigao-e and confused, I would ask things like whose nigao is this, or which performance is it, and so forth. And then he’d smile and say that he already knew the play; even if a piece had yet to open, the type of make-up (kumadori), the countenance of the figure and the style of the costumes were without fail just like he pictured when I later saw the play. One day he was designing a picture of a geiko. He first paid attention to the features, and drew these, then paid attention to the decoration of the hair, and then the other elements: in addition to the latest styles in hair-combs and hairpins, the fashionable types of over-kimono and under-kimono would be this way, and if he had already used one such waist sash (obi) it would have to be this way and then the geta would have to be like this. He explains all this as he continues to draw. If he had already used one type of hair ornament, he would easily know another—the minuteness of the preparation is indeed mind-boggling. Furthermore, Kunichika is most expert at coloration. He preserved the lineage [style] of the Utagawa school, and as such, he at times combined two or three pigments (enogu) and often used six or seven colours (iro), or, the number of pigments could be reduced to create a very appealing palette. Sometimes booksellers-publishers (ezōshi toiya) called by and commissioned work from him. If the artist’s fee proposed was agreeable to Kunichika, he might reduce the number of colours—it would still be beautiful. However, if the fee did not meet with his expectations he would increase the colours and thus the price. The bookseller-publishers are well informed about this and so they were careful not to contradict his wishes.10

The manner of working described by Iijima would also have meant that Kunichika could, in theory, produce designs rapidly and in great quantity before performances, in which the artist did not wait for a play to be staged but created the work based on his presumptions about how it would look (and one that evoked a pictorial symbolism of the actor’s particular facial features). Such a pre-performance release would thereby ensure advance sales for publishers and represented well-placed advertisements for theatres. This marketing approach was one used successfully by late Edo period and Meiji publishers, and is distinguished from prints based on the actual viewing of the performance (nakami [‘view inside’] version vs. the above mitate version). The scholar Fujisawa Akane maintains that theatre managers would have welcomed this type of pre-performance promotion and ‘probably offered advance

information about plays to be staged to both artists and publishers. And Kunichika certainly frequented backstage, demonstrating that even in the Meiji ‘the role of the Utagawa school of artists is not simply a linking of the two art forms, but rather, a case of the artists entering into the kabuki world of actors, writers, and artists and receiving great stimulus from this interaction . . . the Utagawa-school artists were a primary factor in the appearance of the phenomenon of drawing kabuki, acting an ukiyo-e print’. According to the actor Onoe Matsusuke, the artist enjoyed going backstage, and even though he was always shabbily dressed, he would somehow manage to get enough money to buy materials, and [once paid] he would immediately take on grand airs and go out on the town. Conversely, when he was working and someone came to visit, he would not laugh or listen and became the hard-working sort, as witnessed in Iijima’s description above.

Iijima’s obituary further details Kunichika’s contribution as a nigao-e shi and unreservedly acknowledges the artist’s place in the history of the genre:

Kunichika is considered one of the great artists of early modern ukiyo-e and has been exceedingly praised. Kunichika’s death is in fact regrettable, and I hold onto his memory. His art will be missed and the dying out of the technique of actor nigao-e cannot not be lamented enough. To begin with, during the Hōreki era, the first nigao-e was Toriyama Sekien’s Nakamura Kiyosaburō and in the An’ei era Ippitsusai Bunchō, Katsukawa Shunshō, and others specialised in nigao-e, which were popular and valued by the public.

Iijima’s text reminds the reader that the tradition of nigao-e was a time-honoured one, which he believes can be traced back to Toriyama Sekien 鳥山石燕 (1712–88). Iijima’s description of the origins of nigao-e demonstrates that the history of nigao-e is not an art historical construct that we might associate with modern times, and one that is already under discussion in the early nineteenth century. Iijima does not elaborate on why he considers Sekien an originator of the genre, but the memoir of Ogawa Kendō, the Chirizuka dan 鹫塚談 (Tales of

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11 Fujisawa Akane, ‘The mutual flowering of the Utagawa school and kabuki’, in Mueller, Competition and collaboration, 33. For further reading, see her Utagawa ha no ukiyo-e to Edo shuppankai—yakusha-e o chūshin ni—, in particular, ‘Kabuki shiryō to yakusha-e’ 歌舞伎資料と役者絵, 103–37.
12 Fujisawa, ‘The mutual flowering of the Utagawa school and kabuki’, 35. Kunichika was involved with theatres and performance; as mentioned above he was supposedly a chaban kyōgen performer and he also participated in theatre festivals, as seen his decoration of jiguchi andon lanterns at Meiji Theatre, along with Torii Kiyosada 鳥居清貞 (1844–1901) and Ochiai Yoshiiku, on the occasion of the Inari Festival; see Tōkyō Asahi shinbun, ‘Meijiza no Inari matsuri’ (19 January 1896), 4.
13 Kure, Toyohara Kunichika yakusha-e senshū; also Iwakiri, ‘Kindai no yakusha-e’, 35, and Ōe, ‘Ukiyo-e shi Toyohara Kunichika ni tsuite’.
14 The onnagata Nakamura Kiyosaburō I died in Osaka on the eighteenth day of the sixth month 1777 (Ihara, Kabuki nenpyō, vol. 4, 308). Other print designers of the era also depicted him: Ippitsusai Bunchō (Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan: 030-0086, 1769; Ritsumeikan online database: Z0166-232, Z0166-233) and Ishikawa Toyonobu (with Ichimura Kamezō, Ritsumeikan online database: Z0164-036). Kunichika would design prints of the later generation, Kiyosaburō IV (Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, 100-3259, 3/1875).
the dust heap, 1814), describes the display of a Sekien nigao-e painting:

About the beginning of the Hōreki era [1751–64] the artist Toriyama Sekien painted a likeness of the female role specialist Nakamura Kiyosaburō in performance, on a framed panel of rough, unfinished wood 2 shaku, 4 or 5 sun [42.4–45.5 cm] high and 8 or 9 sun [24.2–27.3 cm] wide. It was hung on a pillar to the side of the incense burner in the Asakusa Kannon Hall and everyone was talking about how unusual it was. This should be regarded as the origins of the nigao-e in Edo.16

While it is not within the scope of this study to delve into the history of the evolution of the nigao-e, suffice it to say that the art historian Mutō Junko believes that there were five main players in the origins of nigao-e. Sekien included, they were Furuyama Moromasa (act. c. 1741–48), Ōba Hōsui, Katsukawa Shunshō, and Yanagi Bunchō (1751–1801).17 Later facial expressions in woodblock prints were based on conventions established by the Utagawa school, and during the nineteenth century artists of actor prints were largely followers of this lineage.18 The development of the half-length portrait (ōkubi-e) was closely allied with the history of nigao-e and other figurative genres (e.g. bijinga) (fig. 61). Not surprisingly, the ōkubi-e was also a Kunichika staple. Iijima continues:

In the Bunka era Utagawa Toyokuni I gradually achieved success, creating a unique style, and he designed the single volume Yakusha nigao hayageiko in the illustration of nigao-e. This style was passed on to Toyokuni III and upon his death Kunichika inherited this tradition.19

Toyokuni I’s single volume Yakusha nigao hayageiko of 1817 was intended as a manual whose ‘method was simply a mock-professional procedure for depicting actors’ but one that assisted in standardising representations of kabuki actors while still creating easily identifiable portraits (fig. 62a–b). More importantly, ‘this work offers instruction in the art of “reading” these symbolic, codified representations, or “likenesses”, of actors in a specific style, which would only increase the demand for kabuki prints created by Utagawa-school artists and discourage other artists who might try their hand in designing actor prints’.20 At the

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16 English translation in Clark, ‘Ready for a close-up’, 42. Neither this, nor any nigao-e by Sekien, are known to have survived. The full passage appears in http://www.ne.jp/asahi/kato/yoshio/ukiyoeyougo/a-yougo/yougo-aburageuri.html (accessed 20 February 2014).
17 Clark, ‘Ready for a close-up’, 42.
18 Overtaking the Katsukawa school that had previously dominated the genre (and before that the Torii school). Torii school artists such as Torii Kiyosada and Kiyomitsu, however, were part of the nigao-e landscape in the later nineteenth century.
20 Mueller, ‘Creative specialization and collaborative projects’, 48. It is not my intent to trace the influences upon Toyokuni’s publication, although Yano Akiko believes that the ‘one of the purposes of Toyokuni’s publication was to show popular audiences his awareness of artistic trends in the Kyoto/Osaka region’. Akiko Yano, ‘Capturing the body: Ryūkōsai’s notes on “realism” in representing actors on stage’: http://cas.colorado.edu/sites/default/files/images/stories/PDFs/akiko_yano_hr.pdf. See also Clark, ‘Ready for a close-up’, 47; Toyokuni’s manual for the amateur artist was apparently so popular that it was reported that the publisher Senkakudō did not have time to bind the books properly.
same time, his release of the volume was a clever artistic strategy in securing his future monopoly of the Utagawa actor portrait. It is quite plausible that Kunichika, like his teacher Kunisada before him, would have been familiar with this volume during his training. In it Toyokuni sets forth the fundamental compositional principles of the Utagawa school and instructs, through text and image, how a nigao-e should be drawn, beginning with the features. It could be surmised from Iijima’s description above that Kunichika’s manner of working followed this practice. Iijima himself writes on Toyokuni’s publication in an article in the Yomiuri shinbun from 16 February 1901 entitled ‘Issei Utagawa Toyokuni no haiyū nigao-e’ 一世歌川豊国の俳優似顔絵 (‘Actor nigao-e of Utagawa Toyokuni I’), less than a year following Kunichika’s death and only months before his own in August 1901.  

Ellis Tinios observes that a comparison of ‘Toyokuni’s portrait sketches with faces appearing on his and his pupils’ prints demonstrates in a striking manner the degree of standardisation of depiction achieved by the artists of the Utagawa school’. Moreover, he maintains that ‘any artist who wished to succeed in the competitive Edo market for actor prints departed from these nigao at his peril’. This would include Kunichika, and what Tinios writes about the nigao-e of Toyokuni’s student Kunisada could equally apply to Kunisada’s student Kunichika, especially as regards ‘creativity within convention’:

Kunisada internalized these nigao, making them the core of his representational language for the whole of this long creative life. Kunisada’s mature actor portraits are not easily confused with those of this teacher, nonetheless, they were produced entirely in conformity with his teacher’s conventions. . . . Kunisada developed his own mode of representation within the limits of his teacher’s style, demonstrating once again the creativity that is possible within conventions.

The shifting face of nigao-e: a double-edged sword

This ‘creativity within convention’ is another element that secures Kunichika’s positioning as the preeminent Meiji nigao-e shi and emblematic ‘Meiji no Edokko’. However, his career as a woodblock print designer was confronted by the winds of change, and Iijima makes the following observation (and lament) in his obituary of the artist:

From the Meiji era onwards, the technology of photography became popular, and actor photographs were done in great numbers and as a result nigao-e quickly died out. Apart from Kunichika there is hardly anyone designing nigao-e, and now that he is gone, nigao-e, too, will die out and this is lamentable, and while nigao-e is represented by nothing more than poor workmanship within the art world, it has nevertheless become

See also Tinios, ‘How to draw actor portraits’, 168–74.
21 Iijima’s article offers little critical analysis of Toyokuni’s publication and is largely descriptive, but it does indicate the interest in nigao-e at this time, the decline of which was already being lamented.
22 Tinios, ‘How to draw actor portraits’, 172 and 174.
23 Ibid., 174.
quite valued as one aspect in our understanding of contemporary customs and manners.\(^{24}\)

Iijima’s comments are noteworthy on two counts: first, the perception that photography appeared to have a great impact on printed nigao-e and by implication would eventually lead to the decline of Kunichika’s métier of nigao-e, and secondly, that nigao-e had ‘become quite valued as one aspect in our understanding of contemporary customs and manners’. The latter hints at the significance of nigao-e as a reflection of popular culture and Kunichika’s elevation as an icon of a fading, yet romanticised, cultural past amidst the historicising trends that occurred at the end of the nineteenth century in an effort to preserve cultural identity in the form of the Edokko. In effect, the attrition of nigao-e would equally add to its reputation as Edo no meibutsu (see also Chapter Three on collective memory). Importantly, this attrition is intimated as being set in motion with Kunichika’s death, finally cemented by the deaths of Kikugorō V and Danjūrō IX.\(^{25}\)

Although Kunichika fashioned himself a representative of ‘traditional’ (i.e. woodblock-printed) actor portraiture, he would nonetheless have been well aware of the changes emerging in reprographic technologies by the early decades of the Meiji era. At this time nishiki-e—including actor nigao-e of actors in role and offstage—faced competition from other media, such as photography, lithography, as well as three-colour, offset, and letterpress printing.\(^{26}\) The influx of such new technologies, in particular photographic images, would have a noticeable impact on nishiki-e woodblock print culture. The popularity of photography was such that it was also mirrored in the kabuki theatre. The playwright Kawatake Mokuami, a keen observer of contemporary culture, dealt with the fad for photography in his kabuki tokiwazu piece Sakigakete shashin no yakusha-e 魁写真俳優画 (Pioneer photographic pictures of actors). Staged at the Ichimura Theatre from 2/1870, Kawarasaki Gonnosuke VII (later Danjūrō IX) plays the photographer Koichi, said to be a parody of the real-life Uchida Kuichi (see below) (fig. 63).\(^{27}\) James Brandon notes that ‘this short play, given at the Ichimura Theatre, satirized the craze among Tokyoites, especially kabuki actors, of having their pictures taken at the city’s first photographic emporium. Photography was so popular it


\(^{25}\) The view that actor portraits rapidly declined with Kunichika’s death is widely accepted today among Japanese art historians; see Akama, Zusetsu Edo no engekisha, 223.

\(^{26}\) Woodblock prints documenting the technique of photography first appearing in Yokohama-e, which in themselves were images that documented the life of foreigners in Japan and therefore not of customs among Japanese. Also not included in this discussion was the use of photography for portrait imagery in newspapers and magazines, kabuki journals being established at this time, e.g. Kabuki歌舞伎, Kabuki shinpō歌舞伎新報, and Engei sekai演芸世界.

\(^{27}\) Recorded in Ihara, Kabuki nenpyō, vol. 7, 163.
quickly replaced *ukiyo-e* as a means of illustrating kabuki plays’. I would argue that this ‘replacement’ was not overnight nor was it necessarily rapid; it was also qualitative since high-quality sets like the Danjūrō IX and Kikugorō V series were proof that these types of works were still viable and appreciated.

Iwakiri Shin’ichirō writes that possibly the first kabuki-related photograph dates to the eighth month of 1868 to coincide with a performance at the Ichimura Theatre to mark Ichimura Kikutsu IV’s name change to Onoe Kikugorō V (in the role of Nikki Danjō in the play). But such early examples were more as one-off commemorative photographs and would not have immediately posed a commercial threat to woodblock-printed *nigao-e*. These photographs were known as *buromaido*, so called because they were printed on bromide paper. Subsequently the term ‘*buromaido*’ assumed the generic connotation of an ‘actor portrait’.

The use of photography as commercial portraiture truly emerges at this time (Japanese photographers eventually established their own studios, especially from the 1870s onwards), with actor photographs appearing for sale in shops. Coinciding with and responding to this new fashion, entrepreneurial *nishiki-e* publishers acknowledged this competing reprographic media in prints, with textual references to photography, or a ‘true portrayal’ (*shashin*, i.e., ‘photograph/photography’), in the series titles, print sub-titles, or as descriptive texts on the image. There was also a short-lived fashion for compositions that blatantly imitated photography, whereby the decorative quality of prints was combined with the look of a photographic image. Perhaps the two most representative series employing the latter device are Ochiai Yoshiiku’s *Mirror of actor photographs*, and Kunichika’s *Photograph scenes—today on sale!* (figs. 64 and 65). Both date to 1870 and both use the artifice of including ‘*shashin*’-like photographic images against a plain ground; Yoshiiku’s series uses of the technique of *bokashi* to simulate areas of light and shadow, and a ‘burnished’ surface to capture the feel of a bromide photograph.

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29 Based on Abe Yutaka 安部豊, ‘Engeki shashin no hensen’ 演劇写真の変遷 (*The changes in theatre photography*), *Engei gahō* 28, no. 8 (August 1934). See Iwakiri, ‘Kindai no yakusha-e’, 37. The actor in this role is most likely from the play *Ume momiji nishiki no date ori* 梅照葉錦伊達織, opening 25/8/1868; see Ihara, *Kabuki nenpyō*, vol. 7, 150.
30 See also Clark, ‘Ready for a close-up’, 36.
31 Three of the nine sheets in the Yoshiiku set depict Danjūrō IX (Kawarasaki Gonnosuke as Kumagai Naozane) and Kikugorō V (as Nikki Danjō and Mamushi no Jirōkiichi). While the Yoshiiku set could be interpreted as an imitation of framed photographs, I believe they might be a stylisation of a *carte de visite*. Kunichika’s set is more clearly based on the line-bordered *carte de visite* known in the late 1860s.
32 Actors were also being portrayed in the similarly new media of lithography 石版額絵 (*sekiban gaku-e*); early such portraits (1875) include Danjūrō IX and Kikugorō V by Otto van Smolik. For a
The photographic actor portrait also subsumed the format of ‘picture postcards’ (絵葉書), which were small studio-staged picture postcard photographic portraits known as cartes de visite (c. 8.5 x 5 cm). Not dissimilar to the role of woodblock prints, these would have been done of kabuki actors to distribute to fans or to sell as souvenirs, and would have served as an expedient commercial tool for self-promotion by both actors and theatres. Not surprisingly, major stars like Ichikawa Danjūrō IX, Onoe Kikugorō V, and Ichikawa Sadanji I would have been sought-after subjects for cartes de visite (fig. 66a).  

By the 1870s, the practice and popularity of photographic cartes de visite were pervasive enough that it was absorbed into the lexicon of woodblock prints. Nishiki-e artists, Kunichika included, would not have been ignorant of this new media, and while we cannot know for certain, it is not implausible to suggest that together with publishers they would have also been aware that this was a medium to rival their own. Kunichika, along with contemporaries such as Issen Yoshikazu 一川芳員 (active 1850–60s), seemed to have had an ‘usually strong interest in the subject, judging from the number of photography prints they produced’. This interest may have been fuelled by family connections. Hagiwara Osamu records that in 1897 Kunichika’s brother Chōkichi opened the Arakawa Photography Studio (Arakawa Shashinkan).  

