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## Korin' s Images in Katsushika Hokusai' s Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji : Ukiyo-e and the Rinpa School

メタデータ	<p>言語: English</p> <p>出版者: 國學院大學研究開発推進機構</p> <p>公開日: 2024-06-03</p> <p>キーワード (Ja): 葛飾北斎, 富嶽三十六景, 琳派, 尾形光琳, 酒井抱一</p> <p>キーワード (En): ukiyo-e, Katsushika Hokusai, Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji(Fugaku sanjūrokkei), Rinpa school, Ogata Kōrin, Sakai Hōitsu</p> <p>作成者: 藤澤, 紫, Toda, Dylan Luers</p> <p>メールアドレス:</p> <p>所属:</p>
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.57529/0002000461">https://doi.org/10.57529/0002000461</a>

# Korin's Images in Katsushika Hokusai's Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji: Ukiyo-e and the Rinpa School

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**Keywords:** ukiyo-e, Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎, *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* (Fugaku sanjūrokkei 富嶽三十六景), Rinpa 琳派 school, Ogata Kōrin 尾形光琳, Sakai Hōitsu 酒井抱一

## *Author's Statement*

Scholars have often noted the influence of foreign cultures on the colors and composition of *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* (Fugaku sanjūrokkei 富嶽三十六景), the masterpiece of the Edo period ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849). In this paper, I delve into the themes and motifs of the series, arguing that Hokusai's creation was informed by his familiarity with *yamato-e* やまと絵 gained through his involvement with the Rinpa 琳派 school.

## *Introduction: Ukiyo-e's Quest for Tradition and Innovation*

Ukiyo-e arose as a medium for the townspeople of the newly emerging city of Edo. The term first appears in writing in the Tenna 天和 years (1681–84). To promote the new custom of buying ukiyo-e prints among the city's commoners, the main source of demand, publishers and artists produced works incorporating various ideas. Also, this new school of ukiyo-e attempted to add a sense of tradition to its art by assimilating the subjects and techniques of, for example, the Tosa 土佐 and Sumiyoshi 住吉 *yamato-e* やまと絵 schools and the Kanō 狩野 school of *kanga* 漢画 (Chinese-style painting).

The *yamato-e* tradition and the transmission of its images were essential to the development of ukiyo-e. In the seventeenth century, Retired Emperor Go-Mizunoo 後水尾 (1596–1680) and others vigorously promoted the study of the classics, and a

<sup>1</sup> This article is a translation of “Katsushika Hokusai ga ‘Fugaku sanjū rokkei’ ni miru Kōrin imēji: Ukiyoe to Rinpa” 葛飾北斎画「富嶽三十六景」にみる「光琳」イメージ: 浮世絵と琳派,” *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雜誌 123:11 (2022), pp. 1–23. Translated by Dylan L. Toda.

classical culture revival spread from the imperial court to the shogun family, daimyo, and, eventually, the common people as well. Paintings based on the classics were also favored, and the Tosa and Sumiyoshi schools of *yamato-e*, as well as the Kanō school of *kanga*, joined in producing them.

Against this backdrop, Hishikawa Moronobu 菱川師宣 (?–1694), the father of ukiyo-e, released a large number of ukiyo-e print books (*hanpon* 版本), which also served to provide model examples of *yamato-e* paintings for commoners, through Urokogataya Sanzaemon 鱗形屋三左衛門, a long-established publisher. One such book, *Yamato shinō ezukushi* 大和侍農づくし (pub. Enpō 延宝 8 [1680]; **Fig. 1**), is woodblock-printed picture-centered book (*ehon* 絵本) that covers the customs of people engaged in various occupations of the day. It is characterized by lively depictions of figures that are typical of ukiyo-e. The book is signed “*Yamato-e* painter Hishikawa Kishibei-no-jō 菱川吉兵衛尉.” By calling himself a *yamato-e* painter, Moronobu placed himself in this tradition and added value to his work.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, according to the preface to *Yamato musha-e* 大和武者絵 (pub. Tenna 3 [1683]), Moronobu became a first-rate ukiyo-e artist by adding his



Fig. 1 Hishikawa, *Yamato shinō ezukushi*, frame 4.

<sup>2</sup> Abiko Rie 阿美古理恵 points out the influence of the Iwasa, Kanō, and Tosa schools on the design of Moronobu's picture books and concludes that what he referred to as *yamato-e* was that which stood in opposition to *koden* 古伝 (lit., “old tradition”; existing pictorial expressions), and that he added his own contemporary style to *yamato-e*, making it “the newest paintings in Yamato,” that is, Japan. See Abiko, *Hishikawa Moronobu*.

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own innovations to the styles of the Tosa, Kanō, and Hasegawa families when depicting customs in *yamato-e*.

According to a mid-Edo period (1603–1868) anecdote by the playwright Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749–1823), known as Chikura Sanjin 触羅山人, Nanpō's close friend Suzuki Harunobu 鈴木春信 (1725?–70) also referred to himself as a “*yamato-e* painter.” Harunobu, who was involved in the creation of *nishiki-e* 錦絵 (colorful *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints) and helped to launch the golden age of *ukiyo-e*, interacted with dilettantes in Edo and took the world by storm with both his *mitate* 見立 technique of offering a contemporary take on classical subjects and his *yamato-e* tsukurie 作り絵-style renderings of physical appearances.

