Title:

Lessons for Women: Woodblock Prints of the Tenpō Reforms Era

1. Aim and Outline:

The doctoral thesis explored how censorship may have influenced mid-nineteenth century woodblock prints issued in the Tenpō Reforms period (1841-1843). The Tenpō Reforms resulted in a ban on 'pictures of beauties' (*bijinga* 美人画), courtesan prints (*yūjo-e* 遊女絵) and actor prints (*yakusha-e* 役者絵). Since *bakufu* officials had advised ukiyo-e artists and publishers to instruct women and children in filial piety, loyalty and fidelity so that they might distinguish right from wrong, the thesis concentrated on works that purported to address this imaginary female reader-viewer. Research focussed on the intersection of prescriptive or educational texts and ukiyo-e associated with the *bijinga*, 'pictures of manners and customs' (*fūzokuga* 風俗画), and *yakusha-e* genres. The dissertation attempted to draw out the connection between prescriptive texts and ukiyo-e by interpreting a small number of prints as *kyōkun-e* 教訓絵, whose titles or contents claimed to provide practical guidance and moral instruction to the female print consumer. During the Tenpō Reforms period a small number of print series bore titles that alluded to 'texts' or manuscripts (*gusa* 草) and functioned at both a textual and visual level.

Since the author was looking for evidence that showed how the restrictions imposed by the Tenpō Reforms influenced woodblock print publishing, the methodological approach followed a deductive research model that made use of digital tools. Ritsumeikan University Art Research Center's digital archives and similar online ukiyo-e and book databases facilitated the identification of lesser-known series that were issued in the 1840s. The materials made accessible through digital image databases supported a detailed study of a brief and under-researched period in woodblock print publishing history that preceded the arrival of Commodore Perry and the onset of the Bakumatsu period (1853-1867). Interpretations were based on analyses of the printed material objects, supported and contextualized by social historical studies of the late-Edo period.

Chapter 1 introduced the main research questions and asked whether the morally didactic content within Tenpō Reforms-era woodblock print publishing should be interpreted as evidence of *bakufu* censorship or as diversification within the ukiyo-e publishing industry. In Chapter 1 the literature review introduced contemporary readings of didactic text-images as comic parodies, *mitate* 見立 and pastiches. Chapter 2 developed the literature review in order to suggest alternative critical frameworks for interpreting didactic text-images. Chapter 2 situated Tenpō Reforms-era censored prints within contemporary discussions on Tokugawa-period education. The increase in the number of commoner schools can be viewed as evidence of the public's desire for self-cultivation. However, education could also be used as an instrument of social control during periods of unrest. The thesis developed the argument that didactic prints issued during periods of heightened censorship reinforced traditional Confucian values, feudal hierarchies and gendered identities. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 highlighted series that presented biographies of moral

exemplar - particularly female paragons inspired by the native *kenjo* 賢女 and nativized *retsujoden* 列女伝 traditions. The dissertation argued that publishers issued ukiyo-e series with loyalty, filial piety and fidelity (*chūkō setsugi* 忠孝節義) themes as a strategy to circumvent censorship. The focus of Chapters 6, 7 and 8 shifted away from series inspired by Japan's heroines to examine prints that depicted unnamed, contemporary women as paragons of virtue in their capacity as wives, mothers and daughters. Chapter 9 concluded the dissertation with a summary of research findings.

2. Outline and Chapter Structure

Part 1

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to Research: Historical Context

        i) Tenpō Reforms

        ii) Censorship

1.2 Research Problems: What are they?

        i) Parody or *Mitate*?

        ii) *Bijinga, Fūzokuga* or *Kōkun-e?*

1.3 Justification For Research

    i) Why Utagawa Kuniyoshi and His Contemporaries?

    ii) Why Mid-Nineteenth Century 'Text-Images'?