Kunichika’s acknowledgement of the photographic carte de visite is already visualised in his work in 9/1869—not long after the first recorded photographic image—in the print Seen as if just photographed from the series Thirty-two fashionable physiognomies (thoughts). The composition shows a woman holding two cartes de visite, one presumably of herself that has just been taken at a photography studio or emporium (fig. 67). The thematic inspiration for such a series—thirty-two fashionable physiognomies—lies in the oeuvre of earlier masters like Kitagawa Utamaro, but here Kunichika updates the theme, perhaps to imply that one aspect of physiognomy is that spied through the modern camera lens. The gesaku writer, journalist, and co-founder of the newspaper, Nichinichi shinbun, Sansantei

discussion of lithography actor portraits, see Iwakiri, ‘Nishiki-e to Sekihanga no kankeisei’ 錦絵と石版画の関係性, in Iwakiri, Meiji hanga shi, 137–38.  

33 Iwata, ‘Shiryō shōkai: Meiji no ko-shashin (1)’ 資料紹介 明治の古写真 (‘Introducing research materials: old photographs of the Meiji’), Kabuki kenkyū to hihyō 18, 145. Extant photographs of Danjūrō IX and Kikugorō V exhibit similar backdrops, suggesting a studio setting.  

34 Hockley, ‘Cameras, photographs and photography’, 43. In addition to the artists mentioned here are also Utagawa Kunisada II, Shōsai Ikkei, Utagawa Hiroshige III, and Utagawa Yoshifuji. Utagawa Kunisada II’s print of 1875, ‘Ryōgoku shashinkyō’ 両国写真観 (‘Photography in Ryōgoku’), from the series Tōkyō meisho 東京名所 (Famous places in Tokyo) shows a beautiful woman holding the photograph of a man. Moreover, camera imagery appeared in earlier Yokohama-e that focused on the portrayal of foreigners in Japan and their customs.  

35 Hagiwara lists this information as based on conversations with Yoshida Jinzō and his wife Ito (Kunichika’s granddaughter). Hagiwara, ‘Kunichika kankei nenpu’, n.p.
Arindō (Jōno Denpei, 1832–1901) contributes the text on the print. He conjectures that the woman had wanted the photographic carte de visite done, since the image would be likened to looking at herself in the mirror. In other words, the image could reflect her own individual beauty, not the idealised form that was standard in Utagawa school bijinga and limned here in Kunichika’s composition.

The incorporation of figures holding cartes de visite into the visual lexicon of the woodblock print is proof, according to Allen Hockley, ‘that photography, once a novelty practiced only by Westerners, has now entered into the private lives of Japanese’. Moreover, it would have been one ploy on the part of publishers to attract buyers with illustrations of novel customs conflated with traditional subject matter, media, and compositions. One of the more successful Japanese photographers in the early years of the Meiji was Uchida Kuichi 内田九一 (1844–75), who in 1869 established his ‘Kuichidō Manju’ studio in the capital’s Asakusa district theatres and popular entertainments. While Uchida is most celebrated for his photograph of the seated Emperor Meiji, his clientele also included actors and he produced numerous photographs of them. Kunichika offers a nod to Uchida and the new media in his print Kogiku of Sarugaku-chō and the Imado Daishichi inn from the 1878 series Thirty-six Tokyo restaurants (fig. 68), which depicts a woman looking at a carte de visite inscribed on the back with the Uchida studio label. His recognition of other Japanese photographers of the period might also extend to the sheet entitled Photograph from the 1878 series Mirror of enlightenment sentiment, in which a young woman stands next to a camera (fig. 69). While it cannot be substantiated, some scholars believe that Kunichika might well be referring to one of the first female Japanese photographers, Hanawa Yoshino 塙芳野 (1848–84), who specialised in actor portraits and operated a studio across from the Shintomi Theatre. It was not unheard of for Kunichika to single out known women in his prints, as seen in his image of female gidayū performer Takemoto Ayanosuke I (1875–1941) in his 1890–91 series Scenes of the twenty-four hours: a pictorial trope (Mitate chūya nijūyōji no uchi 見立昼夜廿四時之

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36 Hockley, ‘Cameras, photographs and photography’, 55.  
37 See also Himeno Jun’ichi, ‘Encounters with foreign photographers: the introduction and spread of photography in Kyūshū’, in Coolidge Roussamier and Hirayama, Reflecting truth, 26; he states Uchida’s shop was in Kawaramachi Asakusa; Hockley, perhaps erroneously, says his shop was in Ryōgoku, and other reports state the shop was inside Asakusa’s Niōmon.  
38 Iwata, ‘Shiryo shōkai: Meiji no ko-shashin (2)’, n.p. and 136, illustrates three such carte de visite photographs (Onoe Kikugorō V and Nakamura Shikan IV, respectively, from 1870) with label inscriptions on the mounts reading ‘Tokyo Asakusa ōdaichi/Yokohama Bashamichi/Uchida Kuichi’ 東京浅草大代地／横浜馬車道／写真師内田九一 and a third, n.p. and 138, of Sawamura Tosshō II reading ‘Tokyo Asakusa/Yokohama Bashamichi/Uchida’ 東京浅草／横浜馬車道／内田, in addition to romanised lettering ‘Uchida Yokohama and Tokeio’.
It is difficult to know, however, whether Kunichika’s conceit in acknowledging photographers, such as Uchida or Hanawa, and cartes de visite was one way of gaining acceptance among his audience as someone ‘in the know’ by playing up to the competition, an expression perhaps of his own fascination with the medium, or if the choice of subject matter was actually driven by his publishers. (The fact that these photo images date predominantly to the 1870s suggests that it was part of a publishing fad.)

Kunichika’s illustration of Japanese using cartes de visite is not only related to his bijinga, many depicting women holding cartes de visite with a female image, but some of beauties holding cartes de visite of men. The fashion of carte de visite is also conveyed in his actor portraits. As noted above, this demonstrates that such photographic images served an analogous purpose to actor prints as a souvenir for a fan (or in the case of bijinga, clients), as well as a form of self-promotion (or in the case of prostitutes a form of promotion by brothel owners or the women themselves). In one sheet of the 1878 triptych The allure of seven evil women, he has the actor Suketakaya Takesuke (1838–86) in the role of Shashin no Owaka showing a carte de visite to the actor Ichikawa Sadanji I in the role of Yoarashi Okinu (fig. 70). The oval cartouche of the carte de visite is typical of actual examples from the 1870s.

Kunichika similarly proposes how actor photographs were marketed in the insert illustration (koma-e) in the actor mitate print subtitled True likeness (Shinsha 真写) from his 1877 series Twenty-four novelties of the enlightenment. In it, a couple pauses before a shop selling, among other things, ‘new theatre’ images (shinkyō) as indicated across the top of the insert illustration (fig. 71). This is linked to the main image of the actor Nakamura Shikan IV in the role of Urashima Tarō, most likely from the kabuki play Uta no shiori meisho no e-awase 歌栞名所絵合 that is based on the legend of the fisherman Urashima Tarō who is rewarded for a kindness with a visit to the Dragon god in his underwater sea kingdom. After what he believes is three days away, Tarō finds that he has travelled forward in time by three hundred years. These two vignettes—the sale of photographic portraits and an individual confronted with a future world—are believed by some scholars to represent

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39 In the set, this print corresponds to 11 p.m. The difference, of course, being that the latter images name the subject, while that of the female photographer does not. Both images are not individualised portraits, but are rather standard Utagawa school female images. The Takemoto Ayanosuke image is illustrated in Newland, A courtesan’s day, 167.

40 This subtitle ‘真写’ is actually a transposition of the characters for photograph 写真, and connotes the depiction of things as they actually appear (i.e. like a photograph).

41 For a photograph of such a shop, see http://oldphoto.lb.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/jp/target.php?id=2448. The Scottish surgeon and missionary Henry Faulds (1843–1930) describes in his Nine years in Nipon. Sketches of Japanese life and manners how framed photographic images of prostitutes were hung by the brothel doorways in the Senju district of Tokyo. Faulds was in Japan from 1874 to 1883, a period spanning the incorporation of photography into popular Japanese visual culture. Faulds, Nine years in Nipon, 149.
Kunichika’s comparison of himself with a disappeared past in the figure of Urashima Tarō who wakes up to the future of the photographic actor portrait and the demise of his own métier.\textsuperscript{42} Even though such an interpretation is fancifully tempting, and it is not out of the realm of possibility that Kunichika would have entertained such a play of imagery, this view is hard to substantiate. What is clear, and as established above, is that Kunichika would have been aware of actor photography, whether they be \textit{cartes de visite} or full-sized photographs.

A comparison of prices suggests that in the 1870s photographic portraits were still more expensive than woodblock-printed portraits. Despite the novelty of photography and its subsequent acceptance and gradual absorption into mainstream Japanese life, the prices of woodblock-printed images initially remained competitive with its photographic counterpart. Woodblock printing was an established industry in Japan with the supply infrastructure surrounding materials (blocks, papers, even aniline dyes) well honed; setting up a photography studio would have been a new, more costly venture. Prices for actor portraits in the 1870s—only available after 1875 when publication information was required on prints—were very much lower. As stated in Chapter Two, a diptych from June 1878 illustrating Danjūrō IX in the role of Tokugawa Mitsukuni, popularly known as Mito Kōmon, from the play \textit{Kōmon-ki osana kōshaku} 黄門記童幼講釈 (\textit{The story of Kōmon, a lecture for youth}) lists in its margin a price of 4 \textit{sen} (see Chapter Two; fig. 49).\textsuperscript{43} An average price for a single-sheet print in c. 1875 was between 2 and 3 \textit{sen}, whereas for a triptych the cost tripled to around 6 to 9 \textit{sen} (see also note 50, page 16).\textsuperscript{44} By comparison, Uchida sold individual actor portraits for 12 \textit{sen 5 rin}.\textsuperscript{45} Publishers needed to keep prices low to remain competitive, even against the rise in commodity prices. This would have led to the production of many ‘cruder’ pieces, no doubt providing the fuel for later criticism that Meiji prints had gone to the dogs (see Introduction).\textsuperscript{46} This situation was reported upon in ‘Ezōshiya no konnan’ (‘Hard times for print/booksellers’) in the \textit{Yomiuri shinbun} from 7 May 1896:

\begin{quote}
Since last autumn, the sale of \textit{Azuma nishiki-e} hit a sudden ebb. In order to sell a stack of actor prints (two hundred sheets), [it was necessary] to print twice as many and reduce the price. As much as possible is being done to source [cheap] original blocks from around the country, but this is accompanied by an inflation in the materials [costs] of the original wooden blocks. In the past, printing one black-and-white sheet cost 15
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{42} Including Hockley, ‘Cameras, photographs and photography’, 58–59.

\textsuperscript{43} This print does not appear to have been produced for any particular performance but as a tribute to the actor; it dates to June 1878, the month the Shintomi Theatre re-opened its doors downtown after a disastrous fire. English title of the play from Brandon and Leiter,\textit{ Restoration and reform. Vol. 4}.

\textsuperscript{44} Prices of lithographic prints are discussed in Iwakiri, \textit{Meiji hanga shi}, 132–33.

\textsuperscript{45} According to Ozawa, \textit{Nihon no shashin shi}, 112.

\textsuperscript{46} As Oikawa Shigeru states the integral element of mass appreciation makes it ‘easier to see why they [Meiji prints] often had to be cheap in price, why there are such variations in technical quality, and why it is pointless to speak of ‘vulgarity’ and “coarseness’; Oikawa, ‘The maintenance of tradition’, in Newland,\textit{ Hotei encyclopedia}, vol. 1, 264.
Newland Chapter Four

sen; now this has risen to 25 sen. One colour sheet was 10 sen, or, at most, 13 sen, but now this has increased to 18 sen. Printers have, too, raised their fees. Earlier it cost 1 sen for a sheet and this has steadily risen to 1 sen 5 rin (a triptych is 2 sen 5 rin). More and more booksellers are having difficulties and they are unable to halt the production of ultimately crude pieces—the fate of Edo meibutsu is uncertain (p. 3).

This situation is echoed in the early twentieth century with the article ‘Surishi no konjaku’ (‘Printers past and present’) of 25 February 1908 in the Tōkyō Asahi shinbun:

‘There is no one training now’ (‘Ima wa shugyō suru mono wa nai’)

At the time of the publication of Yoshitoshi’s popular onishiki-e series One hundred aspects of the moon there were many blockcutters and printers, each having polished their own respective skills. But since 1896 (after the Sino-Japanese War) the nishiki-e market has had to face challenges from lithography and photography as well as from cheap koromu (chrome) pictures. And, with the publishers folding due to the costs of production and the fact that prints are thus only affordable to foreigners, the middlemen, nishiki-e sellers (nishiki-e toiya), are also looking at maintaining short-term profit. Like blockcutters, printers, too, were at a loss regarding their livelihoods and many shifted to other fields. In this light, it can be well imagined that there will be few thinking of training in the printing industry in the future. In any case, allowing this famous Edo product (Edo meibutsu) of the Edo period to fall to this degree is truly a shame (p. 5).

Despite the gloomy outlook painted in the two articles above, the vibrant colour, decorative detail, as well as the dramatic imagery, afforded by highly skilled woodblock print printers and blockcutters would have had more aesthetic allure and historic continuity than the new medium of black-and-white photography. Moreover, they were expressions of an ‘interpreted’ reality, what Kamiyama Akira refers to as a ‘sense or feeling of actual realism’ (genjitsukan 現実感). The photograph may well have had appeal because of its novelty value as a ‘realistic’ portrayal, or perceived ‘realism’ as borne out by the young woman in the print who desires an image likened to her own visage reflected in the mirror. The popularity of the photograph—judged by its absorption into kabuki play plots and in prints at least during the 1870s—was equally a barometer of the changing perceptions and expectations of a Meiji audience towards ‘realism’ (genjitsusei 現実性). Nevertheless, photographs would have had little impact in conveying the emotion and expression of a performative moment, since little expression could be expected when a pose before the camera required the subject to remain still for several minutes.

Kamiyama uses the example of Danjūrō IX in his role as the onnagata Sumizome from the play Seki no to 関扉 (Gate at the barrier) and Hanako from Dōjōji 道成寺 and extant

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47 The practice of including the blockcutter’s name (less so the printer) became more common practice in the Meiji; for example, the aforementioned Kōmon includes the name of the blockcutter ‘Horikō Yatarō’ 影工弥太郎 [Watanabe Yatarō], 1850–1913.

48 Kamiyama, ‘Shashin to chinmoku’, 115–16.
photographs to assert, quite rightly, that nishiki-e illustrating the actor in such roles conjure up the power of the actor's individuality. Such analogies could equally be drawn between other prints by Kunichika and extant photographs, including Danjūrō IX as the Heron Maiden from the one hundred Danjūrō set (and in various triptychs) and a photograph from the seminal photographic compilation showing the actor in diverse roles, the Butai no Danjūrō (figs. 72–74). These contrast the portrayal of Danjūrō IX in staged black-and-white photographs—with the advent of photography the actor was into middle age—in which he simply looks like an ‘old man dressed up in women’s clothing’. Kamiyama argues that black-and-white photographs of the actor lose something of the aura and prowess of this towering ‘mythicised’ representative Meiji actor. Perhaps this was not lost on Danjūrō IX who, once after seeing a photograph of himself, angrily commented that ‘This is not my face’ (watashi wa konna kao ja nai). (This calls to mind Kunichika’s anecdote in MNE 21, in which he describes Danjūrō IX’s displeasure over Kunichika’s depiction of the actor’s eyes as bulging; see Chapters One and Two.) Kamiyama further singles out photographs of Danjūrō IX, stating that they differ from those of other actors of the period (e.g. Onoe Kikugorō V, Nakamura Nakazō IV, Nakamura Shikan IV). He argues these met fans’ expectations and demands in conveying individual characteristics and thus the ‘beauty of kabuki’ (kabuki no bi). But he believes that those of Danjūrō IX fall short in projecting this ‘beauty of kabuki’—in other words, they are ‘unbecoming likenesses’ and that the photographic image before us is neither glorification nor necessarily beautification. Nishiki-e, Kamiyama continues, are created from a completely different perspective and possess an entirely different character, what he terms ‘likenesses that are far from becoming’ (in terms of physical beauty). They are visualisations of a dramatic, performative moment, not a record of an actor in role.

If we understand these ‘portraits’ as clips of performative moments and that the aim of these prints was to embody the character—and thus the actor’s persona—in a dramatic, theatrical climatic moment in a kabuki piece (mie), then it follows that they could not be fully ‘realistic’ and immutable personifications of an individual in the Western sense and as would have been more accurately transmitted by the technique of photography at this time. The significance of nigao-e of this era, at least, was as the quintessence of the actor performing a

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49 The Sagi musume performance was part of Setsugekka 月雪花 performed from 13 May 1886 at the Shintomi Theatre. An interesting comparison of prints illustrating the actor in decidedly male roles and corresponding photos include Benkei, Otokonosuke, Kagami Karashishi, and Kezori Kuemon from the Danjūrō series and spreads 16, 140, 242, and 56 from Butai no Danjūrō, respectively. And with onnagata Masaoka (Danjūrō series) and Princess Yaegaki (compare with Waseda 100-5468) from spreads 136 and 215, respectively.