In his thirties, the painter Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849), who is still well known in Japan and abroad today, also became committed to the *yamato-e* Rinpa school. Hokusai, who studied various schools of *kanga* and *yōfuga* 洋風画 (Western-style painting) throughout his ninety-year life, took the name Sōri 宗理, which had been used by the head of the Rinpa school, in Kansei 寛政 6 (1794). Works from his Sōri period are still highly regarded today, and his painting style was his own, not necessarily a simple imitation of the likes of Sōtatsu 宗達 and Kōrin 光琳. While in Kansei 10 (1798), Hokusai gave the name Sōri to his pupil and changed his own to Hokusai Tokimasa 北斎辰政, up through his later years, Hokusai's works still show the Rinpa school style in their subject matters and techniques.

While learning from the classics, he also developed a new approach different from existing painting schools. This was a strategy typical of emerging *ukiyo-e* artists. Particularly distinctive are his wide-ranging subject matters, mixing the refined and the popular, and his eclectic techniques that used a cross-section of styles from painting schools modeled on Japanese, Chinese, Western, and other styles. He depicted not only classical subjects but also hedonistic scenes of, for example, kabuki and brothels, regarded as the two major “places of evil” (*nidai akusho* 二大悪所), and gained a reputation for capturing the urban, pleasure-seeking worldview of the time. Taking spots like Nakanochō 仲之町 (the Yoshiwara 吉原 red-light district) as a theme was a novel endeavor. This can be seen in the poetry line “Nakanochō, not depicted in the Kanō family or Tosa” (Kanoke ni mo Tosa ni mo kakanu Nakanochō 狩野家にも土佐にも画ぬ仲の町) found in the mid-to-late Edo period *senryū* 川柳 poem collection *Haifū yanagi daru* 俳風柳多留 (51 volumes).<sup>3</sup> In the realm of traditional *meishō-e* 名所絵 (paintings of famous places of interest), artists of the time gained the favor of commoners by following the standard style of drawing from *waka* poems and famous anecdotes to depict emotion-

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<sup>3</sup> See Screech/Sukurichi, “Füzokuga,” p. 153.



filled scenes while incorporating the latest information useful for travel and daily life.

I hold that Hokusai's masterpiece *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* (Fugaku sanjūrokkei 富嶽三十六景) is also an example of the *yamato-e* tradition being combined with the innovation of ukiyo-e. Its popularity—an unprecedented blockbuster hit—was also boosted by social conditions such as the popularity of travel and Mt. Fuji religious beliefs and practices. For Hokusai, it must have been a milestone in his artistic career as he entered his seventies.

As *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* uses Prussian blue and perspective reminiscent of copperplate engraving, scholarship has mainly discussed the influence of painting styles of the west. However, it also bears the Rinpa school's influence, as I have discussed in previous articles.<sup>4</sup> This paper focuses on the background to the production of the series's three most famous prints—"Fine Wind, Clear Morning" (Gaifū kaisei 凱風快晴; **Fig. 2**), "Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit" (Sanka hakuu 山下白雨), and "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" (Kanagawa oki nami-ura 神奈川沖浪裏)—and examines Hokusai's use of his beloved Rinpa school, especially the images by Kōrin that were popular the latter half of the Edo period. Having done so, I will then consider, using *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, both the traditional painting qualities that Hokusai sought out and the innovative nature of ukiyo-e.

### **1. Katsushika Hokusai's Artistic Career and the Edo Rinpa School**

Katsushika Hokusai (**Fig. 5**) was born in Hōreki 宝暦 10 (1760) in Warigesui 割下水, located in the Honjo 本所 area of Edo (now Kamezawa 亀沢, Sumida-ku 墨田区, Tokyo). His family name was Nakajima 中島, his childhood name was Tokitarō 時太郎, his common name was Tetsuzō 鉄蔵, and he was also called Miuraya Hachiemon 三浦屋八右衛門. As described in his biography *Katsushika Hokusai den* 葛飾北斎伝 by Iijima Kyoshin 飯島虚心 (1893), Hokusai is said to have moved ninety-three times, changed his name more than thirty times, and used more than 120 artist names. During the Bunsei 文政 period (1818–30), the last years of his life, he was seen as someone always seeking change. He used the pen name Fusenkyo 不染居, meaning "not habituated to any abode."

His highly varied artistic style was another reflection of Hokusai's refusal to become stagnant. Research on him often discusses his taste for the foreign. In addition to the techniques of the Kanō school, Tsutsumi 堤 school, and other *kanga* schools, he was well-versed in the Western-style artistic expressions popular in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He was skilled in realistic works that used, for example, perspective and shadow techniques. On the other hand, there is little research on Hokusai's study of *yamato-e*,

<sup>4</sup> See Fujisawa, "Katsushika Hokusai" and Fujisawa, "Ukiyo-e ni okeru yamato-e to Rinpa juyō."