1.4 Methodology and Sources

1.5 Outline of Structure

1.6 Conclusion

Chapter 2: Tokugawa Education

2.1 Confucianism and Syncretic Texts

2.2 Popular Education: 'The top-down, bottom-up debate'

2.3 Neo-Confucian Educational Texts

        i) Samurai Women and Children

        ii) Commoner Women and Children

2.4 Typologies for Textbooks and Prescriptive Literature

2.5 Criticism of Existing Typologies

2.6 English Language Scholarship on Prescriptive Literature

2.7 Summary of Approach and Hypotheses

Chapter 3: Paragons of Virtue

3.1 *Nishiki-e* and Genre

3.2 Five Relationships (*gorin* 五倫) and the Three Bonds (*sankō* 三綱)

3.3 *Official Records of Filial Piety* and Moral Exemplar

3.4 Primers in Filial Piety: Guo Jujing's *Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety* (*Nijūshi kō*)

3.5 Nativist translations of *Nijūshi kō*

       i) *Honchō nijūshi kō,* 1843

       ii) *Chūkō meiyo kijinden,* 1845-1846

3.6 Conclusion

Chapter 4: Virtuous Models for Women

4.1 *Nishiki-e* and Genre

4.2 *Retsujoden*

4.3 *Kokon meifuden,* 1859-1866

4.4 Tenpō Reforms-Era Female Moral Exemplar

4.5 Conclusion

Chapter 5: Mirrors of Loyalty and Filial Piety on the Kabuki Stage

5.1 *Nishiki-e* and Genre

5.2 'Rewarding good and punishing evil' (*kanzen chō'aku* 勧善懲悪)

5.3 Yō Yōtai's *Kagamiyama kokyō no nishiki-e*: 'A Woman's *Chūshingura*'

5.4 *Kagamiyama kokyō no nishiki-e* as *Retsujoden*

5.5 *Kagamiyama*-related *Iri-serifu yakusha-e* (1832-1849)

5.6 Censorship of *Kagamiyama*-related *Yakusha-e* (1842)

5.7 Conclusion

Chapter 6: Precepts for Women

6.1 *Nishiki-e* and Genre

6.2 *Kyōkun* and *Tashinami-gusa*

6.3 Five Virtues (*gojō* 五常)

       i) *Teisō chiyo no kagami,* 1843

6.4 Four Womanly Virtues (*shitoku* 四徳) and Three Obediences (*sanjū* 三従)

       i) *Fujin tashinami-gusa,* c. 1843

       ii) *Onna Imagawa sugata awase,* c. 1843

6.5 Conclusion

Chapter 7: Skilled Work and Handicrafts

7.1 *Nishiki-e* and Genre

Examples of Censor Seal Anomalies from the Japanese Woodblock Print Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Shita-uri Seal Anomalies

Bibliography

3. Summation of Each Chapter:

Part 1

Chapter 1:

The first chapter introduced the theme of morality within mid-nineteenth century ukiyo-e and provided a brief outline of the policies of Chief Senior Councillor Mizuno Tadakuni. The introduction explained how sumptuary edicts and the Tenpō Reforms affected woodblock print publishing and 'Floating World' culture in the 1840s. Ukiyo-e series that incorporated Confucian themes are generally viewed as forms of parody, either as *fūryū yatsushi* 風流やつし or *mitate*. The author challenged these definitions by suggesting that the increased literacy of print consumers may have influenced the content of ukiyo-e. Chapter 1 asked: should *kyōkun-e* be viewed as an extension of the *ōraimono* and *fūzokubon* genres, and their contents read as earnest instructions for women? The introduction justified further research into lesser-known print series by Utagawa Kuniyoshi and his contemporaries that combined didactic texts with imagery.

Chapter 2:

The second chapter provided a brief history of Tokugawa education and introduces the titles of the key texts that were used to teach Confucian ethics to samurai and commoners. The chapter considered the evidence that community leaders encouraged commoner education during periods of unrest in order to preserve feudal hierarchies, in what constituted a 'top-down' promotion of Neo-Confucian values. Chapter 2 presented different approaches to categorizing and labeling didactic texts, particularly prescriptive texts for women, and considered how typologies developed for educational books could be applied to didactic woodblock printed text-images.