50 Kamiyama, ‘Shashin to chinmoku’, 114.

51 Ibid., 115.

52 Ibid.
role and as such the nigao-e was seen as a convincing true likeness of spirit.\(^{53}\) It must be added, however, that Kunichika quite convincingly captured Danjūrō IX’s most distinctive physical attribute—his long face. But ultimately it is not individual physical traits that are important. In this light, Iwata Hideyuki’s description of a print by Migita Toshihide of Danjūrō as the Heron Maiden for a performance in March 1892 at the Kabuki Theatre could equally be applied to Kunichika’s images of the actor:

... [the print] does not represent the gentle beauty of the onnagata, rather it represents the individual character of the actor Danjūrō IX... Sagi musume depicts Danjūrō’s special characteristics with only slight beautification. In other words, such a portrayal is not a touching onnagata performance of the Sagi musume, instead it is ‘Danjūrō performing Sagi musume’.\(^{54}\) (fig. 74)

The meaning of nigao-e therefore can be seen as richly layered. It is not simply a staged representation of a particular role for a particular play by a particular actor as would have been conveyed by a photograph, rather the embodiment of the actor who is inseparable from this role in its representation. In this way, the traditional exaggeration of the actor’s features move away from the strictly ‘realistic’ to the ‘performative’, and into the realm of expressive, imagined ‘beauty’. The competition between ‘beauty’ versus ‘realism’ is comically offered in the 1873 triptych by Issen Yoshifuji entitled A humorous competition between foreign and domestic goods (fig. 75), in which different commodities are personified and each figure sports the respective Western or Japanese commodities as their heads. In the lower left corner a figure in Western dress, brandishing a flag with the inscription ‘shashin’ and with a head in the shape of lacquer-framed photograph of a beauty, battles a figure in traditional dress whose head is a stack of woodblock prints (also of a beauty). The thigh guards of the latter are inscribed right to left ‘ezōshi’ (illustarted books), ‘Azuma nishiki’ (woodblock prints of the East [Edo/Tokyo], and ‘ezōshi’. The text running below the figures reads:

‘Photograph’ (shashin) says: ‘I show only the truth. No matter how many years pass, I am still interesting to look at.’

‘Colour woodblock print’ (nishiki-e) says: ‘I make beautiful women and other things more beautiful than they actually are by means of illustrated books and prints. How could you ever be a match for me?’\(^{55}\)

\(^{53}\) The inclusion of the actor’s name and the role in Meiji prints would have supplied further information for the print-buying public to identify the individual, thereby completing a portrait-like image.

\(^{54}\) Iwata, ‘Bakumatsu Meiji ki no yakusha-e’, 15.

\(^{55}\) Translation corrected from that in Meech-Pekarik, The world of the Meiji print, 101; for full image, see pl. 17. The Japanese text reads: 写しん日 おれはまことのせうつし。まちがうことはだいきれへだ。ゐく年たってもおざがさめねへ。にしきえ日び人の外うつくしくきれいに見せる東ゑそふし。なんとおれにはかなうめえか. Thanks to Lawrence Marceau for assistance with this.
Photograph versus print: the changing face of imaging

But what impact did actor photographs have on the perception, reception, and sale of woodblock-printed actor imagery? During Kunichika’s lifetime, the advent of the photographic image was seen to have had a significant impact for printed nigao-e. This was not only played out in the imitations of photographic portraits of the 1870s but on the future survival of the genre, a point noted early on by writers like Iijima. Sentiment regarding the influence of photographs and photographic cartes de visite on the decline of the ‘Edo no meibutsu’ tradition of nigao-e is similarly echoed less than a decade after Kunichika’s death in an article from 1 June 1909 in the Tōkyō Asahi shinbun entitled ‘Nigao-e no matsuro’ (‘The final days of nigao-e’). It squarely apportions blame to photography and picture postcards (cartes de visite images):

Following the passing of the ‘Kiku-Dan-Sa’, there are only a small number—two or three—artists of the Utagawa school still left, most having turned their brushes to other fields; there is one, Baidō (no) Hōsai, who depicts nigao-e but with the development of picture postcards 縮眼書, nigao-e are severely impacted and today such an unfortunate situation has proved quite difficult. The thought that Edo no meibutsu is on the decline is, as one would expect, such an unpleasant feeling that it moves certain elders of the theatre world to tears (p. 7).

Tsubouchi Shōyō takes a parallel stance in his concluding sentence in his ‘Meiji no meiyu to sono nigao-e’, writing that photography did hasten the decline of woodblock-printed nigao-e:

. . . with the Meiji 30s [1897–1907], the nigao-e of classical [traditional] theatre were gradually monopolised by Hōsai and ultimately declined in 1903 (Meiji 36). The main reason for this was perhaps the appearance of photography 縮寫 and picture postcards 縮眼書.\(^{56}\)

In the following section of the same article, entitled ‘Butaigao toshite wa fudeki no shashin’, Shōyō dares to place photography and nigao-e on equal footing. With that he sends a cautionary message about photographic imagery:

As reference objects for the history of theatre, it could be said that [nigao-e] are more or less the same as photography. One such example is the case of the photographs of the ‘Dan-Kiku-Sa’ [Danjūrō IX/Kikugorō V/Sadanji I]. During their ‘golden age’, the technique of photography was still in its infancy and the manner in which they were photographed lacked device. It seems that photographs of figures like the fifth generation [Kikugorō V] were meticulous, but this was perhaps because it only dealt with the pose. The facial expression is poor (カラ駄目). A handsome masculinity dominates, but the expression of the role is flat (i.e. ‘dead’). This is to say nothing of the indifferent Danjūrō—the ‘bulging eyes’ (medake 目だけ) are always of Horikoshi Hideshi [Danjūrō’s name], be he in the role of Ieyasu, Kiyomasa or Kezori. As roles

they did not resonate. On this point, compared to actors after the Taishō era, such as Baikō, Kōshirō, and Uzaemon, the great actors had no ‘form’ (kata). The same goes for Sadanjī. Rather than being exclusively yakusha-e of a good performance having a close likeness with added imagination, the onstage facial expressions of Dan-Kiku-Sa have little to commend themselves.\(^{57}\)

That the decline of nigao-e is lamented in the above contemporary accounts is hardly surprising. Some scholars today reinforce the view that after Kunichika’s death—as if a watershed event—there was a demise of the nigao-e actor print, as voiced by Iwakiri Shin’ichirō, in 1995:

The year of Kunichika’s death, in 1900, was a critical juncture for actor prints, seen in the cloud descending on this tradition of nishiki-e, and the circumstances become such that it gradually dies out due to the importation of new printing technologies in the later Meiji seen in the objects [prints] by some in the lineage of the Torii school. This trend extended generally to ukiyo-e woodblock prints. There was a period of popularity in Meiji 27/28 (Sino-Japanese War), but this was driven to the wall ten years later in Meiji 37/38 (Russo-Japanese war), when lithography, letterpress printing, photography, and so forth took over.\(^{58}\)

The number of exhibitions and trends in publications today create the impression that actor imagery was of comparatively little significance (except for artists like Tōshūsai Sharaku, written about early on by Westerners). However, Iwata Hideyuki comments that when seen against genres such as bijinga and fūkeiga, ‘at that time the actor prints of the Utagawa school by Toyokuni, Kunisada, and Kunichika could in actual fact boast of enormous popularity and production in great quantities in the realm of ukiyo-e, and it certainly goes without saying that the focus of ukiyo-e of that period was on actor prints’.\(^{59}\) If this is indeed the case, how does one reconcile the popularity of photography and the woodblock-printed image? Was there co-existence, a reciprocal influence? There was certainly a degree of reciprocal influence between the woodblock nigao-e tradition and photographic images since actors and beauties, two mainstays in the nishiki-e canon, were also the two of the most popular subjects in early photography. The attempt at an ‘action’ pose of the actor in photographs was of course to imitate the action on stage. In visual terms they were also taking their cues from the established repertory of woodblock-printed imagery, seen for example in the Sagi musume noted above, or in other aspects such as the climatic mie pose often portrayed in woodblock prints.

Clearly we have seen how the fashion for photography influenced a fad in woodblock

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\(^{57}\) From Tsubouchi, ‘Butaigao toshite wa fudeki no shashin’, 650–51.

\(^{58}\) Iwakiri does not specify here which Torii school artist he is speaking about, but perhaps either Torii Kiyotada IV and Torii Kiyosada, who produced actor portraits in the early twentieth century. Iwakiri, ‘Kindai no yakusha-e’, 35.

\(^{59}\) Iwata, ‘Bakumatsu Meiji ki no yakusha-e’, 10.
prints in the 1870s, but by the 1880s this appears to have faded. Kunichika continued to produce a large quantity of prints throughout the 1890s, but the number of print designers of his stature still alive (and having trained in the Edo period) was diminishing. This attrition and the threat to Edo no meibutsu posed by new technologies like photography would only serve to enhance his reputation as an icon of Edokko culture and his continual branding of himself as a master of traditional woodblock-printed nigao-e during an era of change. This included the shift from images that are intended to convey an internal state of mind to an external and technologically advanced process.

Layers of visual narrativity: Kunichika’s imaging of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX (and Onoe Kikugorō V) and his nigao-e actor portraits as a form of image branding

Kunichika’s reputation as a nigao-e shi is most obviously grounded in his triptych compositions, the most striking of which are those generally of a half-length single figure spread across three sheets (i.e. triptychs), a format referred to variously at the time as sanmai ittai 三枚一体, literally ‘three sheets, one body’, or ichinindachi sanbanmono 一人立三番物, literally ‘triptych with standing single figure’. (Today it is more commonly referred to as sanmai tsuki hitoriichi 三枚続一人立ち, ‘standing single figure across three sheets’).

Believed to have been a Meiji invention, this format reached full expression in the 1880s and 1890s, not only in Kunichika’s oeuvre but also in that of many of his contemporaries such as Tsukioka Yoshitoshi and Yoshitoshi’s student Gosai (Migita) Toshihide (see e.g. figs. 57, 60, and 74). This is intimated in a Yomiuri shinbun item entitled ‘Haiyū to gakō no funpatsu’ (‘The great efforts of actors and artists’) from 1 May 1891:

... in former years it has happened that the most celebrated name in the portrayal of actor nigao, Toyohara Kunichika, has settled on solely producing a single figure spread across a triptych composition (sanmai ittai), and... even as an artwork [of Sugawara Michizane] it expresses sufficiently the power of his art. On this occasion, he exerts a great effort... to create a great picture of the single figure of Kikugorō as Kankō [Sugawara Michizane] depicted across a triptych composition. [He] had already illustrated this same actor, yet with this preparatory drawing (hanshita) he surpassed even himself (p. 3).

Or, as in the announcement for Toshihide’s Sagi musume print in the Tōkyō Asahi shinbun on 24 February 1892, and therefore pre-performance:

... this time Gosai Toshihide, who has a good reputation in designing nigao-e, has rendered Danjūrō in the role of the Heron Maiden, and like Kikugorō as the same

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60 Shindō Shigeru believes the following Kunichika work illustrating Nakamura Shikan IV as Jinriki Tanigorō from the fourth month of 1867 (Keiō 3) is the first half-length portrait, in which a single figure is spread across a triptych composition (fig. 76). Shindō, ‘Bakumatsu, Meiji haiyū nishiki gafu’, 1996, cited in Iwata, ‘Bakumatsu Meiji ki no yakusha-e’, 15. See also Akama, Zusetsu Edo no engekisō, 188, which describes the format as conjuring up a ‘one shot’ view of the performance stage.
subject, this is published by Sasaki Toyokichi of Owari-chō; both are brilliant as triptychs illustrating a single standing figure (ichinindachi sanbanmono).\textsuperscript{61}

Undisputedly the most celebrated actors of the day—and a frequent subject in Kunichika’s oeuvre—were the aforementioned triumvirate of the ‘Dan-Kiku-Sa’. Not surprisingly, they are listed as first, second, and third under the category of ‘haiyū shibaiya yaku’ 俳優芝居屋やく in a 1885 publication of rankings of all aspects of popular culture.\textsuperscript{62}

The numerous triptychs, either depicting performance groupings or in the more powerful sanmai tsuki hitoridachi format showcasing these and other actors (and not uncommonly including their verse), are matched by an equally meritorious output of single-sheet prints, either independent or within series.

As established above, Kunichika’s nigao-e of renowned actors functioned as a performative expression of reality and as a representation (and validation) of his own self-narrative as a nigao-e shi. Among the many series and suites of prints done by Kunichika, two aspiring series—not of triptychs but of single-sheet prints—released towards the end of his life are conspicuous for their size (one hundred sheets each), their devotion to imagining a single actor, and their production driven and most likely sponsored by the two actors who are the subjects: \textit{One hundred roles of Baikō} and \textit{One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō}. The prints in these two sets are emblematic of Kunichika’s own narrative as a nigao-e shi and stand apart from Kunichika’s other images of kabuki actors. More so than independent commercial prints of actors catering to publisher and theatre demands, as a type of ‘collaborative work’ these prints offer a narrativity operated by the subjects of the series (i.e. as self-promotion by the actors Onoe Kikugorō V and Ichikawa Danjūrō IX). The careers of these actors seamlessly parallel Kunichika’s own, and together they share authority in the visual and theatrical interpretation of Meiji-era kabuki theatre. What is significant with these two sets is that in the process of commemorating their own image in print through their participation in its production, Kikugorō V and Danjūrō IX were also, whether knowingly or not, commemorating the \textit{nishiki-e} tradition and Kunichika, one of the final adherents of the Edo-born Utagawa nigao-e tradition: Kikugorō V, Danjūrō IX, Kunichika, and the woodblock-printed nigao-e coalesce to become a conjoined \textit{Edo no meibutsu}.

Both \textit{One hundred roles of Baikō} and \textit{One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō} were issued by the Tokyo-based Gusokuya. They epitomise what could be seen as a continued trend during the Meiji era in the production of large sets in which the sheets were

\textsuperscript{61} ‘Sagi musume to Gorō’ 鷺娘と五郎, \textit{Tōkyō Asahi shinbun} (24 February 1892), 3.
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released singly or in small numbers (usually three) to the public. One such example was Tsukioka Yoshitoshi’s successful One hundred aspects of the moon (Tsuki hyakushi) which, judging from newspaper reports, was announced and sold in instalments of three by the publisher Akiyama Buemon (Kokkeidō). The groundbreaking nature of such a set does not go unnoticed, as remarked in a newspaper item regarding its completion a few months before Yoshitoshi’s death in 1892:

We would like to inform (the reader) that the Tsuki hyakushi, continuing since Meiji 18 (1885), is finally complete. The achievement of such a great work by (one) artist is in fact a rare thing and is a signal deed since the completion of the one hundred nigao images by Toyokuni in the Bunkyū era.64

The report of ‘one hundred nigao images by Toyokuni in the Bunkyū era [1861–64]’ might mean the multi-sheet set by Toyokuni III (Kunisada) entitled Complete collection of actor likeness of past and present (Kokon haiyū nigao taizen 古今俳優似顔大全). This group, which was published from late 1862 to late 1863, comprised 101 sheets with 302 actor portraits.65 However, it is more likely the reference is to an untitled set of kabuki actors past and present that was released from the third month of 1860 to the seventh month of 1863 by the publisher Ebisuya Shōshichi 恵比須屋住七 (Kinshōdō 信昇堂).66 This sumptuously

63 The trends in the production of large-scale series and the idea of consumer subscription to series is something that has received little scholarly attention: were large-scale series truly a marketing ploy, or did other factors come into play into the completion of large-scale series such as the publisher’s investment (i.e. commissioning both artist and authors), forcing them to complete series even if they were unsuccessful (perhaps a consideration in the Danjūrō set)? How did newspapers and the resultant widened possibility of advertisement assist publishers in promoting series compared to the period before commercial newspapers? Was the existence of large-scale sets a pre-Meiji phenomenon (e.g. Hokusai and Hiroshige, but not so much Kunisada and Kuniyoshi)—did this trend increase with actor prints in Kunichika’s time? Or, was there a distinction between titled and untitled series?

64 ‘Yoshitoshi no “Tsuki hyakushi” kanseisu’ ‘芳年の「月百姿」完成す（‘Yoshitoshi’s One hundred aspects of the moon is complete）, Yomiuri shinbun (22 May 1892), 2.

65 See http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1311898?tocOpened=1 and Kunisada.de (http://www.kunisada.de/Kunisada-series60ths/series227/series227-1.htm) for the catalogue (mokuroku) sheets; the latter lists the title incorrectly. The publisher Hirookaya Kōsuke 広岡屋幸助 is mentioned in surviving letters written by Kunisada later in his life. Ōkubo, ‘Sanze Toyokuni’, 35. Ōkubo also states that the set from released from Bunkyū 3 (1863) to the founding year of Genji (1864), although the aratame seal is from the intercalary eighth month of Bunkyū 2 until the following tenth month of 1863.

66 Research is ongoing regarding the number of images in the untitled set. Kojima Usui illustrated the series in his ‘Sanze Utagawa Toyokuni’, n.p, with fifty-nine images by Kunisada and eleven by Yoshitora, and two additional keyblock proof impressions (kyōgōzuri). Ōkubo, ‘Sanze Toyokuni’, 35, states there were sixty prints completed by Kunisada and twelve prints by Yoshitora; the less reliable site http://www.kunisada.de/Kunisada-other-series/series18-heads/series18-heads-0.htm mentions the existence of two preparatory drawings and two proof prints. The Hirakai Ukiyo-e Zaidan Bijutsukan and Rikkar Bijutsukan catalogue on the series (1977) states that the untitled set are sixty-eight designs with eleven designed by Yoshitora. Izzard, Kunisada, 182, states seventy-two images were completed, of which some were by Yoshitora. In 2006, Iwakiri Yuriko identified an album in the Mitani collection containing sketches and block copies (kanshita) of sixty-one unpublished designs by Kunisada and one design by Yoshitora; see Marks, Kunisada’s Tōkaidō, 29 (thanks to Andreas Marks for sending this information, 30 March 2015). Moreover, the text by Kanagaki Robun on the Kunisada shini-e designed
produced set differed from Kunichika’s Baikō and the Danjūrō sets in that the (principal) portraits were of many actors. But there are parallels between Kunisada’s untitled set and Kunichika’s two series: first, both artists released these ambitious sets of actor images towards the end of their respective careers, which were ‘highly valued in the quality of the carving and printing...’; secondly, that ‘stakeholders’ (sponsors) were most likely involved (in Kunichika’s case the two actors) in the creation of the two sets, perhaps approving the images before production; and thirdly, that in the designs the artists were drawing on decades of in-depth insider knowledge in visualising kabuki actors and bringing to nigao-e their own ‘creativity within convention’. 67

Was the decision by Gusokuya to begin production of the Baikō and the Danjūrō sets in 1893—the year after the completion of the Yoshitoshi set by the Kokkeidō in 1892—motivated by the success of Yoshitoshi’s work? Could their production be seen as an effort on the part of the publisher Gusokuya to infuse new life into the tradition of woodblock-printed nigao-e by highlighting two members of the Dan-Kiku-Sa and ensuring market return by commissioning Kunichika? 68 Gusokuya—Fukuda Kumajirō and later Fukuda Hatsujiro—was the preeminent publisher of kabuki actors during this period and a rival of Kokkeidō. In fact, the two publishers are noted in an article that describes Edo-e (nishiki-e) as once ‘the crown of Edo meibutsu’ and singles out Gusokuya as ‘famous for the publishing of nigao-e’, even though the writer of the article believes that the Kokkeidō was Tokyo’s number one ezōshiya. 69

by Kunichika (see Chapter One, fig. 21) records that he systematically assembled [the images of] celebrated kabuki stars of past and present, with plans to of issuing one hundred and fifty ōkubi-e portraits.