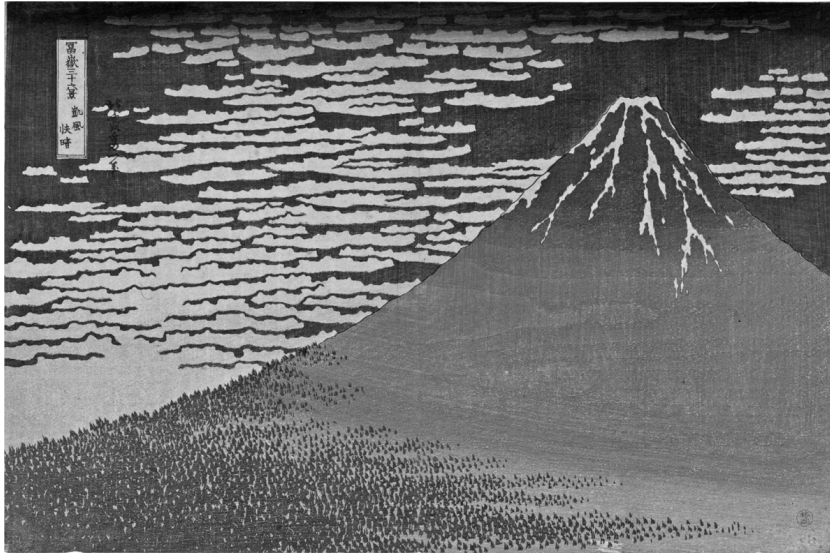


Fig. 2 Hokusai's "Fine Wind, Clear Morning" (Katsushika, "Fugaku sanjūrokkei: Gaifū kaisei").



Fig. 3 Hokusai's "Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit" (Katsushika, "Fugaku sanjūrokkei: Sanka hakuu"). Cropped by the author.

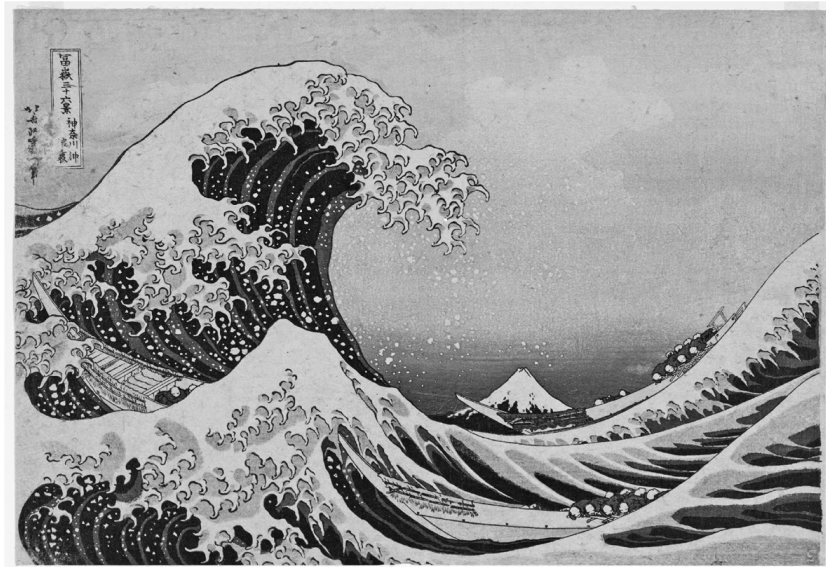


Fig. 4 Hokusai's "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" (Katsushika, "Fugaku sanjūrokkei: Kanagawa oki nami-ura"). Cropped by the author.



Fig. 5 Katsushika Hokusai (Iijima, *Katsushika Hokusai den*).

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and that which does exist tends to concentrate on the period from his mid-thirties, when he took the name Sōri. A closer look at the artist's career reveals that works from his fifties and later also reflect the motifs and stylized quality of the Rinpa school. Below, I will discuss in some detail the influence of *yamato-e* paintings, especially the Edo Rinpa school, on Hokusai's works during the second half of his life.

The Rinpa school, or Rinpa style of painting, began with Tawaraya Sōtatsu 俵屋宗達 (dates unknown) and Hon'ami Kōetsu 本阿弥光悦 (1558–1637), *yamato-e* style painters active in Kyoto at the beginning of the early modern period. Their aesthetic sense, characterized by simplified motifs and colorful renderings against the backdrop of Kyoto's elegant culture, was passed on indirectly, with painters, such as Ogata Kōrin 尾形光琳 (1658–1716), modeling their styles on Rinpa painters they admired. Kōrin, related to Kōetsu and born to one of Kyoto's leading kimono merchants, Kariganeya 雁金屋, had a particularly outstanding stylized aesthetic.