Chapter 3:

The third chapter introduced contemporary curatorial approaches to interpreting mid-nineteenth century text-images and the current reluctance within art-historical scholarship to interpret ukiyo-e print series as morally prescriptive or didactic. Chapter 3 repositioned so-called 'mitate' series within the literary tradition of cultural translation and nativization of imported Confucian texts. Utagawa School print series from the 1840s, which incorporated the themes of loyalty and filial piety (*chūkō* 忠孝), were re-considered within the context of the morally reformative politics of Matsudaira Sadanobu and Mizuno Tadakuni.

Chapter 4:

In Chapter 4, the prescriptive text-images or *kyōkun-e* narrowed to an examination of *bijinga* series issued in the 1840s that purported to provide moral exemplar to women. These biographical series combined Buddhist and Confucian ethics in their accounts of the virtuous lives of Japanese women.

Chapter 4 reframed these series within the Confucian *retsujoden* 列女伝 tradition (to which the series' titles allude) and views them as examples of nativized Confucian texts.

The chapter referenced Utagawa Kunisada's print series *Kokon meifuden* which has attracted the attention of scholars working in the fields of Gender Studies and Comparative Confucian Studies mainly owing to its reformatting as a book. Chapter 4 demonstrated that Kunisada's *Kokon meifuden* had been preceded by a large number of didactic print series issued in the Tenpō Reforms era. The scholarly divide between specialists of woodblock printed books and specialists of woodblock prints has resulted in a fragmented understanding of how traditional notions of gender were constructed and disseminated via print culture during the Edo-period.

Chapter 5:

Prior to the 1840s, theatre playwrights had defended their art by claiming that the *kanzen chōaku* 勧善懲悪 plots of *jōruri* and kabuki revenge dramas provided moral instruction to women and children. Chapter 5 is dedicated to a detailed examination of images issued in relation to the *Kagamiyama kokyō nishiki-e* - a play inspired by the tale of a servant girl who was commended for her loyal fidelity. This revenge drama was performed annually for Edo's female servants and was scheduled to coincide with their period of spring leave. The female moral exemplar within these tales also drew from the *retsujoden* tradition and filtered into prescriptive literature for women. Chapter 5 explored actor-related text-images and how the ban on actor prints affected the *niche* industry of *iri serifu yakusha-e* 入りせりふ役者絵. A study of Tenpō Reforms-era prints confirmed that artists circumvented censorship by replacing actors' names with their *nigao* 似顔. In addition to this device, censored *yakusha-e* were retitled 'old tales' (*mukashi gatari* 昔語). Artists and publishers appeased censors by emphasizing the virtues of loyalty and filial piety, and disassociating tales of vengeance from the kabuki theatre. Among the first actor prints to be issued after the ban were designs that drew attention to the moral lessons and Confucian virtues embedded in the kabuki plots.

Chapter 6:

Chapter 6 explored *bijinga* text-image series that referenced Confucian texts and prescriptive texts for women. The three main Tenpō Reforms-era series discussed in this chapter have not attracted the attention of print or book scholars. Consequently, these series have not been analyzed as *mitate* or pastiches of *jokun* 女訓. Chapter 6 revealed that there was a tradition within ukiyo-e of referencing the Five Virtues (*gojō* 五常), quoting the injunctions listed in prescriptive texts, such as the *Onna Imagawa*, and feminizing Confucian lessons. The publishers and authors of these didactic text-images claimed that the moral instruction within these works was for the benefit of their female consumers. Instead of simply interpreting these works as parodies of authoritative texts, the author has attempted to locate them within a process of cultural adaptation and nativization of Confucian teachings.

Chapter 7:

Chapter 7 looked more closely at depictions of woman performing household chores and skilled labour. Instead of dismissing images of working women as parodies of the occupations of male journeymen, Chapter 7 discussed women's involvement in the industries of textile manufacturing, textile processing, and agriculture. These instructive text-images can be read as censored images of beauties and sex workers, romanticized depictions of 'poor women'(*shizu no me* 賤の女) and as abstractions of the Confucian female virtue of 'womanly work' (*fukō* 婦功). Series that purport to offer guidance or instruction to their readers portrayed women as domestic managers and nurturing mothers. These works share imagery found within *fūzokubon* and *kyōkunsho*, and draw attention to the didacticism present in women's literature from this era.