67 The surviving Kunisada letters assist in drawing parallels with Kunichika’s own production and the workings between artist, sponsor, and publisher. Ōkubo, ‘Sanze Toyokuni’, 36–38, traces the sponsor of the untitled Kunisada set to the forebears of Mitani Chōzaburō 三谷長三郎, who were copper and iron merchants in the Nurishi-chō 塗師町.

68 Sadanji I does not appear to have ever collaborated on such a set. During the Meiji era, the Gusokuya was run by Fukuda Kumajirō and then Fukuda Hatsujiro; the firm was initially in Ningyō-chō, Nihonbashi, but address listed advertisements in the Tōkyō Asahi shinbun for prints suggest that it moved to, or was at least also operating from, Hasegawa-chō, Nihonbashi, in September 1897. In the early 20th-century the Gusokuya firm responds to market demand for postcards, woodblock-printed and lithographic images; see ‘Gusokuya no ehagaki’ 具足屋の絵葉書 (‘Picture postcards by Gusokuya’), Yomiuri shinbun (5 August 1905), 3, and ‘Nishiki-e tokyo no sakukon’ 絵絵問屋の作今, Tōkyō Asahi shinbun (4 October 1907), 6. Three of the main, though certainly not the only, nishiki-e publishers of this period were the Gusokuya, Kokkeidō, and Daikokuya (Matsuki Heikichi). Records suggest that the number of publishers at this time was on the decline (also noted in above 1907 article); further research is required on this intriguing topic. Uehara, Shōnin meika Tōkyō kaimono hitori annai, lists thirteen publishers under the heading ‘nishiki-e’ (http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/803720; spreads 29–31), while Shimizu, Tōkyō ryūkō sairenchi, lists thirty publishers under the heading ‘jihon’ 地本 (http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/768129; spread 21)

69 Under the section ‘Edo meibutsu no nagori’ 江戸名物の名残 (‘The vestiges of Edo meibutsu’), in ‘Tōkyō ichi no ezōshiya’, 83. In addition the writer also adds that Daihei (Matsuki Heikichi) was known for lithographs and magazines.
It is perhaps noteworthy that neither the Baikō nor the Danjūrō sets appear to have been promoted to the same degree in newspapers as Yoshitoshi’s moon series, suggesting that the publisher Gusokuya did not feel the need to do so, or that the actors (and their fans) had a private hand in their production and may therefore have had a say regarding their distribution. Generally, Gusokuya does not appear to have been as proactive as Kokkeidō in adopting newspaper advertising. However, the entire Baikō set was announced once in the Yomiuri shinbun on 2 July 1893, before its completion in 1894; the list of prints is prefaced by the following text:

Soon on sale from the Gusokuya of Ningyō-chō is the set One hundred roles of Baikō by Toyohara Kunichika that shows the roles of the Otowaya [guild name of Onoe Kikugorō] performed to date. In the upper register are nigao images of deceased individuals such as Hikosaburō, Kodanji, Tanosuke, Hakurō, Sekisan, Mitsugorō, and Kakitsu, alongside Danjūrō, Sadanji, Shikan, Kuzō, Matsusuke, Fukusuke, and Shūchō, with poems by master Ashinan Eiki.  

Whether the actor, publisher, fan club(s), or all of the above were the primary drivers of the publication, it seems most likely that Kikugorō would have had a hand in it, even though the actor does not appear to have left any record regarding the motivation behind the set. In 1893 and a decade before his death, Kikugorō would have been forty-nine and at the height of his creative power. A series commemorating him would been a fitting tribute to his long career. Perhaps, too, the death of a number of his fellow actors gave Kikugorō pause for thought and their inclusion in the upper cartouche was equally a form of tribute to them.

Some five months later, on 15 November, the Yomiuri shinbun issued a short news item entitled ‘Danshū hyakushu iden to su’ (‘Danshū’s one hundred about to appear’) that reveals how actors vied with one another in creating their own public personas and securing a public following. The article also acknowledges something of the workings behind the inception and production of specially commissioned actor print sets, in this case clearly spearheaded by the actor Danjūrō IX:

Upon hearing that Onoe Kikugorō V had recently selected the One hundred roles of Baikō to become nishiki-e, in which images drawn by Toyohara Kunichika are accompanied above by verse, Ichikawa Danjūrō, not wanting to be outdone, stated: ‘Acknowledged as the top actor in the Japanese empire, how can I be left out and have someone the likes of Kikugorō be placed before me? There is no way that I can face my ancestors. All right, all right, I am going to publish the Danshū71 one hundred roles,

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70 ‘Baikō hyakushu’, 3; the deceased actors are: Bandō Hikosaburō V (1832–77), Ichikawa Kodanji IV (1812–66), Sawamura Tanosuke III, Suketakaya Takasuke IV (1838–86), Iwai Hanshirō VIII, Sekisan (?Seki Sanjūrō IV, 1838–89), Bandō Mitsugorō VI(?) (1841–73) and Bandō Kakitsu I (1847–93), alongside Ichikawa Danjūrō IX, Ichikawa Sadanji I, Nakamura Shikan IV (1831–99), Ichikawa Kuzō III (Danzō, 1836–1911), Onoe Matsusuke IV (1843–1928), Fukusuke, Nakamura Shikan IV (1831–99), and Bandō Shūchō II (1848–1901). The poet, Ashinan Eiki, is Shin Eiki.

71 Danjūrō assumed the poetry name (haimyō) ‘Danshū’ in 1877 after performing the role of the loyalist samurai Saigō Takamori, nicknamed ‘Nanshū’ (Southern State) after his
thus transmitting the honour to one hundred future generations’. Also, it is reported that he personally visited Kunichika to talk this over and offered him twice the amount that Kikugorō had paid him. They agreed to produce this fabulous set and Danjūrō remarked to Kunichika, ‘I have a few ideas about what I want and so can you show me some preparatory drawings, once you have completed them?’ Kunichika did one of Yaoya Oshichi and two others and sent them to Danjūrō. Extremely happy with these, the actor took them along to the homes of all sorts of famous individuals; he asked people such as Kuroda Kiyotaka and Chō Sanshū to compose verse for these prints. Furthermore, he said, ‘For the onnagata roles I intend to select gentle, faithful women—staying away from evil figures such as Iwafuji and Yashio—and will ask ladies of the imperial court for waka’.72

Danjūrō IX would like the reader to believe that the reason for undertaking the project was in reaction to a profoundly felt obligation to honour his ancestors by not being outdone by his stage contemporary Kikugorō V. While Kikugorō V and Danjūrō IX enjoyed a close working relationship, the Onoe and Ichikawa lines were long-standing rivals on the kabuki stage. This sort of self-posturing might also have had the intent of appearing less arrogant—that is, taking this on not for oneself but for forebears and future generations. A similar statement of intent does not seem to have been made by Kikugorō. However, we should look behind this self-effacing posturing and see the set as a carefully crafted act of ‘self-promotion’ and ‘self-commemoration’, with Danjūrō’s response clearly throwing down the gauntlet to Kikugorō. And indeed Danjūrō IX’s talents as an actor, the influential company he kept, and his efforts towards theatre reform meant that his position as the country’s most authoritative actor of the kabuki stage was virtually unassailable: ‘No one, notwithstanding the emperor,’ wrote the kabuki scholar Toita Yasuji, ‘had the type of power that Danjūrō wielded’.73 So as to guarantee his plan and what can only be seen as a very public display of one-upmanship, Danjūrō IX offers Kunichika double the fee. In typical fashion, Kunichika, unfazed, designs both. The existence of two versions, one commercial, the other deluxe with the use of thick, expensive hōshō paper, rich pigments, and sumptuous printing techniques such as gauffrage (karazuri), suggests that the deluxe version may have been produced for or sponsored by a particular cohort, perhaps a fan club.74 The practice of issuing two versions is not new, dating

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72 The character Tsubone Iwafuji is included in the set, while that of Yashio Gozen is not; however, a composition of Yashio is included in the Onoe Kikugorō series (no. 88). Moreover, there are in fact a selection of ‘evil women’ in Danjūrō’s project.


74 As an aside, the commercial production of prints from initially privately commissioned surimono is not unusual. In 1889, for example, Danjūrō IX and Satake Eiko佐竹永湖 (1835–1909) collaborated on a privately published surimono diptych showing a painting of Fuḍō Myōō, the Ichikawa’s line tutelary deity, with the inscription ‘Thoughtfully copied by Danshū from an original composition by
at least to the 1840s, and seen in the work of Kunichika’s teacher, Kunisada. Further research is required to establish whether the deluxe version was sold in album form. Ultimately, however, whether the news of the Kikugorō set propelled Danjūrō into action, or whether he may have himself been considering such a set earlier is difficult to know, although what might be considered a ‘prequel’ to the set—that is, multi-images of Danjūrō in role with verse as a devised set—is known from nine sheets housed in the Kokuritsu Gekijō (National Theatre of Japan) (fig. 77a–c).  

The Yomiuri news item additionally informs us that Danjūrō asked Kunichika to design a few trial images, among them the female character Yaoya Oshichi. Apparently pleased with the results, Danjūrō proceeds to invite eminent cultural figures to contribute verse and calligraphy, and the article singles out the Sinologist, poet, and painter-calligrapher Chō Sanshū (Nagatani Kō, 1833–95) and the statesman-calligrapher Kuroda Kiyotaka (1840–1900). The list of contributors yields an impressive catalogue of leading artists, poets, writers, and calligraphers of the Meiji era, and indicates that celebrated kabuki actors like Danjūrō were rubbing shoulders with the cultural elite. In addition to Chō Sanshū, these were the Nihonga painters Kawabe Mitate (1838–1905), Kawabata Gyokushō (1842–1913), Gyokushō’s student Hashidate Shisen (1855–1921), Ayaoka Yūshin (1846–1910), Satake Eiko, Ikeda Kinpō (Kinhō, 1843–99), and Iijima Kō (1829–1900); the nishiki-e print designer Katsubunsai (1835–1908); the calligrapher Takahashi Deishū (1835–1903); the Bashō-style poets Shin Eiki and Watanabe Shichiku (Shichiku Denkian, 1831–99); the writer/statesman Fukuchi Ōchi (Fukuchi Gen’ichirō, 1841–1906), and stage performers such as the nōwaka master Tsuruya Danjūrō (1846–1909). The engagement of such an illustrious

[Watanabe?] Kazan’. The Kokkeidō took up the composition, adding a sheet illustrating the actor by Kunichika and releasing it as a triptych print. The publication was announced in the Yomiuri shinbun on 29 June 1889 (p. 3) and noted that Danjūrō IX did the image of Fudō Myōō.

This undated group of prints has two images of the actor in role per sheet with a poem accompanying every image; judging from the compositional style and use of the name ‘Arakawa Yasohachi‘ it probably dates 1875 to 1880s. It is believed that the images were meant to be configured as three triptychs; however the exact order is unclear. The poets and the roles are identified on the Museum online site: www2.ntj.jac.go.jp: nos. 06140/06141/06142. Danjūrō was also busy at this time engaging in other multi-image sets devoted to him, although not on the same scale; see, for example, the 7 January 1897 report in the Tōkyō Asahi shinbun about the planned set of eighteen ōbōsho-sized images illustrating the Kabuki jūhachiban 吹舞伎十八番 (‘Kabuki eighteen’) by Torii Tadakiyo, assisted by Torii Kiyosada, and published by Hasegawa of Kyōbashi, Minami Denna-chō; see ‘Naritaya no niga-e’, 7. The set is viewable on the Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, beginning with 201-0123.

Based on a real-life tale of a teenage girl who was executed by burning at the stake in 1683, the figure of Yaoya Oshichi appears in a number of kabuki plays. This was not included in the final set, however.

Research on this series is ongoing, and this writer is currently involved in cataloguing it. However, the results regarding a handful of contributors remain tentative, still unidentified and/or with readings unconfirmed: Nangai(?), Shinen, Kōgai, and the female poet Baisetsu. Alternate names for Shin Eiki
cohort of cultural personalities in his set is in keeping with the cultured persona that the actor Danjūrō IX sought to project. The actor even adds his own verse reproduced in his own hand to the print from October 1897 illustrating the urban dandy Hanagawado (no) Sukeroku, which he signs ‘Ninth-generation Sanshō’ (kyūsei Sanshō; ‘Sanshō’ is Danjūrō’s poetry name) (fig. 78):

華に酔い/此鉢巻の/不釣合 九世三升
hana ni yoi / kono hachimaki no / futsuriai

This headband, lopsided—
to intoxicated by the blossoms. Sanshō IX

The first five sheets of Danjūrō’s series appeared in 1893 and 1894, presumably sometime after the launch of Kikugorō V’s work in around July 1893. Unlike the remaining compositions in the set, they are distinguished by the fact that they are numbered. The first image, Dōjōji (1893), contains verse by the author and journalist Fukuchi Gen’ichirō (signed ‘Ōchi koji’), the second, Yanone Gorō (1893), has an inset design (a curved radish) by Kawabe Mitate (signed ‘Karyō Shōtate’). The fourth print of Katō Kiyomasu (1894) contains a landscape inset by Satake Eiko, and the fifth, Shibaraku, contains calligraphy by Takahashi Deishū. 78 The dancer in Dōjōji was, according to Danjūrō’s adopted son, his best female role (onnagata), while the Yanone and Shibaraku roles were representative aragoto roles of the Ichikawa Danjūrō line. 79

It is the third image (1893) of Danjūrō as the monk Benkei from the play Kanjincho (The subscription list) that may have held particular significance for the actor. Danjūrō performed the Benkei role before the Meiji emperor and empress in April 1887, one which contributed to the legitimisation of kabuki actors. 80 It is not surprising that the verse on this

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78 It should be noted that the order of the prints in this series does not correspond with the order laid out in the two catalogue sheets (mokuroku) accompanying the sheet, which includes ‘Princess Yaegaki’ in the first numbered group. This print is unnumbered and appeared in October 1897.
79 Ichikawa, Kyūsei Danjūrō o kataru, 209 and 74.
80 Their new ‘official’ and acknowledged status was affirmed in April 1887 when a troupe of kabuki actors, with Danjūrō IX in the principal role, performed Kanjincho before the Meiji emperor and empress at a gala event held at the residence of Foreign Minister Inoue Kaoru. The event included a series of kabuki/kyōgen performances and dances, collectively known as Tenran kabuki (Imperial kabuki): on 26 April: Kanjincho, Takatoki, Ayatsuri Sanbasō, Ryōshi-tsu kimi, Genroku odori, Ashigarayama, Yōchi Soga; on 27 April: Terakoya, Hanami odori, Ise Sahurō, Tsuchigumo, Yoshino yama odori, Genroku odori; on 28 April: Terakoya, Genroku odori; and on 29 April: Kanjincho, Usubozaru, Chūshingura (Acts III/IV), Yoshino-ochi, and Rokkase. Ichikawa, Kyūsei Danjūrō o kataru, 39–48. Of these, Kanjincho, for which Danjūrō IX adopted a number of Nō theatre conventions, was perhaps the most significant.
print would have to emanate the appropriately solemn, eulogistic tone required for this kabuki star. Chō Sanshū composed the Chinese-style verse and most likely brushed the calligraphy for this print. The verse is styled after the opening lines of the celebrated verse ‘On Ascending Youzhou Tower’ (Deng Youzhou tai ge) by the Chinese poet Chen Zi’ang (661–702) (fig. 79).\(^{81}\)

前無辨慶/後無辨慶/唯我獨尊/鳴呼辨慶  三洲居士題

mae ni Benkei naku / nochi ni Benkei nashi / yuiga dokuson / aa Benkei  
Sanshū koji dai

No one like Benkei has come before  
no one like Benkei has come since  
you are the most exalted—ah, Benkei!  
By the scholar Sanshū

The perception of his own greatness is perfectly intoned in the laudatory verse seen on this print: that there has not been and will never be an equal to Danjūrō’s performance of the mountain priest reaffirms his place for future generations.

The production of One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō was suspended after these first five prints, and it would be two years before the next work was released. Why this occurred is unclear, but significantly all one hundred images for the Kikugorō series were published within a year—that is, 1893 to 1894. The year 1894 saw the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War (ending 1895), and it could have been that the energies of woodblock print publishers were partly channelled into the production of war imagery. Or, it may have been that Danjūrō lost interest in the project,\(^{82}\) was dissatisfied with its direction, or that the market did not respond positively to it, and production was placed on hold. It could also have been influenced by changes in the Fukuda publishing house itself. Fukuda Kumajirō, who initiated both the Kikugorō and Danjūrō sets, died in 1898. Kumajirō’s successor, Fukuda Hatsujirō, appears to be taking over the helm of the business by 1895, and his name begins to appear on the Danjūrō prints in 1897.

A less likely contributing factor may have been the relationship between the artist and the actor. As discussed in Chapter Two, Kunichika quite openly voices his disdain in MNE 23

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\(^{81}\) The original Chinese verse reads (in translation): ‘Witness not the sages of the past/perceive not the wise of the future/reflecting on heaven and earth eternal/tears flowing down I lament in loneliness’. Danjūrō was keenly interested in literati culture, including the Chinese-inspired literati-style painting tradition. Danjūrō’s biographer, his adopted son Ichikawa Sanshō, remarked that his father collected literati-style paintings, starting with the works of Watanabe Kazan (1793–1841); see Ichikawa, Kyōsei Danjūrō o kataru, 157–58.