After going to Edo in Hōei 宝永 1 (1704) on the advice of Nakamura Kuranosuke 中村内蔵助, a Ginza official, Kōrin would often reside in Edo. Kyoto's cutting-edge art culture fascinated Edo's cultured people; his younger brother Kenzan 乾山, a potter, also moved his base of operations to Edo in his later years. Even after Kōrin's death in Shōtoku 正徳 6 (1716), his highly stylized approach (referred to as Kōrin *moyō* 光琳模様) spread, was incorporated into clothing and crafts, and came to be honored by painters in the early nineteenth century. The first of these was Sakai Hōitsu 酒井抱一 (1761–1829), who studied Kōrin while in Edo. Kōrin was closely connected to Hōitsu's birth family. Tadataka 忠孝 (1648–1720), the fifth generation of the Sakai family, the Maebashi 前橋 domain lords, was one of Kōrin's prominent patrons.

In recent years, the successors of the Rinpa school in Edo have been classified as the “Edo Rinpa” to distinguish them from those in Kyoto. Hōitsu is regarded as the founder of the Edo Rinpa school, and while he admired Kōrin, his style was more realistic and refined. Tamamushi Satoko 玉蟲敏子 notes that the information that did exist regarding Sōtatsu, Kōrin, and Kenzan in the mid-eighteenth century was fragmentary and connected to the Edo poet coterie (Edoza 江戸座), a group that was in turn linked to upper-class warrior society and brothels.<sup>5</sup> Hōitsu was born in Edo as a son of the Sakai family, daimyo known for their sophistication. He skillfully combined the tastes of the feudal lords with the trends of the common people, as evidenced by the fact that he published comic tanka under the name Shiriyaake no Sarundo 尻焼猿人 (“Monkey-person with a burning butt”) and actively interacted with townspeople.

As a young man, Hōitsu is said to have been trained by Toyoharu 豊春 (1735–1814),

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<sup>5</sup> See Tamamushi, *Ikitsuzukeru Kōrin*, p. 25.

the founder of the Utagawa 歌川 school of ukiyo-e artists, and honed his skills by working on *bijinga* 美人画, or beautiful women paintings. In the Kansei period (1789–1801), however, Hōitsu, who, as mentioned above, came from a warrior-class family, withdrew from the “vulgar” culture of the common people, partly due to the influence of reforms by *rōjū* 老中 (shogunate elder) Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信, and turned his attention to the style of Kōrin, of which the Sakai family had been a patron. In Bunka 文化 10 (1813), Hōitsu created “Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu” 緒方流略印譜, a single sheet (*ichimai zuri* 一枚摺) bringing together the signatures, seals, and biographies of Sōtatsu, Kōrin, and others, and then in Bunka 12 (1815), the one-hundredth anniversary of Kōrin’s death, published a booklet version (using the Chinese characters 尾形 for Ogata), in which he refers to the line from Sōtatsu and Kōetsu to Kōrin, Kenzan, et al. as the “Ogata lineage.” He also held an exhibition to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Kōrin’s death and was involved in its catalogue (*Kōrin hyakuzu* 光琳百図; **Fig. 6.1**), promoting research on Kōrin and positioning himself as the successor of this lineage.

On the other hand, Hokusai, who was of the same generation as Hōitsu (one year older), became a disciple of the ukiyo-e artist Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章 (1743?–92) around An’ei 安永 7 (1778), and took the name Shunrō 春朗. He created prints of actors (*yakusha-e* 役者絵) and the like but left this school after Shunshō’s death. In his mid-thirties, Hokusai used the name “Sōri” from Kansei 6 (1794) to the autumn of Kansei 10 (1798). This name came from Tawaraya Sōri 俵屋宗理 (dates unknown), a mid-Edo period *mach-eshi* 町絵師 (painters who did not work for the shogunate) who created

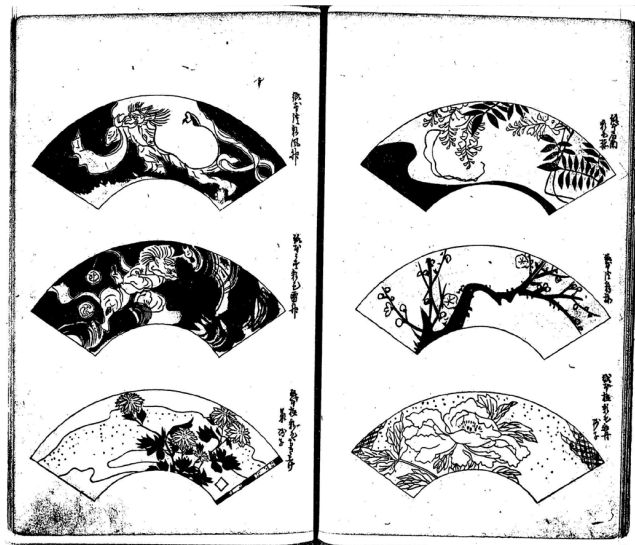


Fig. 6.1 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 24.



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Kōrin-style works. This basically coincides with the period when Hōitsu turned his attention to the style of Kōrin.