Chapter 8:

This chapter looked at woodblock prints issued in the Tenpō Reforms era that related to the institution of marriage, and the customs and traditions associated with childbirth and raising a child. Chapter 8 discussed two large series that provide moral maxims to young women with regard to their domestic role as filial daughters, modest wives, and good mothers. These designs were considered in relation to earlier series and illustrated books produced by ukiyo-e artists in order to demonstrate that although rare, didactic ukiyo-e did exist and were consumed by Edo audiences. The texts from these works borrowed from Confucian lessons, and referenced the didactic style of prescriptive literature for women. Research conducted on advisory text-images for wives as mothers revealed that these works increased during a period of moral reform and censorship. Series drew on existing models and provided pastiches of *fūzokubon* and *kyōkunsho*, particularly *oshie-gusa* styled texts and domestic encyclopedia (*chōhōki*).

Chapter 9:

The concluding chapter summarized key findings that resulted from research undertaken into didactic print series and suggests areas that could be further developed in the future. The conclusion emphasized that prescriptive literature and *kyōkun-e* should be viewed as hybrids that combined entertainment with moral and/or practical instruction. From these texts a great deal can be learnt about how Neo-Confucian values were instilled in the population and disseminated via printed media.

Part 2

Appendices and Supplemental Materials

The appended transcriptions and translations in Part 2 supported statements and observations made in the main thesis. Transcriptions, and provisional translations of two large print series, were documented to support future research into these works.

4. Results and Considerations:

Research revealed several series by Utagawa School artists that had not received previous critical attention. These works are relevant to on-going research in the fields of Gender Studies and Comparative Confucian Studies and draw attention to the socialization of women within Tokugawa Neo-Confucian society. The study considered artistic constructions of femininity and diligent industry within urban and 'rural' contexts. Analysis moved beyond discussions of works as *mitate*, and instead located works within

the continuum of cultural adaptation and nativization of Chinese Confucian texts. Research resulted in the selective transcription and translation into English of several under-researched series from the Tenpō Reforms era and the socio-historical contextualization of these works.

Research into 'womanly work' resulted in the thorough documentation of sericulture-related series issued in the first-half of the nineteenth century and the transcription of the *kyōka* 狂歌 poetry that featured on some of these print series. This study demonstrated that a small number of series issued in the 1840s drew inspiration from the figure of the *shizu no me* or 'humble' female agricultural worker. Images of women engaged in textile handicrafts that illustrated the Confucian virtue of *fukō* were discussed in relation to imagery found in *joshi yō ōrai* and *fūzokubon*, revealing the close relationship between these book genres. These studies demonstrated the overlap between domestic duties and commercial manufacturing/agriculture found in images of early-to-mid nineteenth century ukiyo-e, particularly with regard to textile-related industries.

5. Literature Cited:

The author produced transcriptions and translations for the key ukiyo-e series that were discussed in this dissertation. The author relied on Basil Hall Chamberlain's translation of the *Onna daigaku* 『女大学』 in *Things Japanese*, 5th Ed. (London: John Murray, 1905), Marcia Yonemoto's translation of Sawada Kichi's *Shin onna Imagawa* 『新女今川』 in Yonemoto *The Problem of Women in Early Modern Japan* (California: University of California Press, 2016), and Risako Doi's translations of Kaibara Ekiken's *Wazoku dōjikun* 『和俗童子訓』 in 'Beyond the Greater Learning for Women: Instructional Texts (*Joshiyō ōrai*) and Norms for Women in Early Modern Japan' (M.A. Thesis, University of Colorado, 2011). The sources for translations of Chinese Confucian texts were James Legge's *The Chinese Classics* (London: Crawford & Co., 1861) digitized via the Chinese Text Project, Theodore Wm. De Bary and Irene Bloom (Eds.), *Sources of Chinese Tradition. Volume 1* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), and Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng (Eds.), *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

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(London and New York: Routledge, 2016). The aforementioned research was based on the pioneering research work on *ōraimono* by Koizumi Yoshinaga 小泉 吉永, Ishikawa Matsutarō 石川 松太郎 and Ishikawa Ken 石川 謙.