\(^{82}\) The role of fans in the production of this set is unclear, since it appears that the actor himself was the driving force behind its creation.
for Danjūrō, who, following an unflattering depiction of him by Kunichika, had complained to Kikugorō, saying: ‘It’s a given that all these print artists give actors money [make money for actors] by doing nigao-e [literally ‘likeness pictures’]—it might a bit harsh but Kunichika is really arrogant.’ Kunichika’s response during the interview: ‘From the very beginning, I did not take to Danjūrō . . . Danjūrō might be more learned, he can draw a bit, but his many attempts at hokku are undistinguished, and after all is said and done, there is nothing that can be done if he is completely stuck-up about it [his accomplishments]’. Even if the personal rapport between the two men was uneasy, the sizable number of prints of Danjūrō by Kunichika, One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō included, demonstrate that the two men had a solid working relationship. Nevertheless, such outspoken comments in the newspaper interview would not have endeared him to the doyen of kabuki, and may have created a further (or on-going) rift between them. Dates on the prints, however, suggest that the greatest number of examples from the project were released in 1898 (some sixty), with the month of August witnessing the release of fourteen pieces, a dip in September and October and interestingly an increase in the month of November following the interview (an effective publicity move?) (Table I). Some seventy-three images in the One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō were released before Kunichika’s death in July 1900. The one hundredth and final sheet was not released until October 1903, only weeks after Danjūrō’s death on 13 September 1902. Based on current research, the distribution of prints appears as follows: 1893 (three), 1894 (two), 1897 (three), 1898 (sixty), 1899 (five), 1900 (three), 1901 (six), and 1903 (eighteen).

The first five sheets therefore are numbered. Many of the remaining ninety-five unnumbered sheets boast the same high-quality use of materials in the deluxe edition. The insets in some four-fifths of these images contain verse by Shin Eiki, who appears to have come on board after 1897. Well known within kabuki circles, Eiki was Kikugorō’s haikai teacher and he was also acquainted with Danjūrō through poetry. Eiki supplied the poems to all of the Kikugorō set, and perhaps due to the apparent speed and success of its production, the publisher Gusokuya felt that Eiki’s participation in One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō would be advantageous. Eiki’s light-hearted poems differ from the more eulogistic tone of Chō Sanshū’s verse from the initial group of five, and constitutes witty wordplay dealing with the character (and play) portrayed without overt celebratory references to Danjūrō. Collectors of the series at the time might have sensed a clear deviation from Danjūrō’s original intent.

The format of the set also distinguishes the two sets and potentially their intent. One commemorates the achievements of Kikugorō V and his contemporaries, both living and dead, and thus the kabuki tradition. Each sheet in One hundred roles of Baikō represents Kikugorō
in the main frame (fig. 80; see also Introduction, figs. 6 and 11). The upper inset acknowledges the main supporting actor with his image and name—including Danjūrō in twenty-one examples—alongside verse by Eiki. This gives a more collaborative feel compared to the Danjūrō series, which focuses on Danjūrō, the association with illustrious cultural figures serving to elevate further his already high cultural standing. The Danjūrō suite leaves us in no doubt about his perceived role as the unrivalled star of Meiji-era kabuki. He is given centre stage with inset cartouches above, carrying only a verse, or an illustration somehow linked to the play depicted. There are no portraits of supporting actors as in the Kikugorō work, suggesting that no one in the kabuki acting fraternity was allowed to share the limelight with Danjūrō.

Danjūrō’s apparently unassailable standing within the kabuki world equally impacted the realm of nigao-e, with Tsubouchi Shōyō observing that:

It seems generally that the rendition of refined faces is difficult judging from the fact that even the [special] traits of ‘Dan’ [Ichikawa Danjūrō], ‘Kiku’ [Onoe Kikugorō V] or ‘Hiko’ [Bandō Hikosaburō V], ‘Shi’ [Nakamura Shikaku I], ‘Ku’ [probably Ichikawa Kuzō III] and ‘Ta’ [Sawamura Tanosuke III] are unskilfully done such that they make one think of other figures; even among the works by Kunichika there are a considerable [number] in a ‘photographic’ (i.e. realistic, shashinteki) style that have no merit. Beginning with the length of the face and due to the trend to portray them [the faces] moderately long, there was never the feeling that they were good likenesses during his later period . . . (In the Meiji 10s, it was my habit to stop and gawk like an unrefined houseboy at the displays of new pictures in book-and-print shops [ezōshiya]). For Sadanji and others in the Meiji 30s, there was a trend to design likenesses that could be mistaken for Danjūrō; perhaps this is why the habit of displaying the outward appearance declined at this time. Even with Danjūrō and Kikugorō, well, the likelihood that those [works] can be [seen as] genuinely realistic is pretty low. By comparison, recent new nigao-e are clever objects; perhaps they were even aided by photography, although it is perhaps primarily due to the brush techniques of western-style portraits.

That the ‘Danjūrō look’ was considered a fashionable trend in the portrayal of actors reaffirms the immediate association the image would have had with the popular consciousness, and publishers would have banked on this carefully confected image to ensure sales, no doubt in the same way that the ‘Danjūrō brand’ was enlisted to sell other products (as a sort of product endorsement). Advertisements in newspapers, for example, illustrate what can only be the actor in the role of Hanagawado Sukeroku and Benkei for products like fabrics (e.g. Higuchi Shōten) and tobacco (e.g. Old Gold cigarettes) (see Introduction, fig. 13a–b). It is highly plausible that Kunichika fashioned the often easily recognisable

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83 Four prints do not illustrate supporting actors: one shows a scene with birds, a skeleton, the Maeda family residence, and a portrait of raconteur San’yūtei Enchō (1839–1900).
84 Tsubouchi, ‘Nitenai nigao-e’, 651.
85 The use of actor’s names (or associated make-up or robes) as forms of product placement is not necessarily new, but mentioned here because of the pervasiveness of the Danjūrō look.
'Danjūrō look' of elongated face with angled and long nose, thus approximating the actor’s actual physiognomy, and if not, he was certainly instrumental in popularising it.

It is clear that Danjūrō’s motivation in commissioning Kunichika’s *One hundred performances of Ichikawa Danjūrō* was in part as a gesture of one-upmanship over his contemporary Kikugorō and in part a careful act of self-aggrandisement. But we can imagine that both actors, aged fifty-four and forty-nine, respectively, in 1893, when their sets of one hundred roles were begun, might have also wanted to take stock of their life-long achievements. In the end, both men were to die only a decade later, Kikugorō in February 1903, Danjūrō in September of that year. Perhaps the realisation of such a monumental series was driven by a desire to leave a permanent reminder—a visual legacy—of their performances for future generations in a singular group of roles that were personally chosen. Even in the face of other increasingly popular, albeit still very expensive, forms of portraiture such as photography and the less costly medium of lithography, both actors made the conscious decision to commission Kunichika, the leading exponent of *nishiki-e* actor portraiture to design an ambitious suite of images. By commemorating their own image, then, Danjūrō and Kikugorō were also quite unknowingly commemorating the *nishiki-e* tradition and Kunichika, one of its last adherents. And Kunichika would never again create sets of actor prints on this scale. In producing these two series Kunichika—more so than in any of his actor *nigao-e*—is not only imaging the achievements of two of the greatest actors of the day, but is also issuing a statement about his standing as a *nigao-e shi* and about the *nishiki-e* tradition as a whole. It is as if to say, ‘we might be at the end, but let’s go out with a bang’.
CONCLUSION

The word ‘precursor’ is indispensable in the vocabulary of criticism, but one should try to purify it from every connotation of polemic or rivalry. The fact is that each writer creates his precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future.

Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Kafka and his precursors’

No man can walk out on his own story
From the 2011 animated film Rango

This study of the life and art of Toyohara Kunichika appeared at the outset deceptively simple. What began as a purely art historical study of Kunichika intending to chronicle his art practice through an examination of his vast corpus of woodblock prints evolved into a richly layered investigation of self-narrative, the construction of artistic persona, and how the 1898 Yomiuri shinbun ‘Meiji no Edokko’ suite of interviews feeds into the nostalgic appeal of the Edokko trope more generally in the Meiji era. My research became interdisciplinary and was expanded to include readings by scholars working in other disciplines that focused on the role of narrative in the writing of history as well as the fashioning of personal and collective memory. Coalesced, these resulted in a fresh reading of Kunichika’s Yomiuri shinbun interview, which Japanese scholars have almost without exception neither contextualised nor interpreted within the broader context of the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ suite of interviews. (This author has done the only English translation of the interview.) Nor have they delved into what these texts reveal about a Meiji historical narrative. By weaving in further newspaper reports and announcements on Kunichika in the Yomiuri shinbun and the Tōkyō Asahi shinbun, this study has also forged a deeper understanding of Kunichika’s image, reputation, and reception within the public consciousness of Meiji-era Japanese. The Yomiuri interviews included, these newspaper accounts served not only to reinforce Kunichika’s status as the premier chronicler of the Meiji kabuki stage in the woodblock print medium, but also to elevate him and his art—a ‘famous Edo product’ (Edo no meibutsu)—as a romanticised representative of the Edokko. He and those of his generation born and raised in the period bridging the Edo and Meiji were lauded as symbolic cultural (and geographic) capital of a eulogised Edo/Edokko cultural past even though they operated in the ‘modern’ milieu of Meiji. Kunichika’s interview and his art thus possessed long ‘historical consequence, however transformed and refashioned, of the social energy initially encoded in those works’.

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1 From Borges, ‘Kafka and his precursors’, 108.
The word-image associations fashioned by the interview and Kunichika’s body of work underscore his own self-image first and foremost as an artist of actor nigao-e, or ‘likeness pictures’. He stresses this point in his interview, leaving the timeless readership in no doubt about his feelings regarding his rightful place as an artist of the Utagawa school. Kunichika left us no diary. In its place, this study has demonstrated that the interviews could and should be read on one level as a personal narrative. Constructed at the end of his long career, this narrative delivers up an image that Kunichika clearly wished to convey to the world. As argued in Chapter One, the meaning of Kunichika’s textual and pictorial narration becomes in effect the need to imbue his own life with meaning, establish his rightful place as an actor nigao-e artist, and in the process place him symbolically within his own nishiki-e tradition. At the same time, the interview (and his art) are very public ‘epistles’ for future generations, cementing his role as nigao-e shi at a time when this tradition was faced with competition threatening its survival from other reprographic media such as photography. Read as such, the assertion that Kunichika was aware that the interview in print would outlive him and would contribute to the future assessment of him is entirely plausible.

Such a textual/pictorial legacy was guaranteed by Kunichika’s connection to the Utagawa school, other artists and writers, as well as the kabuki theatre that moulded and fuelled his artistic identity. The various anecdotes involving actors that pepper the interview remind the reader of Kunichika’s close association with the kabuki theatre, and as noted in Chapter Four ‘any link to important artistic and literary circles or to a political and cultural elite fosters the posthumous visibility of an artist. Association adds to credentials’. This ‘association’ not only sustained Kunichika in life, shaping his artistic persona, but also in death, an aspect most clearly demonstrated by his inclusion in a shini-e of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX in 1903 by Kunimasa IV (Baidō Hōsai). Hōsai, if we remember, was the second of the two nishiki-e artists in the ‘Meiji no Edokko’ features (fig. 81). The Danjūrō shini-e appropriates the compositional format used to illustrate the death of the Buddha (parinirvana), in which the figure of Buddha lies on a bier surrounded by disciples, deities, animals, and devotees. It is a borrowing replete with symbolism ‘venerating an ancestor, defining his lineage and asserting authority over his legacy’. Here, however, the Buddha’s entourage is replaced by living kabuki actors and along the top predeceased figures connected with the kabuki world: actors, writers, and playwrights who also featured in Kunichika’s life. These include Onoe Kikugorō V who, placed centrally, heads the dead actors on the right. Kunichika appears in the left group of writers, playwrights, and others, second from the left. His inclusion in the top register secures his place, posthumously, as a member of the Meiji kabuki elite and represents

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3 Lang and Lang, ‘Recognition and renown’, 95.
4 Moerman, ‘Dying like the Buddha’, 53.
one element in the survival of reputation in collective memory that is explained by a
‘recognition by peers’. This flies in the face of the censorious views of Meiji prints being
formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by many connoisseurs, collectors,
and scholars, who dismissed these prints variously as ‘going to the dogs’ or as illustrative of
‘decay’. Kunichika’s best work, and that of other of his contemporaries like Tsukioka
Yoshitoshi, demonstrates the high quality that these pieces could achieve and the continuing
public popularity of them (and their métier) is borne out by contemporary reports.

A second element in the survival of reputation entails what Gladys Engel Lang and
Kurt Lang identify as a more ‘universal renown’. A nota bene at the end of the final segment
of the Kunichika interview mentions that he was being promoted in the important
international expositions of the late nineteenth century, including a painting for the World
Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 (fig. 82; see also Chapter One). Together with his
student Chikanobu, he is placed on the world stage, creating an added dual recognition as a
leading member of the Utagawa school. His contribution—surprisingly not a kabuki theme—
receives repeated attention in the newspapers (e.g. Appendix III: Yomiuri shinbun, 3 February
1892, 14 May 1892, 19 October 1892, 12 January 1893). Their work and those by other artists
in these international expositions is intended to project the essence of ‘Japanese-ness’ on the
international stage (in the case of artists like Kunichika this was in an often-sanitised image of
popular culture). Kunichika is singled out in the English press as the finest of those artists
selected to represent Japan, with comments made by the owner-editor of the Japan weekly
mail, the Irish Captain Frank Brinkley (1841–1912), after previewing the works in Tokyo that
were destined for Chicago. He singled out Kunichika’s painting, noting it epitomised well the
‘Kuniyoshi school’ and brought the viewer ‘into close touch with original of the ante-Meiji
chromoxylographs’ (see under Appendix III: Yomiuri shinbun, 12 January 1893).

Kunichika’s textual legacy in the Yomiuri interview adds ballast to his prolific
creative expression. For the Meiji audience who would have experienced his actor prints first-
hand—days before or after a performance or as mitate—and for us well over a century later
who read his work through a distanced historical lens—his art has lost little of its impact. This
‘impact’ is not only performative but aesthetic. They are performative in enabling a recreation
and a reliving of a particular scene in a kabuki play through actors who themselves become
personifications of theatrical roles, and aesthetic in the recreation of that moment through a
visualisation that draws upon convention and subsumes Meiji tastes. Reports in newspaper
announcements of the period signal that the notion of the aesthetic is not lost on the Meiji
public, seen in descriptions such as ‘the designs are bewitching and the colour palette

5 Lang and Lang, ‘Recognition and renown’, 79.
Newland Conclusion

beautiful’ (*Yomiuri shinbun*, 10 March 1886) or in Iijima Kyoshin’s obituary of the artist. That an aesthetic judgement is used in the promotion and sale of these prints is perhaps indicative of the degree of aesthetic worth attached to these ‘cultural artefacts’—even in their public reception—and their role both as mass consumables and as objects worthy of contemporary Meiji aesthetic appreciation. It is an area of further research.

But as ‘cultural artefacts’, Kunichika’s prints also functioned as what Tomoko Sakomura has succinctly translated as ‘memory releasers’. I might expand upon this to interpret them as ‘cultural/collective memory releasers’, since such triggers not only reassured Meiji viewers of a continuum of tradition in the present but reinforced a sense of history identified with the cultural past of the city of Edo. Text and image join to form what Nagel and Wood describe as a ‘plural’ event:

No device more effectively generates the effect of a doubling or bending of time than the work of art, a strange kind of event whose relation to time is plural. The artwork is made or designed by an individual or by a group of individuals at some moment, but it also points away from that moment, backward to a remote ancestral origin, perhaps, or to a prior artifact, or to an origin outside of time, in divinity. At the same time it points forward to all its future recipients who will activate and reactivate it as a meaningful event. The work of art is a message whose sender and destination are constantly shifting.

There is still much to be done to overturn the deeply rooted art historical prejudices relating to Meiji nishiki-e and its practitioners who, like Kunichika, maintained, adapted, and transformed the tradition through the Meiji and beyond. They were acknowledged as masters of a tradition seen as one form of famous cultural product, but their reputations became ‘all but a fragment of the past quickly [disappearing] behind a curtain of oblivion’ due to the overly censorious views of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers and collectors.

These artists adapted to changing visual and cultural traditions, and an examination of their lives and art offers exciting future research opportunities. As demonstrated in my work on Kunichika and his contemporaries Baidō Hōsai and Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, the newspaper, with its range of articles from publishers’ announcement to the reporting on aspects of artist’s lives, is an invaluable, yet to date relatively untapped, resource. This academic lacuna requires readdressing. Newspapers are not only ‘disseminators of information’, but as evidenced by the Kunichika *Yomiuri* interviews the press is what James L. Huffman refers to

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8 Lang and Lang, ‘Recognition and renown’, 79.
as a ‘narrator, a storyteller whose decisions about what to ignore and what to include do far more to shape our vision of public reality than most of us realize’. In Kunichika’s case, newspaper reports do much to shape our ‘reality’ in understanding the artist: they give us an idea of what it was like to be an artist in Kunichika’s time, of the surrounding cultural milieu, and how together these factors came to shape his art practice. His Yomiuri interview, as well as the numerous items dealing with his life and his art, reaffirm his standing as a nigao-e shi. They also bring us closer in forming a more personal, intimate picture of a complex, at times contradictory, individual whose legacy endures to this day.