The *Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu* booklet compiled by Hōitsu describes Tawaraya Sōri as follows: “Took the name Tawaraya. At first a student of Sumiyoshi Hiromori 住吉広守, later painting in the style of Kōrin. A person of the Meiwa 明和 [1764–1772] and An'ei years [1772–1781].” This suggests a temporal gap existed between when Tawaraya Sōri was active and when Hokusai took the name Sōri. The nature of their relationship is still unclear. Sōri had close ties to *haikai* 俳諧 poetry, so it has been suggested that the *haikai* network connected them.<sup>6</sup> In the section on Shunrō (Hokusai) in *Ukiyo-e ruikō* 浮世絵類考 (Ebian 曳尾庵 version, created between Bunsei 文政 2 [1819] and Bunsei 4 [1821], Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 writes, “. . . Changed his name from Katsukawa to Kusamura Shunrō 叢春朗, and thereafter followed in Tawaraya Sōri's footsteps to become the second generation Sōri. Later, for certain reasons, he returned the name to the family head and changed his to Hokusai Tokimasa . . .”

In this period, Hokusai, unlike other ukiyo-e artists, turned away from *nishiki-e* production and worked on comic tanka and *haikai*-related *surimono* 摺物 (privately-commissioned woodblock prints) and publications. He also mass-produced beautiful women paintings, such as “Sōri bijin” 宗理美人, which featured slender limbs, developing a different style of painting. In the private publications Hokusai made at the time, such as picture calendars (*e-goyomi* 絵暦) and comic tanka picture-centered books, he copied Rinpa school works while using two signature-seals: “Hokkyō 法橋 Sōtatsu's Image, Copied by Sawara Sōri” and “Hokkyō Kōrin's Image, Copied by Hokusai Sōri.” Some of his students, such as Rinsai Sōji 琳齋宗二 and Jutei Sōbyaku 寿亭宗百, created works in the style of the Rinpa school.<sup>7</sup> In this way, from the second half of the eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth century, when Hokusai was active, Rinpa school and ukiyo-e artists interacted with and strongly influenced each other in the Edo art world.<sup>8</sup>

### 2. Hokusai and Carrying on Korin's Images

It appears that there were at least two periods in Hokusai's life when he actively drew closer to the Rinpa school. The first was his three-year Sōri period beginning in Kansei 6 (1794), and the second was late in the Bunka years (1804–1818), when Hōitsu and others began to honor Kōrin. The exhibition of Kōrin's works at a temple in Negishi 根岸

<sup>6</sup> See Nagata, “Hokusai no gagyō to kenkyū kadai.”

<sup>7</sup> See Itō, *Hokusai to Sōri-ha*.

<sup>8</sup> There is also a case of an Edo Rinpa and ukiyo-e painter being related: the daughter of Suzuki Kiitsu 鈴木其一 (1796-1858), a disciple of Hōitsu, and Kawanabe Kyōsai 河鍋暁斎 (1831-89), a member of the Utagawa school, were married.



in Bunka 12 (1815), the hundredth anniversary of his death, led to a renewed awareness of Kōrin in Edo. Hokusai probably also came into contact with and was strongly influenced by Kōrin's aesthetic sense during this time. The first volume of the exhibition catalogue *Kōrin hyakuzu* was published around Bunka 12 (1815), and the second in Bunsei 9 (1826). This book, which contains many of Kōrin's major works, became a textbook for studying the Rinpa school and has been used in various fields up to today.

On the other hand, the year before this exhibition, Hokusai published *Hokusai manga* 北斎漫画, the ukiyo-e print book that became the biggest hit of his life. Earlier, around Bunka 7 (1810), he began working on publishing the likes of modelbooks (*edehon* 絵手本) and woodblock printed novels (*yomihon* 読本) under the name Taito 載斗. *Zōho ukiyo-e ruikō* 増補浮世絵類考 (ed. by Saitō Gesshin 斎藤月岑, intro. written in Tenpō 天保 15 [1844]) highlights Hokusai's great influence on the publishing world: "His art style is not the ordinary, for example *nishiki-e* and *kusazōshi* 草双紙. He created and published many embroidered portraits and woodblock-printed novel illustrations. This person greatly opened up the genre of illustrated woodblock printed novels."

The first volume of *Hokusai manga* was compiled and published by Eirakuya Tōshirō 永楽屋東四郎, a publisher in Owari 尾張, based on preliminary sketches Hokusai made during a stay at the residence of his student and Owari domain retainer Maki Bokusen 牧墨僊宅. The series, which contains fifteen volumes with an enormous number of images, said to total about 39,000, continued to be published even after Hokusai's death. Even outside of Japan, it has earned high acclaim, for example being used as a design collection. The images range from familiar objects such as people, plants, animals, landscapes, and houses to supernatural, otherworldly beings. They are truly comprehensive. We could call it a data collection of Hokusai the painter. It also covers a wide range of subjects from various schools, including those of *yamato-e* and *kanga*.

Among the many motifs preferred by the Rinpa school, it is interesting that Hokusai favored that of the wind and thunder gods and included it in this book. The third volume of *Hokusai manga*, published around Bunka 12 (1815), includes two large spreads of the wind god and thunder god (**Fig. 7**). These two gods, represented heroically as attendants of the thousand-armed Kannon 観音, were a subject used by Kōrin and painters of the Edo Rinpa school ever since Tawaraya Sōtatsu. They have a reputation as a typical subject of the Rinpa school. Notably, in that year, the one-hundredth anniversary of Kōrin's death, Hokusai greatly focused on iconography symbolic of the Rinpa school. Miniatures of fans depicting these two gods can also be found in the second part of the first volume of *Kōrin hyakuzu*, published in the same year (**Fig. 6.2**). In the final illustration of the

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Fig. 6.2 Miniatures of fans depicting the wind god and thunder god (Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 24). Cropped by the author.