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9 Huffmann, Creating a public, 6.
Appendix I. Transcription of the Kunichika ‘Meiji no Edokko’

『読賣新聞』明治廿一年十月廿四日
「明治の江戸兒」 (二十)
豊原國周

豊原國周は歌川豊國の遺鉢を継ぎて似顔絵師の巨擘なり、通称荒川八十八とて本年六十有四才、三代相傳江戸ッ子にて気象面白く、一世の経歴は東錦絵と共に花やかなれども、地体金銀を厚とも思はねば、今は本所表町の片隅に引込めて、といいと貧乏にうき世を送れり、彼の家は熊谷稲荷の東二丁程の北裏にて、棟割長屋の真中なれども一寸瀟洒の格子を立てて名札を張り述べ、一間三尺の納戸の向は垢つきたる畳の一と間なり、いかに長火鉢を据えて佛壇をも飾る、奥なるいぶせき二畳は極めて小飾り、而のち大なる一畳を立てて名札と来状函を掲げ、一間三尺の柵戸は四方に延びたる日光透るか懐で江戸ッ子の全盛を語り

私は全体変漢で親父からして餘ッ程おかしいのです、祖父は何と名乗たか知らないが何でも湯島の大工で一向宗だったから今戸の本立寺に墓があります、けれども阿母は子供の丈夫に育つ様にと親父を勤めて一代法華になったから、私は一向宗と法華とゴチャ交せにして居るのです、乃で親父は京橋三十間堀七丁目の家主で大島九十と云ふ者阿母は御数寄屋同心荒川三之烝の女お八百と云ふ者で、私は三十間堀七丁目の家で生れた……御城下の京橋ッ子です、少し恥を話なくっちゃァ分らないが親父は役人の後へ河童が肛門へ指さしをして居る刺繍を刺てたから河童の九十と言ってしまってどうも家主にやァ似合はないやない男だったのです、阿母だって若い時分に親父を見染めかなにかして、一所になったの分らぬ、一体私は次男で兄は長吉と云ったが私は九十で阿母がお八百だからってことで八十八と云ふ名を命たんだが、苗字は大島だが夫がナセ荒川八十となっちと云ふと、どうもおかしいやんだ、私が十三四の時分です……苗字御免と云ふ事があったが其時兄は大島なんて苗字は巾が利かないと妙に考へ込んで阿母の実家の荒川を名乗って出たから家中が到頭荒川になって仕舞っただんです、マア此等から変わって居るからどうせ私だって尋常ではない

祖父よりの歴史を畧叙し来たりて漸く已得意の時代に進み

親父の時分にやァ身上もよかった、そうして通三丁目へ奥州屋と云ふ湯屋を開いたが、なんだから気に晴りはないと云ふて其處を譲って、南傳馬町へ兄貴が押繪屋を出したから私も押繪をやって見模と云ふので一遊斎近信の弟子になったが、全く之れが私の手ほどきで夫が再代目豊國の弟子になった、二代目豊國は田舎源氏の押繪をかいて名人豊國と言われた男だが、私は丁度十七年の間そこで修業した、師匠も初代豊國の所に十七年居たこと云ふ事を後に聞いていたからどうも不思議な事だと思った、乃で一寸話して置きますが私は生れて所を離れてから今までに百十七度移転た、自慢でいないが北斎は生涯の內に八十餘度移転たと云ふけれども移転の方では私が兄分だ、勿論其移転は一年の內に三度もやったことが有って随分おかしか
「明治の江戸兒」（廿一）

抜私が初めて世帯を持ったのは柳島の半四郎横町で、女房はお花と云ふんだッたが一番に失敗ったのは抑も斯ういふ事です、其時分新門の辰五郎が巾を利かして其乾児が二丁目の芝居でんぽうで見た所を書って板元が其喧嘩の絵をかいて呉れと頼みに来たから、私は新門の乾児を彦三郎、菊五郎、田之助の似顔に見立てて棒を持ってあふれてると黒坊が向に逃げて行く所を僕めて板元の處が新門の方では乾児共が喧嘩に負けて逃げて行く所だと言い出して大勢で私の家を打毀に来ると言ぶ騒ぎだ、そうして其序に五ッ目の師匠の家もメチャメチャに毁すと云ふんだから私も驚くし師匠も心配した、スルト師匠の弟子に芳艶と云ふのが有って之が新門の乾児だッたから私は仲裁して見ますッて骨を折ッたのでマアいい鹽梅に夫で和解が届いた、處が其時分私が賣出しで.....自分の口からそう言ってはおかしいが師匠の絵よりいい所があるなんて言ふものが有ったから、此失敗を科修に國周と云ふ名を師匠に取揚げられて仕舞ッた、夫から仕方なしに私は一鶯斎と云ふ名で絵をかいてると夫もならないってんで師匠が板元の家を諸方断って歩いた、そうこうする内篠田仙魚と云ふ後に員彦の名を名乗ッた人が仲へ入って呉れて漸う國周の名を返して貰ッたがどうも一時は弱ッたネ

此時彼は娘の勧する酒を味わひつつ稽古や興を催して

其後私は日本橋の音羽町へ新宅を拵へた事がある夫は随分普請もよし植木は皆藝者の名をつけてチャット出来上ッたから国輝が其時分やかましい奉書一枚刷りへ額堂の絵をかいた散紙を撒いて愈々新宅開きとなッた、音羽町と云ふ所は探索掛なんか多く住居てるが、私は豆音さんと云ふ探索掛の世話になった衣服なんか取つたから、其禮廻りをした歸へて来る

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らボコボコ穴が明く、乃で私も餘々乱暴で見兼ねたから、傍へ行って『暁斎坊主酷い事をするナ、廃しなさい』と言ったが酔ってから私もし怒る、歯ぬきの石井大之進は『暁斎の坊主反歯だから乃公が其奴を抜いてやる』と力むし、親延の橋本作蔵は刀を抜いて斬って仕舞ふと飛びかかったから、暁斎が驚いて垣根を破って逃げちまったが、其時分中橋の紅葉川の舊趾が溝になってたんでそこへ堕ちたから全然で溝鼠の様になったのは私の顔へ墨を塗った報だと笑った、けれども暁斎はあれ程になる丈感心の事には其後私の家へ尋ねて来たから夫なり仲が直って仕舞ったが、親延が刀を抜いた時にはどうも激しい騒ぎで往来も止る位だッた。

『読賣新聞』明治世一年十月廿六日
「明治の江戸児」　（廿二）
豊原国週　（つづき）
彼は微笑を帯びて膝を崩し漸く語調を乱して
一彼ス喩云ふおかしい事がある、夫は私が向島に居た時だッたが、常陸の金子と云ふ醫者が、
須田と云ふ大盡の一所に私の所へ来た事がある、此二人はつちとも大金満家で前の年に私
が書を頼まれてかいたんで懇意に爲ったんだが、どつかへ飲みに行かうと云ふで、不忍の
長蛇亭へ上った、マアそこで散々飲んだり食ったりした上旬に、女郎貫行かうと云ふから、
宜しいてんで私が案内して仲の町の初音屋から品川樓へ押上げた、私の買った女は二枚
目の金州て晝三で却々美しい縹致だったが、権高でもって私が毎に打ったり酒を言ったり
するから、何でも野歯間かんなかと思やァかかったんだが、ツンツンしてへたけが、座敷
が引けてから私は一人で部屋へ行って、丁度夏の事だったから蚊帳ノ中へ入ってた、スルト
金州メ新造の一所にやって来やがって、突然　『お前は何だへ』ってへから小癪に障ったが
怒るのも野暮だ　『ナニか、乃公ア書師よ』と言ふと、金州は『フーノ繪師かへ、そんなら
何か描て御覧』って新造に言付けて сырい所へ金末をまいた立派な紙を持って来た、夫から私が
斯う蚊帳中に首ばかし出して…。

と両手に蚊帳をまくる体裁をなし
『サァ墨を磨ねへ』ってて新造にゴリゴリやらって筆を執ると、金州が何かけるもん
かってへ風で、立膝して側に見て居やがった、忌々しい奴だと思ったが待てよ、こいつは
書なんかちやァ面白くねへ、一番斯うしてやろう、とドゥプリ墨をつけた儘、紙一杯に
のの字とかいて、そつを土壇に

「の」しのまま風こころみる扇扇かな
と、余りうまかァねへが即吟を書いてやッた、さらすると金州が『オヤオヤ酒落てるるよ、却々生意気だねー』ッて、まだ冷言やァがるから、いい加減に切り上げて私獨り先へ帰ッちまった、夫から三日ばかりすると私の隣家へ四十八年の春が来て『國周さんと云ふ書の先生のお宅はどちらです』と聞いてるから、私がソロと小耳に挟んで噂ァった『お花、今隣家で宅を聞いてる奴があるが、多分借金請だらう、来たら不存だって言へ』と言ってゐる内、其女がガラリ表を開けて入ッて来た、モー隠れる事も出来へへ『どちらからお出なそッた』と尋ねると『オヤ先生様ですか』ッて上がッて来たのは品川樓の新造さ、大きな菓子折をそここへ出して『之は画三から御遺物でございます、先夜はお見受け申て誠に失敗を致しましたから、よろしくお詫び申して畏れと言付ッて出ました、夫にどうぞモー度是非御登樓下さる様に願つて登れと呉々も申されました、決して御散財はかけませんから……ネ先生、今晩にもどうぞ』ッて言ふんだ、此畑生乃公を田舎漢かなんかと思やァがッて、まだ馬鹿にしてゐやがる、江戸子が女郎に召ばれて見ろ、平生十両遣ふ所は二十両も三十両も遣はなくちゃァならねへと思ッたが、さうも言へねへから『ハイ、いつか又其内に折があッたら……』と渇まして挨拶すると、噂ァめ側でプリプリしてゐがッた、さうすると女は又風呂敷に包んダンものを出しかけて『先日おかき下さいましたのを後で楼主に見せますと、之は全く御手仕上げた額でございます、先生の書は澤山あるけども、字は誠に珍らしいから、額にして大切にしとくがよいと、斯うゆられましたから早々斯いふ風に仕立てました』と軽くて風呂敷を除けたから、見ると私が乱暴書したのが立派な額に爲ッてるんだ、状は見やられ乃公の名を聞いて吃驚したらうと、少し溜飲を下げたが、女はまた両手をついて『夫で此額に先生の落款がございませんのは、いかにも残念だから御詫び申して、一抑落款を願ッて参る様にと申ので、誠に恐入ますが何卒……』と云ふから『ウンよしよし』と今度は横柄に有合せた朱印を捺してやッたが、後はどうしたか、何でも金州は餘ッぼど私に焦れて居たに違へねへ恐悦顔にて説き進める彼は飲さしたる猪首を膳に置きて、私は一体大酒飲みで、負ける事が大嫌へな性分だ、或時私は真部河岸へ立派に普請をして住居たが、之も丁度夏でネ、俳優の時蔵が大川へ屋根船を二三艘浮かして減法金びらァ切るんで、何でも柳橋の藝者は十二三人も揚げてゐで、ドソチャソドソチャソ大騒ぎだから、私は宅に聞いてて、なんだ此ははした俳優が大層もネへ眞似え仕やがッて、よし此方も一番向を張ッてやれと、銭もねへ持って屋根船を五六艘乗り出して、ドソチャソドソチャソ舞ッこきの藝者が番間を集めて競争ッた、どうして俳優と書師だものラ金ッこで勝る譜がねへ、夫でも三四日は花々しくやり合つたが到頭敗北して借金は山の如く、挙へたばかりの家は北岡文兵衛さんへ三百両の抵當に渡しちまひ、外の借金の爲に願はれて身代限りを喰らッた、何でも東京で身代限を喰ッたのは、私が二番目でヘッコッたから、切ても腹巻に斯うしてやれッてんで、身代限の言渡書を一両三分出して胡麻竹棒の額に挙へ、夫を宅の前へ麗々と掲げて
いた、此奴は面白へッてんで、仕舞にやァ大受けに受けたなァをかしかッた、勿論此身代限は時蔵の一件ばかりでなく、斯ういふ事も手傳ったんだ、其時分林大衆頭の妾が池の端に住ってたが、其兄てへのは加賀鳶の歌ってへんで随分顔の譯われた奴さ、此奴がどういふ譯だったか、國遇が来訪したからって言ひ触らして宗十郎、小団次、半次郎、菊五郎なんかん所から金を集めて道っちまった、どうしても酷い奴で、私が俳優の似顔をかくもんだから、夫を種に騙をしたんだが後で聞て驚いた、けども歌もいい顔の男だから赤い衣服を着せるでもないと思って、私が金を搾って俳優所へ返しに回ると、宗十郎がどうしても其金を受取らへ、仕方がねへから寿司の折かんなか acompって、斯う歌の尻をぬぐっちまったが、借りた金は皆んな私が飲食して引っ道っちまった、サァそんなこんなが畳まったから、忽ち身代限りを出したんだが、其内にやァ湯島の小河原検校から借りた金もあった、小河原検校ってのは不盲でシコタマ金え持ってて禁延さまに御目にかかったなんて法螺は吹く人だから、妙に恐らがってたが、私が身代限の言渡書を宅の前へ掲げたてへのを聞いて、其金は皆な私に奨れるってった、そうして唐紙へ『國周先生いささかの事によりて、家作を棄てけるも遊民の心を察しぬれば、實にことはりと思ひはべる』として

懸想の／世渡る船の／桜次第／どうせ阿弥陀に／まかす身の上

ってへ狂歌をかいて甌れた、カラモー何だか感心しねへ文句だが、借金をはたらねへのは有難へから、恭しく頂戴仕った『江戸子の生れそこない蔵をして』かネ、姿勢気はかし出してたから、私も到頭いい身上をメチヤメチヤに摩ちまった、負け惜しみぢゃァねへが繪師なつてものは金のねへ方が薩張していいネ、ナニ金が無へたッて米や酒に不自由はしねへんだ（つづく）

『読売新聞』明治卅一年十月廿八日
「明治の江戸児」（廿三）
豊原國周（つづき）

米や酒に不自由しゅへってば斯ういふおかつかな事がある、私が錢を遣うちまつて馬道七丁目の瀧野へ家に居候した時分、詰らねへから上州草津へ湯治に行ったスルト湯治場で懸想に为ったのが武州岩槻の鈴木由三郎さんへ大な醸酒家だ『酒を醸る所の密を額にして成田の不動様へ納めたいから宅へ来てかいて呉れまいか』と言ふから、有難い大旱の雲霓だ、ぢきて出かけてくと、どうも大した家で百人からの奉公人がドンドン酒を醸つてる『サァ先生こちらへ』っててんで喫の一番いす座敷かなんかへ通り、毎日御馳走になつちやァかきかきして、漸う出来上つた其額は今でも成田に納つてるが、歸へる前の日朝つから始めめて日の暮れるまで飲んだが何でも五六升っちゃ利かなかった、燈が點て又飲直すてんで膳を代へると、旦那どの七五三、三つ組の盃を持ち出した、先づ一番小さい三合入りの盃で一盃、古酒
のドロドロする様な奴を引っかけ夫から五合入り七合入りと見事に飲ん仕舞つた私の酒量にやぁ、流石の旦那どのも驚いた様子、サァ之が謂の御礼だってんで金を二百圓貰ったから、之で東京へ帰ろう家には娘も待ち草臥てるからなんて、思ひ思ひ一対寝入ると火事で私も畳なんか持ち出して遣ったが、大きい家だから焼けただれでビクともしじへ、すっかり出来派に出来た、處で私が翌朝帰ろうとすると、旦那殿が『先生は酒好きだから之をお持ちなさい』つて一斗五升ばかり入る酒樽を一つ呉れた、何より有難いつてんで、夫を腕車の下へプラ下げて乗つかつたから、全然で御祭の山車見たいだ、一里ばかり来てそいつを片口に二盃ばかり出して、車夫と二人で飲むと、サァ面白くって堪らねへ、チャリンチャリンチャレンテクストドンテクストドンと竜しをしながら車の上で踊ってくから、従来の者がおかしがって振りかへる、子供は大勢シーツてんで車の後へ附いて来るから、どうも愉快でこてへもれねへ、チヤリンチヤリンチヤンテケストドンテケストドン口囃しをしながら車の上で踊つてくから、往来の者がおかしがつて振りかへる、子供は大勢シーツてんで車の後へ附いて来るから、どうも愉快でこてへもれねへ、チヤリンチャレンでつて大満まで来ると、いつか其酒樽の紐が切れどつかへ失なつちまつた、サァ大変折角大事にして東京へ踊り込むと思つたに、肝心の酒を遺失っちゃァ仕様がねへつてへんで、車夫を走らして跡を見せたが一向分らぬへ、拠なく警察者へ届けたが、間ぬけ切つてるから『私は只今岩槻から参る途中で酒樽を遺失致しました、勿論金高に致しますも、其酒はひどく酔ふ酒で御覧の通、私が夫を飲みまして狂人の様になつとりますのが現然たる証拠、萬一拾ひ取りました者が、夫を飲みまして狂乱致しては相済まざる事と存じて御届けに及びます』とマァ斯う屁理屈を附けたんだ、スルト警察でもおかしがつてクスクス笑ひながる『若し拾取つた者から届出たら早速沙汰とするから』と云つたが致頭出なかつた。東京を失敗つて草津へ行き、こそで懇意が出来て一月ばかり遊び仕事をして二百圓の金を貰たから、金錢はいつでも此通り、食ふに困るなんてへ事は腰ぬけか骨なしの言ひ草だと思つてるが、酒樽を遺失た時ばかりはどうも惜しくて惜しくて堪らなつた

之より話はまたまた俳優の事に及び

私は似顔絵師だから、俳優は皆交際ふが、團十郎つて奴は初から気味が下へ、何時だけどか、團十郎が晩天星五郎の芝居をしたことがあったから私が夫と菊五郎の小栗馬吉をかいた、其時團十郎が菊五郎ん所へ行って、『絵師なんてものは俳優に金を出して似顔をかくのが當然だのに國周はどうも横柄だ』とかんなとかプツプツ言つたってへから、私も親に障つた、夫から西郷隆盛の芝居を演つた時なんかい、わざと團十郎の西郷を出目にかいて、少年隊には團十郎の弟子を一人もかかなかつた、スルト團十郎も夫と気が附いて、俳ブリブリするから三枚続き一人立の團十郎は決してかかないと極めて何所から頼まれても断つてたが、嵐吉六今の坂東喜知六が夫を聞いて私に異見をするし、板元の方でも『マァ我慢してかいて呉れ』と言ふから復たかく様になった、此喜知六と云ふ男は、中々如才ない男で、筆も執れろし風流気もある、マァ俳優の内で文字のあると云ふのは、私は中がよくないが團十郎、夫
から喜知六、故人になつた團六位のもんだろう、団六てへ男は却々可愛い奴で、私も及ばずながら引立ててやったが俳名は青松庵飛猿と云ひまして、夫は故人の『猿飛んで一枝青し嶺の松』てへ句が實にいってへんで、自分で命たんのです、そうして能く物を辨へた方だから

風やみて田螺の動く水田哉
なんてへ句もあります、私が発句の講釋うするでもねへが、世の中に産の軽いのは犬で、重いのは田螺だ、田螺が産をする時にやァ、殻から脱け出して草の根や棒の端へ子をひり付けらんだから、風が強いと其殻を吹き散らされて歸へる家が無くなると云ひます、こいつを知ってるから句が此句を吟だんだがでもちァに斯うはでねへ、餘ッ程前にあの男が郡代に住ってた事がありますが、其時近所から火事が始てて、両國橋ノ所まで焼き拂つた、団六は焼け出されて、些ばかり取り出した荷物の側にガタガタ慄へてたが、師匠の松露が来て『サァ団六ここだ、早くやらねへか』つてへと団六も漸う気が付いてすぐによんだのが

古草や焼けてきのはらずつくづくし

松露も感心して

白魚の目にも涙かこの火かげ
とやった、どうも火の中で此位に出るのはふらいもんで私なんざァ池も及ばね
へ、喜知六にも句があります、併しまも選き出さんから酒落文の方が宜し、此風講釋師の南国が越後へ行つた時、或る客に召せて料理屋へ行くと、立派な官員さんが大勢居て伎在は掻げてたが、中に七十ばかりの爺さんが、御前御前と言はれて剛勢威張つてた、南國めどんな爺さんが出てて能々視ると、ナーニ之が坂東喜知六なんだ、不思議だと思ってると、先方も苦労人だ、別の座敷へ南國を呼んで『イヤどうも珍らしいナ、昔馴染に二人で一盃やろう』と胡座をかいて飲み初めたが、喜知六は聲を低くして『已もナ、娘が此縣の知事に落籍されて、首尾よく北の方と御出世遊はしたから、此地方へ来れば御前々々で成張ってられるんだ』と話したさうだ、南國は嘘を吐く男ぢゃァねへから、夫を本當とすれば喜知六の娘と云ふのは新橋ですすめと云つてた伎在に違へへ、何にしても亭巧な男サ、團十郎はまた一層博識だが、発句は駄調が多い、書も少しはかくがあァ天狗になつちまつちやァ仕様がへね

彼は仏幕府の比より揮毫せる大書の拂塗米等へ送れる名誉のものに付て詳々せしかどこに
はわざと省きぬ （此稿了）

（正誤）前稿橋本作蔵を周信とせしは周延の誤り
Appendix II. Toyohara Kunichika lineage.

TOYOHIRA KUNICHICA
豊原国周 (1835–1900)

YÔSHÔ CHIKANOBU
楊洲周延 (1838–1912)

SUZUKI NOBUYUKI
鈴木延雪 (1878–?)

WATANABE [YÔSAI] NOBUKAZU
渡辺 [楊斎] 延一 (1872–1944)

NABETA GYOKUEI
鍋田玉英 (1847–?)

TOYOHIRA CHIKAHARU 豊原周春 (1848–before 1900?)

UTAGAWA KUNIMATSU 歌川国松 (1855–1944)
(also pupil of UTAGAWA KUNITSURU I/KOBAYASHI EITAKU)

YUKAWA CHIKAMARU 湯川周丸 (act. 1861–Meiji) [Sôitsurô, ‘Ukiyo-e shi sôboroku’, 27, lists YUKAWA CHIKAMARU 湯川周丸]

GOKYÔRÔ CHIKAYOSHI 五橋楼周芳 (act. 1865–68)

CHIKAYUKI 周幸 (act. 1865–early Meiji)

CHIKASHIGE 守川周重 (act. 1860s–early 1880s)

TOYOHIRA CHIKASATO 豊原周里 (act. 1887–96)

CHIKAMINE 周峰 (n.d.)

SHÔKI 周李 (n.d.)

CHIKAMASA 周政 (mentioned in Yomiuri shinbun 27 July 1891)

UTAGAWA KUNITERU III 三代目歌川国輝 (act. 1886–95) (also pupil of UTAGAWA KUNITSURU II)

UTAGAWA WAKA 歌川和哥 (act. late 1880s) (possibly a Kunichika student)

(modified from Newland, Hotei encyclopedia of Japanese woodblock prints, 2005)
Appendix III. Kunichika-related articles in the *Yomiuri shinbun* and *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun.* Articles that are transcribed generally indicate that an English translation appears in part or in full in the main texts.

**Yomiuri shinbun** 読売新聞

8 September 1877, 3.
‘Yakusha-e ni natakai Toyohara Kunichika-san ga kongetsu jūrokinichi ni Ryōgoku no Nakamura-rō de shogakukan moyooshi sekijō nite...’ (俳優絵に名高い豊原国周さんが今月十六日に両国の中村楼で書画会を催し席上にて劇場興覧會と名づけ芝居に縁のある書画珍物などの展観をも催されます).

10 March, 1886, 2.
‘Genji gojūyonjō’ 現時五十四情. Announcement of the series *Genji gojūyonjō* (Fifty-four loves of a contemporary *Genji*) from the nishiki-e publisher Sawamuraya Seikichi of Honshirogane-chō 2-chōme. It notes that the ‘the designs are bewitching and the colour palette beautiful; they are nishiki-e most suitable for the presentation of a remote country’ (其圖柄の艶麗にして且彩色の美事なる遠国の遺ひ物などには最もよき錦絵で有ります).
(Image: http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/bunko30/bunko30_b0228/bunko30_b0228_0038/bunko30_b0228_0038_p0001.jpg)

29 June 1889, 3.
‘Surimono no nishiki-e’ 摺物の錦絵. Announcement of release by Akiyama Buemon Kokkeidō, Nihonbashi-ku Muromachi-chō 3-chōme, of print of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX with painting of Fudō Myōō by his own hand for a performance at Nakamura Theatre.
(Image: Illus. Mueller, *Competition and collaboration*, pl. 198.)

30 November 1890, 3.
‘Utagawa ha gakō no senmon’ 歌川派工の専門. Lists the specialist genres of leading print designers, including Kunichika for actors (Chapter One): 歌川派工の専門 歌川派の工にて板下絵のみに関し居るものその数多あられ共目下一派の得意を出して其名世に聞えたるものを挙れば武者絵は芳年、 似顔は國周、官女は周延、押絵は國政、手遊絵は年英、名所絵は吟光、類似油絵は清親、見世物看板絵は芳盛、劇場看板絵は清満、年中行事絵は勝月、図扇絵は玉英と限りたるが如しとなり

26 January 1891, 3.
‘Ukiyo-e no konnan’ 浮世絵の困難. Announcement of Ichikawa Danroku’s death, 4 January; Kunichika described as ‘yakusha no nigao o kakikeru wo Kunichika’.

26 April 1891, 3.
‘Kunichika daiga o kakan to su’ 國周大絵をかかんとす (Chapter Three).
1 May 1891, 3.
‘Haiyū to gakō no funatsu’ 俳優と画工の奮発 (Chapter Four).

今度新富座にて興行する七卿落の演劇には菅原道実祈の場あるよしと三修公の夢として顔わし道実を菊五郎が演ずる都合なりと此の演劇は近頃の名作と云ひ殊に魯国星太子が観ある時は豊原國周も頗る移転好きにて既に八十七回転宅せりされば同人の一生には移転の数必らず百四十五度に及べしと云ひて右菊五郎の菅公を三枚一体の大繪にせんと奮発し枉げるに此の際我國光を輝かすべき一助になさんと奮発し枉げて右菊五郎の菅公を三枚一体の大繪にする事となし既に同優を寫生し且つ其板下もあらさより出来するに至りたる趣き


8 May 1891, 3.
‘Gakō wa sōjite hikkoshi zuki ka’ 畫工は総じて移転好きか (‘Do print designers as a rule like to move?’) (Chapter One).

中古の書聖とも云ふべき北斎翁はとかく移転好きにて生涯の内に百餘ケ所へ住居をかへたるよしとあるが今の豊原國周もまた頗る移転好きにて既に八十五度まで転宅せりされる同人の一生涯には移転の数必らず百四五十度に及べしと云ふべき

27 July 1891, 3.
‘Toyohara Kunichika hyōzen satte yuku tokoro o shirazu’ 豊原國周飄然去て行く所を知らず (Chapter One).

芳年と對して浮世絵師の二柱と略される豊原國周翁は奇行多き人にて五十餘年間に八十七回居を転じたるが如きは凡人も知る所の事実なり翁が八十五回目の居（浅草小鳥町）に在りし時門人外山周政なるもの師に事ぶること最も篤し後翁深川冬木町に轉じたま去って下谷金杉村に転寓したるが数日前何思ひかせん匆々行李を整へて家財を擧げて周政に興へ予之より天下を周遊す汝また憂ふる勿れと飄然去て行く所を知らず

13 August 1891, 3.
‘Kunichika-ō Kusatsu ni ari’ 豊原國周草津に在り (‘Old master Kunichika spotted in Kusatsu’) (Chapter Two).

畫工豊原の國周翁飄然去て行く所を知らずとい此程の紙上に掲げし翁東京を去て女を横浜の知るべに預け単身上州草津の温泉場に到り全の大湯楼（大川角造方）に足を止めて入浴旁々揮毫に怠りなく今は樓主の依嘱に依りて大なる絹地（四尺に七尺の大さなり）へ紫式部を描きつつあり尤も此の畫は去月未より筆を下し来月中には出来の見込なれば出来次第歩を延べて佐渡國相川へ赴き半年ばかり全所に遊る都合なりと云ふ時に記す上州草津は目下浴客二千人ほどありて帝國大學のドクトル、ベルツ、ドクトル、スクリーパ両氏及び横濱獨逸病院長クル、クラファエ氏等も來浴て華氏寒暖計は七十度前後を上下せり

‘Mita bakari de wa wakaranu mono’ 見たばかりでは分からぬもの (‘Seen but not known’) (Chapter One).

國周翁古浴衣を着て上州草津に向ひ飯屋旅籠屋に入る毎に床の畳幅を見て成程と感ず家の者其の畫師なる事を察して姓名を同へば翁即ち豊原國周なりと答う是に於て皆笑って僞なりとして国周先生は東京の大家なり片田舎へ来ると非ずと冷やすれども二三揮毫するに至れば始めて眞の國周なる事を知り止めて帰さざと力む翁即ち憤然袂を拂って去る事幾回なるを知らずと此の程翁が去る方へ寄せられし畳の端に記されたり
3 February 1892, 2.
‘Utagawa ha no shuppin’ 歌川派の出品 (‘Works by the Utagawa school’).

The two messieurs Toyohara Kunichika and Utagawa Chikanobu—leaders of the Utagawa school—received a request by the head of our country’s exposition [domestic exposition] regarding exhibits for the Great Exhibition in the United States. Master Kunichika’s work, Cherry-viewing on the banks of the Sumida River (3 x 4 shaku 5 sun), relates to the Tenpō era, while Chikanobu’s work [the same size] is entitled Nobles flower viewing (Kijin kanka no zu 貴人觀花の圖). Due to the conditions surrounding the commission they were to avoid [illustrating] rude things like the half-clad figures and drunken behaviour and so forth [normally] seen during flower viewing on the Sumida River. As such, the designs are refined [images] of aristocratic daughters (hime) and such, and because it was a commission of the times the painting materials used are not imported (foreign made).

24 April 1892, 1.
‘Sandaime Toyokuni no kenbi’ 三代豊国の健碑 (‘Construction of memorial for Toyokuni III’).

14 May 1892, 3.
‘Toyohara Kunichika hyōzen toshite saru’ 豊原國周飄然として去る (‘Toyohara Kunichika leaves unexpectedly’). Account of unexpected departure for Sado and also note about commission for the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition (Chapter One).

12 August 1892, 2.
‘Utagawa Toyokuni no hi’ 歌川豊国の碑 (‘The grave of Utagawa Toyokuni’).

24 August 1892, 3.
‘Gahaku Toyohara Kunichika-ō Sekai Daihakurankai shuppin no kigō o jisu’ 畫伯豊原周翁世界大博覧會出品の揮毫を辞す (‘The artist, the master Kunichika, turns down displaying work in World Fair’ [Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition]) (Introduction).
格龍世界大博覧會に出品の絵図を命ぜられて卒然之を辞し、一時其跡を暗ましたる工豊原國周翁は此程再び東京に顕れ千束村の閑室に於いて件の絵図を揮毫する事となれるよし抑も翁が名誉ある揮毫を辞したるは一種其奇癖に出でたる事曾て本紙に掲げ如くなるが翁素と磊落酒を嗜みて亂酔終夜も悪く事なく為めに赤貧洗うが如く出品絵図の下命あるに當ては殆ど絹地額縁等の購入に差支へし程なりしを二十四餘年傍らに侍じて孝養怠りなき一女ひろ子深く嘆きて父に数月間の暇を乞ひければ翁は其意外なるに驚き此年頃聟をも撰ばで打過ぎしが不承知にてさる事をば言ひ出でしやと尋ねればひろ子は涙せき敢ず父上の御酒癖殊には御老体の今日となりて苟めの間も御側を離れんこと本意なくは存ずけれどもや一世一代とも云ふべき大翁の御揮毫あるに其資本さへなくて差支へ給ふが悲しさに此身を何れへか驚きて金策仕す所存なり兹が木の事存仰せられるは誠に恨むしと嘆に翁も暫時は涙に暮れ頓には許さざりけるが女が達ての願ひもだし難く遂に之を承諾しひろ子を上野の農家へ下婢に出ざし其給金を前借して漸くに絹地額縁等を調へ今や筆を下さんとするに至りて圖なくも農商務省認可の圖案を紛失せしかば流石の翁も偶然の不幸に呆れ且つは女に對する面目なしとて俄かに何れへか立去り生涯はかかじと決心したるをひろ子が聞きていと情けなき事に思ひ主人に乞うて漸くに父の居所を尋ね当て主人諸共手紙もて其の不心得を諌めれば翁も忽ち悟りて其揮毫を継続する事をなり数日前帰京して山高信離氏に面會し事云々と物語れば氏も其思ひ直したるを喜び是非とも揮毫を急ぐべしと勤めけりより素より圖案は胸中にあれば直さま其清書にとりかかるに至りしなり尤も依託工の絵図出来期限は本月三十一日なれど斯る事情あるが為め翁には特に二十日の猶豫を興へられしかば翁また之に励されて今は晝夜其出来を急ぎ居れりと云ふ。

19 October 1892, 3.
‘Kunichika-ō mata arawaru’ 国周翁また顕る（‘Master Kunichika resurfaces’). Detailed account of Kunichika’s disappearance and the account of the painting meant to be delivered to the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition (Chapter One and Conclusion).
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12 January 1893, 2.
‘Bokutei kanō no zu’ 墨堤觀櫻の圖 (Conclusion).

The *ukiyo-e*, *Cherry-blossom viewing on the banks of the Sumida River*, by the designer Toyohara Kunichika, the most complicated and the most meticulous among the paintings submitted to the Chicago World’s Fair, is currently close to a successful completion due to the extraordinary public spirit of the wealthy merchant Sakai Hanjūrō of Izumi-chō in Nakabashi.

Such reports are mirrored in the *Japan weekly mail* (see Conclusion):

We cannot pass entirely without notice TOYOHARA KUNICHIKA’S picture of a holiday-keeping crowd among cherry trees. He we have the *Kuniyoshi School of Ukiyo-ye [sic]* fairly well represented, and are brought into close touch with original of the ante-Meiji chromoxylographs. (Brinkley’s views were first compiled in a series of six articles, later published in a pamphlet. Brinkley, *Artistic Japan at Chicago*, 21–26) (thanks to Rosina Buckland for supplying the Brinkley source)

11 March 1893, 3.
‘Nishiki-e’ 錦絵. Announcement of release of Toyohara Kunichika’s *nigao-e* illustrating the characters Akoya Kotoseki 阿古屋琴責 and Kondō Shigezō 近藤重蔵 for performance at Ichimura Theatre; publisher Kokkeidō (Nihonbashi-ku, Muromachi-chō 3-chōme) (play *Dannoura kabuto gunki*; 壇浦兜軍記; see *Kabuki nenpyō*, vol. 7, 401–2).

26 March 1893, 3.
‘Okugesama no ko’ お公郷さまの子. Discussion of Kunichika’s work on a *kodomo zukushi* (series of children’s prints).

2 July 1893, 3.
‘Baikō hyakushu’ 梅幸百種. Announcement of the *nigao-e* series *One hundred roles of Baikō (Baikō hyakushu)*, with list of the one hundred images (list of works not included here) (see Chapter Four).

29 October 1893, 3.
‘Nigao no nishiki-e’ 肖貌の錦絵. Announcement of release of triptych of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Fudō Myōō 不動明王, Ichikawa Sadanji I as the courtesan (tayū) Ikuta Kaku 生田角, and Ichikawa Kodanji as Yūten 祐天 for performance at Meiji Theatre; sales office (hatsubaijo) for print is the Kokkeidō, Nihonbashi Muromachi-chō.


7 November 1893, 3.
‘Utagawa Toyokuni-ō no hi’ 歌川豊国翁の碑 (‘Grave of Master Utagawa Toyokuni’) (Chapter One).

13 November 1893, 3.
‘Utagawa Toyokuni no hi’ 歌川豊国の碑 (‘Grave of Master Utagawa Toyokuni’).
15 November 1893, 3.
‘Danshū hyakushu iden to su’ 団洲百種出んとす. Ichikawa Danjūrō IX’s announcement about undertaking the publication of his one hundred roles, designed by Kunichika (Chapter Four).
尾上菊五郎先頃梅幸百種と云ふを撰びて之を豊原國周に寫さしめ圖上に俳人の句を附して錦畫となしたるに之を聞く市川團十郎負けぬ気になり日本帝國の俳優中に在て指を第一に屈するもの此の團十郎を措いて其誰ぞや菊五郎如きに後れを取つては先祖へ對しても面目なし好し好し我れも之より團洲百種出版して名誉を百代の後傳へんと自身國周を尋ねて之を相談し菊花五郎が支出したる書料の二倍を拂ふて頗る立派に之を織かせる事に約束し且つ白く巳れには少し望があるから出来たら見本の草稿を見て呉れとあるに國周も承諾し八百屋お七外二枚を織して團十郎へ送りたれば同優大に喜びて之を諸名家へ持ち廻り黒田清隆・長三洲等の諸氏へ頼みて此へ字句を題せしめ且つ女形の錦には岩藤・八汐などいふ悪人を避て温和忠實なるものを撰び此には宮中の女官に和歌を乞ふ考なりと云

6 October 1893, 3.
‘Tokete mimasu Musubi Kashiwa’ 解三升結柏. Announcement of the print Tokete mimasu Musubi Kashiwa; publisher Akiyama Buemon (see fig. 19).

6 October 1893, 5.
‘Nigao no nishiki-e’ 肖児の錦絵. Announcement of the publication of two nigao-e triptychs for performances of the scenes ‘Shikorobiki’ 鏡引 and ‘Kumagai jinya no ba’ 熊谷陣屋の場 at the Meiji Theatre by Kunichika; publisher Kokkeidō (Nihonbashiku, Muromachi-chō 3-chôme).