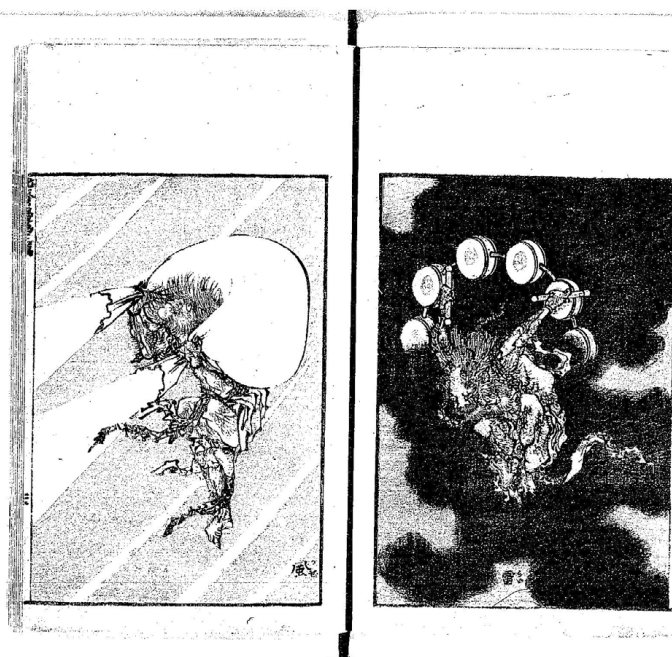


Fig. 7 Katsushika's "Wind God and Thunder God" (Katsushika, *Hokusai manga*, frame 27).

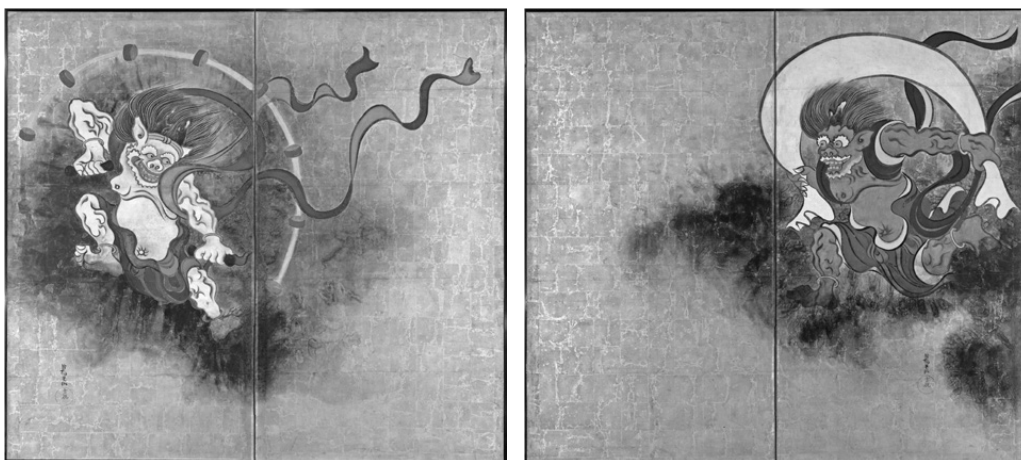


Fig. 8 Copy of Tawaraya Sōtatsu's wind and thunder gods folding screen (Ogata, "Fūjin raijin zu byōbu"). Cropped by the author.

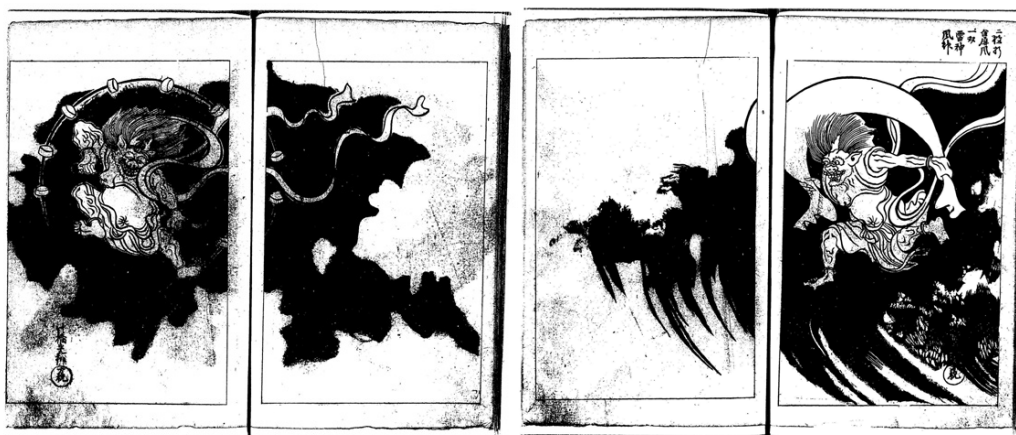


Fig. 9 Miniature of Fig. 8 (Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frames 81–82).

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second part of the second volume of the same book, published eleven years later in Bunka 12 (1815), a miniature (**Fig. 9**) of a copy (**Fig. 8**) of Tawaraya Sōtatsu's wind and thunder gods folding screen that is held by Kenninji 建仁寺, appears. (Both the copy and original are titled "Fūjin raijin zu byōbu" 風神雷神図屏風 in Japanese). Hōitsu, who was involved in the compilation of *Kōrin hyakuzu*, must have also thought that this famous work was appropriate for its final image, a tribute to Kōrin's great achievements.

Incidentally, in 1915, another one hundred years later, the department store Mitsukoshi Gofukuten 三越呉服店 held an exhibition of Kōrin's works to mark the two hundredth anniversary of his death. Hōitsu's various activities honoring Kōrin left an indelible mark on representation culture in the late Edo period and connected this legacy to the reception of Kōrin in the modern era.

### ***3. Korin's Images in Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji***

In the early Tenpō years (1830–1844), when Hokusai had just entered his seventies, he began publishing *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, which would become his major work. Due to popular demand, he added ten more images, resulting in a grand series of forty-six. Hokusai offers richly varied depictions of Mt. Fuji, a sacred mountain that sits in the landscapes of provinces from Hitachi 常陸 (present-day Ibaraki) in the east to Owari (present-day Aichi) in the west.

Behind the series's success were various techniques to engage Edo's townspeople, its primary target. By including the names of places in subtitles, it functioned as a set of traditional "paintings of famous places of interest" (*meisho-e*) and also provided travel information sought by people living in urban areas. He chose a variety of compositions, trying to keep viewers interested. Therefore, there are almost none for which the place is unclear or that give a similar impression. The two exceptions are "Fine Wind, Clear Morning" (Fig. 2) and "Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit" (**Fig. 3**). In both cases, no place names in the subtitle or objects in the paintings make the location clear. There is no way to identify any specific area. Above all, their bold arrangement, with a large Mt. Fuji comprising two-thirds of the image (known as "Red Fuji" and "Black Fuji," respectively), gives a strong impression of the mountain's rocky surface and is distinctly different from that of other works in the series. For the below reasons, I presume these images, which have much in common, were created as a pair.

The subject of "Fine Wind, Clear Morning" is the gentle wind blowing from the south, and the contrast between the reddish mountain surface and the blue sky makes this clear-sky morning scene even more appealing. In contrast, "Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit" depicts Mt. Fuji receiving a heavy evening shower. The black foot of the mountain is lit by a stylized lightning flash, bringing sharp thunder to the viewer's mind. The combination of natural phenomena such as wind and lightning with the deified Mt.



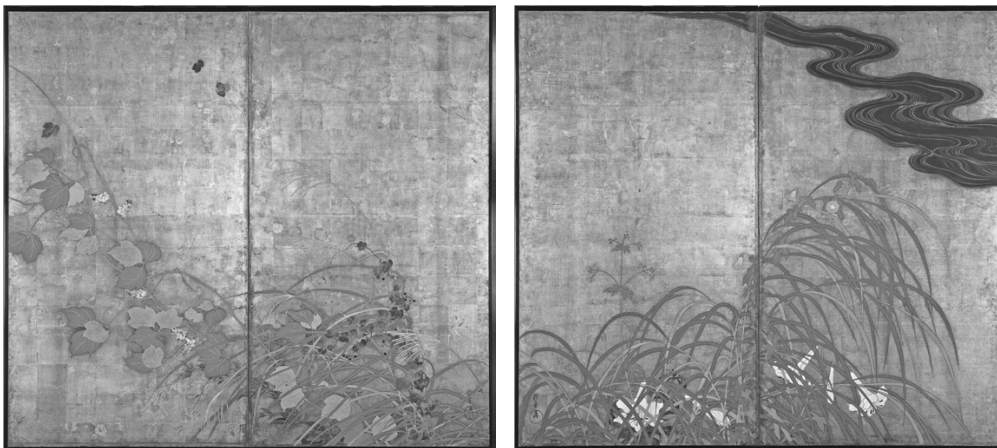


Fig. 10 Sakai, “Natsu aki kusa zubyōbu.” Cropped by the author.

Fuji aligns with the idea of the wind and thunder gods image.

Of note here is Hōitsu’s famous folding screen masterpiece, “Flowering Plants of Summer and Autumn” (Natsu aki kusa zubyōbu 夏秋草図屏風; Fig. 10). On the right screen are summer plants after rain, and on the left screen are autumn plants swaying in the wind. According to a piece of paper attached to its preliminary painting (*shita-e* 下絵), it was commissioned around Bunsei 4 (1821) by Hitotsubashi Harusada 一橋治済, the father of the eleventh shogun Tokugawa Ienari 徳川家斉 and head of the Hitotsubashi family. While this piece was divided into two folding screens in 1974 for conservation reasons, originally it was found on the back side of Kōrin’s aforementioned “Wind God and Thunder God” (Fig. 9), with the autumn plants swaying in the wind behind the wind god, and the summer plants wet with rainwater behind the thunder god. These gods had been placed amidst a natural setting typical of Hōitsu. Replacing the gorgeous gold background favored by Sōtatsu and Kōrin with an austere silver ground and switching gods with familiar plants is exactly the *mitate* style found in the ukiyo-e and *haikai* that Hōitsu was familiar with.