1 November 1895, 3.
‘Nigao no nishiki-e’ 肖貌の錦絵. Announcement of the publication of nigao-e works, described as ‘gorgeous nishiki-e’ (birei no nishiki-e), by Kunichika and related to recent Shintomi Theatre performances (the scenes ‘Itakuraya no ba’ 板倉屋の場 and ‘Oshiage zutsumi koroshi’ 押上堤殺の場), as well as the November performance of Shiharaku 暫 and Kunai no tsubone 宮内局 at the Kabuki Theatre; publisher Kokkei-yagata 屋方, Nihonbashi, Muromachi-chō.

6 April 1896, 3.
‘Gaka Kunichika no iten byō’ 画家國周の移轉病. Report on how Kunichika’s tendency to move approximates a ‘sickness’ (Chapter One).
歌川派嫡流の畫家豊原國周は世に聞えたる飽性にて住家多くは一年を超えず甚しきは一ケ月の中に七十ケ所へ移轉せしけり北斎も有名なる移轉家にて生涯の中家を移せしこと八十ニ度に及びたれど國周の如きは六年前既に八十二ケ所へ移轉せりとされば今年までに前後移轉せしこと百度以上に及び移轉毎に其税を課せらるる事となられば今後何千円の税金を納むるやも知れずとて大に閉口し居るとな

7 April 1896, 3.
‘Gaka Kokunimasa no kiheki’ 画家小国政の奇癖 (‘Strange habits of the artist Kokunimasa’).
7 May 1896, 3.
‘Ezōshiya no konnan’ 繪草紙屋の困難 (Chapter Four).
東絹絵は去秋来先かに詰まり俳優絵の如きは辛ふじて一盃（二百枚）を捌く程なれば二盃以後は摺を簡略にし価格を下げて田舎廻しとし僅かに原板を利する位が関の山なり之に反して板木の原板は木材の騰貴せるに従前墨摺板一枚十五錢のものは廿五錢に、色摺板一枚十銭乃至十三銭のもの十八銭に上りたれば摺工の方も工銀を上げ従前一枚一銭のものを一銭五厘に（但し三枚ものは二銭五厘）に直上げたらさば絵草紙屋は更々困難する餘終に祖末の品を製出すの止を得ざるに至りたるなりとず江戸名物の行末こそ覚束なけれ

10 January 1898, 3.
‘Utagawa ha no hanashi’ 歌川派の話 (Chapter Four).
江戸名物と知られたる歌川派の絵も追々衰微して技術の稍や見るべきは國周一人のみ、若手にては國周の門人周延少し売り出してたれど苦労人目には餘り面白からぬよし、されば嵩谷に胚胎して歌麿に成功したる稲妻もここに至りて殆んと減期に近づきし様思はる、今は昔に遡りて妙手を古人にもとれば其数殆んと枚挙に違らざらど遺墨の今に保存せられたるもののほと稀なり、歌麿、豊春 매우多く名高きは抵消し生生涯の内に八三十五度移転したり、假令絵は下手なりとも移転の数は子のたか北斎に勝れり云々

23 January 1899, 3.
‘Ukiyo-e shi no ibutsu’ 浮世絵師の遺物 (‘The relics of ukiyo-e masters’). Listing of various generally lesser-known artists. Kunichika’s name is referenced.

20 July 1900, 4.
Kyokugai Kanjin 局外閑人. ‘Ko Toyohara Kunichika no seikō’ 故豊原國周の性行 (‘The personality of the late Toyohara Kunichika’) (fig. 20, Chapters One and Four).
浮世絵師豊原国周本月一日を似て死す、年七十、國周は、俗称稱荒川八十八、江戸神田の生まれにして、幼より稲妻を嗜み、香蝶楼豊國の問に入り、稲妻を學び、終に師の骨髄を得て、國字を稱するを許され、國周を號す、最俳優似顔に長じ、又歌川派の彩色に妙を得たり、余國周を知ること久し、甞其の居を訪ひしに、頻に得意の似顔をあき居たり、因りて誰の似顔にして、何の狂言なるやを問ふ、云く、何々、而して此の狂言、既に一覧せしやといひしに、微笑して白く、狂言は、未だ開塲せざるなり、それと顔の隈どり、躰のこなし、衣裳の模様等、必かくあるべしといふ、後こ後の狂言を見しに、果して其の如し、又一日藝妓の
肖像を書きし事ありし、諸人を対し、先づその面貌を聞き、之を書き、次ぎに髪の飾りを聞き、而してその他を問はず、既に流行の此の櫛、此の簪を用いゐる上は、衣服の上着は、流行の何々、下着は、何々、帯は、必らず何々なるべし、既に此の帯を用ふれば、下駄は、必これなるべしといふが、髪飾の一を聞き、推してその他を知る、用意の細密なる、實に驚くべし、又彩色は、國周の最得意とする所にして、歌川流の正傳を守り、失はず、時として二三の絵具と配合して六七の色をあらはし、又絵具の數を減じて、よく妍麗なる彩色をなす、偶絵草紙問屋來りて、其の料を出だすこと、意の如くなれば、彩色の數を減じて、美麗ならしめ、もし夫れ意に適はざれば、彩色の數を多くして、費用を増さしむるなり、問屋等亦よく之を知り、常に其の意に戻らんことを懼るるなり、これ皆多々年老練の一技にして、他人の及ばざる所なり、近世浮世絵の一大家と稱して、過譽にあらざるべし、嗚呼國周の死、實に惜むべし、余は其の人を嫉むにあらずるなり、其の技藝を惜むなり、俳優似顔の法、此に滅絶せんことを惜むなり、抑俳優似顔は、寳暦年間鳥山石燕が書きたる中村喜代三郎が似顔を始とし、安永年間に到り、一筆齋文調、勝川春章の徒、専似顔をかきて、世に賞せられ、文化年間一世歌川豊國に至り、益精功を極め、法自一格をなし、役者似顔稽古一冊を著はせり、三世豊國、其の伝を繼ぐ、明治以来寫眞術盛にして、俳優の寫眞大に行はる、ここをもて、似顔は、忽廢れて國周の外、殆これをまるくものあらざりき、今や國周死し、似顔亦死す、惜むべきなり、或は白く、似顔は、繪塲裏の一末技たるに過ぎざれども、これ亦當時の風俗人情を知るの一端として、大に価あるものなりと、國周は、性正直にして、一途に師の法を守り、他を顧みず、風韻雅致などいふことは、預り知るざるもののを如し、頗酒を嗜み、酔ひ来れば、うなり且つ舞ひ、餘念なきこと、恰小兒の如し、家計常に苦み、屡書画会など催したれど、其の得る所は、數日にしてこれを尽くず、又屡信越地方へ遊歴せしが、其の歸途は、必空嚢なりき、又性転居の癖ありて下谷、浅草、神田、本所と居轉せしこと、幾十回なるを知らず、近年本所に轉じ、一所に住居すること殆三年、ある人白く、近頃國周轉居せず、彼は必死せんと、果して其の言の如し、門人多かりしが、周重、周春の徒、既に死し、今存せると楊州周延にして、其名著はる、又京師に住せる歌川國松も、嘗國周に就き學びたる人なりと

The *ukiyo-e* master Toyohara Kunichika died the first day of this month. Aged seventy, Kunichika was born with the name (zokushō) Arakawa Yasohachi in Edo’s Kanda district. Since his youth he was accomplished at drawing and he became the student of Kachōrō Toyokuni from whom he learned art techniques. He ultimately achieved the essence of his teacher’s style, was permitted to use the character ‘Kuni’ and assumed the art name ‘Kunichika’. He excelled the most in actor nigao-e and was skilled [in creating the] coloration of the Utagawa school. This reporter’s acquaintance with Kunichika is long standing and in fact I visited him at his home. He frequently used his ability/skill to draw nigao-e and confused, I would ask things like whose nigao is this, or which performance is it, and so forth. And then he’d smile and say that he already knew the play; even if a piece had yet to open, the type of make-up (kumadori), the countenance of the figure and the style of the costumes were without fail just like he pictured when I later saw the play. One day he was designing a picture of a geiko. He first paid attention to the features, and drew these, then paid attention to the decoration of the hair, and then the other elements: in addition to the latest styles in hair-combs and hairpins, the fashionable types of over-kimono and under-kimono would be this way, and if he had already used one such waist sash (obi) it would have to be this way and then the geta would have to be like this. He explains all this as he continues to draw. If he had already used one type of hair ornament, he would easily know another—the minuteness of the preparation is indeed mind-boggling. Furthermore, Kunichika is most expert at coloration. He preserved the lineage [style] of the Utagawa school, and as such, he at times combined two or three pigments (enogu) and often used six or seven colours (iro), or, the number of pigments could be reduced to create a very appealing palette. Sometimes booksellers-publishers (ezōshi toiya) called by and commissioned work from him. If the artist’s fee proposed was agreeable to Kunichika, he might reduce the number of colours—it would still be beautiful. However, if the fee did not meet with his expectations he would increase the colours and thus the price. The bookseller-publishers are well informed about this and so they were careful not to contradict his wishes.
Kunichika is considered one of the great artists of early modern ukiyo-e and has been exceedingly praised. Kunichika’s death is in fact regrettable, and I hold onto his memory. His art will be missed and the dying out of the technique of actor nigao-e cannot not be deplored enough. To begin with, during the Hōreki era, the first nigao-e was Toriyama Sekien’s Nakamura Kiyosaburō and in the An’ei era Ippitsusai Bunchō, Katsukawa Shunshō, and others specialised in nigao-e, which were popular and valued by the public. In the Bunke era Utagawa Toyokuni I gradually achieved success, creating a singular style, and he designed the single volume Yakusha nigao hayageiko in the illustration of nigao-e. This style was passed on to Toyokuni III and upon his death Kunichika inherited this tradition. From the Meiji era onwards, the technology of photography became popular, and actor photographs were done in great numbers and as a result nigao-e quickly died out. Apart from Kunichika there is hardly anyone designing nigao-e, and now that he is gone, nigao-e too will die out and this is lamentable, and while nigao-e is represented [no more than] [by] poor workmanship within the art world it has nevertheless become quite valued as one aspect in our understanding of contemporary customs and manners. Kunichika appeared carefree, with a straightforward character, he wholeheartedly guarded his teacher’s style, took little notice of others, had great gusto and so forth. He had a great taste for sake, and when he was drunk, he would hum and dance, absorbed, just like a child. He always struggled with the family finances; he often participated in shogakai and these profitable events ran for a few days. Also, he often toured the region of Shin’etsu, and without fail on his return home was out of pocket. He had a taste for moving, living in Shitaya, Asakusa, Kanda, and Honjo; it is not known how many times he moved. Today he lives in Honjo. Some say that he lived in one place roughly three years, though as might be expected, he had not moved recently before the lead up to his death. He had a number of pupils, but Chikashige, Chikaharu and others have already passed away; the remaining student Yōshū Chikanobu is well known and the Kyoto master Utagawa Kunimatsu also studied with Kunichika.

**Tōkyō Asahi shinbun 東京朝日新聞**

29 June 1889, 4.
‘Danshū no Fudō’ 団洲の不動. Announcement of release of triptych illustrating Ichikawa Danjūrō IX and Fudō Myōō. (see image *Yomiuri shinbun*, 29 June 1889)

26 December 1890, 3.
‘Hana awase yakusha karuta’ 花合俳優かるた. Announcement of karuta set by ‘悉く俳優の似顔国周’ (*otogoto no nigao Kunichika*), with the set described as achieving beauty and lists publisher and address listed below (Eisensha Shōten; possibly Akiyama Buemon).

31 October 1893, 3.
‘Meijiza no haiyū-e’ 明治座の俳優絵. Announcement of Kunichika print of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Narita Fudō 成田不動, Ichikawa Sadanji I as the courtesan (tayū) Kaku (太夫), and Ichikawa Kodanji as the priest (kōzō 小僧) Yūten 拓天; publisher Akiyama Kokkeidō (see image under *Yomiuri*, 31 October 1893).

3 November 1893, 3.
‘Azuma nishiki-e’ 東錦繪. Announcement of Kunichika *nigao-e nishiki-e* triptych of Nakamura Fukusuke as Manjiya Wakamurasaki 万字屋若紫, Ichikawa Sadanji I as Ōyama Saemonjō 大山左衛門尉, Ichikawa Gonjūrō as Fujimura Urata 藤村浦太, Ichikawa Yonezō as Genpei Sakigake-tsutsuji no Kohagi 源平魁躅の小萩實 and Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Kumagai Naozane and Ichikawa Sadanji I as Anewa no Heiji 姉輪平次; publisher Akiyama Buemon.

(Image: [http://ja.ukiyo-e.org/image/artelino/47785g1](http://ja.ukiyo-e.org/image/artelino/47785g1))
4 March 1894, 3.
‘Meijiza no nishiki-e’ 明治座の錦絵. Announcement of Kunichika (full name, unusually with gloss reading) print of Ichikawa Danshū (Ichikawa Danjūrō IX) as Katō Kiyomasa 高砂 and Danshirō ぼず Sankichi 團四郎坊主三吉; publisher Akiyama Kokkeidō.


8 March 1894, 3.
‘Meijiza no nigao-e’ 明治座の似顔絵. Announcement of Kunichika triptych for the performance Senbonzakura with Danshū (Ichikawa Danjūrō IX) as Kawagoe Tarō 川越太郞, Ichikawa Yonezō as Shizuka Gozen 静御前, and Ichikawa Gonjūrō as Hangan Yoshitsune 判官義経, as well as the Kunichika diptych of Ichikawa Sadanji I as Danshirō 團四郎 and Yonezō as the courtesan (tayū) Takesago 高砂; publisher Akiyama Kokkeidō.

(Image: Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan: 100-4391/4392/4393; Kabuki nenpyō, vol. 7, 427)

15 September 1894, 3.
‘Tokete mimasu Musubi Kashiwa’ 解三升結柏. Announcement of Kunichika triptych of performance between Danshū (Danjūrō IX) and San’en (Ichikawa Danzō VI [Kuzō]), who reportedly had not acted together for some time, with Danjūrō as Arai Chōgorō and Kuzō as Musubi Kashiwa Ichirōbei (see fig. 19; also http://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp:07117). The article includes the hokku on the image:

涼しさのあと先はなし海と山 三升 (suzushisa no ato saki wa nashi umi to yama, Sanshō)

Ichikawa Danjūrō IX)

桜の音もはづむやあたり稲 三猿 (kashiwade no oto mo hazumuya atari ine, San’en) (most likely the same poet on the 1898 image of The ferryman Fukashichi [Ryōshi Fukashichi] from the Danjūrō IX one hundred performances set)

三ツ組しかげは月なり和合盆 鶴岡三翁 (mitsu kumi shikage wa tsuki nari wagōhai, Tsuruoka San’ō) (perhaps the same greengrocer Tsuruoka mentioned in the MNE set and perhaps the same person whose verse appears on the 1898 image of Fuwa Banzaemon from the Danjūrō IX one hundred performances set)

空までも香るものの栃の花 住直見水 (sora made no kaoru mono no nare ine no hana) 鷹のふりすずしさ松に余り鳴 談州棗燕枝 (taka no furi suzushisa matsu ni amari ine, Danjūrō Enshi) (Enshi, 1837–1900)

打合わせ音いときよし夏きぬた (uchiawasu o toki yoshi natsu kinuta) 北廊正楽

丸い世に習へ新酒のひざ直し 国周 (see Chapter One)

男同士茅の輪涼しくぐり鳴 桂花園 (otokodōshi chi no wa suzushiku kuguri keri, Keikaen) (Keikaen, 1830–1899, poet on Kikugorō V and Danjūrō IX sets)

13 October 1894, 3.
‘Sensō no nishiki-e’ 戦争の錦絵. Announcement of Yōshū Chikanobu’s war triptych Heijōkanraku no zu 平壌陷落之圖 by publisher Tsunob, Yokohama-chō 3-chōme; Seikanekishinbe no haisō 成歴新兵之敗走 by Kokunimasa by publisher Inoue Kichijirō, Honchō 2-chōme; and Kunichika’s yakusha nigao-e triptych, Daidō kōgeki sen no zu 大同江激戰之圖, from a Meiji Theatre performance; publisher Akiyama Kokkeidō.

6 October 1895, 3.

‘Meijiza no nishiki-e’ 明治座の錦絵. Diptych of nigao-e of Kumagai Jinya 熊谷陣屋 and Shikorobiki しころ引; publisher Akiyama Kokkeidō (see image Yomiuri shinbun, 6 October 1895).

22 October 1895, 5.


1 November 1895, 3.

‘Haiyū nigao-e’ 俳優似顔絵. Announcement of Kunichika triptych of Ichikawa Danjūrō IX as Kunai no tsubone 宮内局 and Shibaraku 暫 and Kunichika’s triptych for the scenes ‘Sakuraya’ at Shintomi Theatre and ‘Oishiage-tsutsumi koroshi’ with Onoe Kikugorō V as Chōji 長次 and Shōchō as Oryō おりょう, Kataichi as Kōbei 幸兵衛, Matsusuke as Sakakuraya 坂倉屋, Fukusuke as Oshima おしま流石; publisher Akiyama Kokkeidō (see also Yomiuri shinbun, 1 November 1895).

(1 Image: Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University: arcUY0045/0046/0047)

22 November 1895, 5.


19 January 1896, 4.

‘Meijiza no inari matsuri’ 明治座の稲荷祭り. Announcement of participation of Kunichika, Kiyosada, and Yoshiiku in decoration of jiguchi andon 地口行灯 lanterns at the Meiji Theatre on the occasion of the Inari festival.

24 January 1896, 4.

‘Nishiki-e’ 錦絵. Announcement of triptych by Kunichika described as ai-kawarazu dekiyoshi 相変わらず出来よし from publisher Kokkeidō Akiyama, Nihonbashi-ku, Muromachi-chō 3-chôme and a Gekkō triptych from Daihei, Yoshikawa-chō.

9 May 1896, 4.

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(1 Image: Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan: 100-2616/2617/2618; from the play Fūkigusa Heike monogatari 富貴草平家物語 staged at the Kabuki theatre; Kabuki nenpyō, vol. 7, 518–19)

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