Hokusai’s “Fine Wind, Clear Morning” and “Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit” are not as clear-cut a *mitate* as this Hōitsu masterpiece. I think that Hokusai adopted an Edo *haikai*-style approach that would be understood by those in the know. *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* has several other playful features. For example, in “Reflection in Lake at Misaka in Kai Province” (Kōshū Misaka suimen 甲州三坂水面), which depicts the actual Mt. Fuji in the summer with a winter Mt. Fuji reflected upside-down on Lake Kawaguchi’s surface. It is like trick art. These touches attracted buyers of the series, preventing them from getting bored. Although there is a gap of about ten years between this work and the

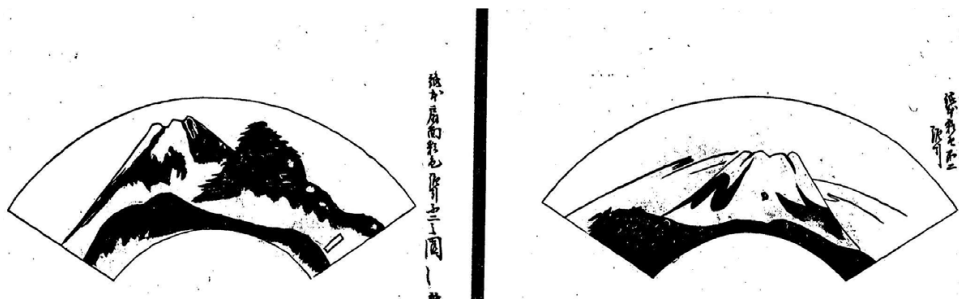


Fig. 11 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 22. Cropped by the author.

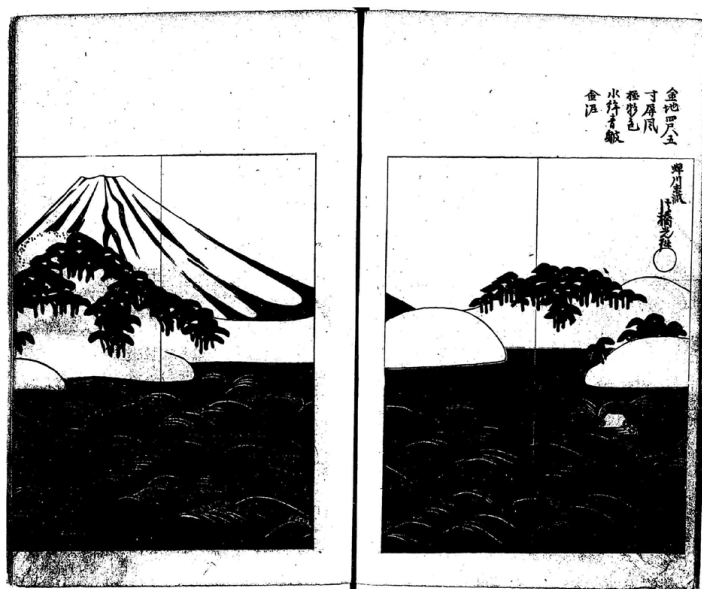


Fig. 12 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 74.



completion of “Flowering Plants of Summer and Autumn,” interestingly Hōitsu, who was Kōrin’s greatest champion, and Hokusai, who was a great admirer of the Rinpa school, appear to have been working on their pieces at about the same time in Edo with similar ideas.

Incidentally, Mt. Fuji images are included in *Kōrin hyakuzu*. The second part of the first volume includes a pair of fans with large images of the mountain (**Fig. 11**). The similarly bold Mt. Fuji in an image in the second part of the second volume (**Fig. 12**) is also eye-catching, but this was originally a pair of six-panel screens, and, to fit the ukiyo-e print book format, only four panels from the right are shown, resulting in Mt. Fuji occupying a greater proportion of space than in the original. In addition, the existence of a pair of folding screens with an image similar to this one on the right screen and “Matsushima” (Matsushima zu byōbu 松島図屏風; **Fig. 15**; described below) on the left screen has been reported in recent years.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps Kōrin-derived images were the source of the bold compositional ideas seen in *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*’s “Fine Wind, Clear Morning” and “Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit,” as well as the source of the stylized waves, discussed in the next section, found in “The Great Wave off Kanagawa.”

#### **4. The Reception of the Japanese-Chinese-Western Mix Found in *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji***

At the end of the *gōkanbon* 合巻本 *Shōhon jitate* 正本製 (pub. Tenpō 2 [1831]), there is an advertisement by Nishimura Eijudō 西村永寿堂, the publisher of *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*:

*Thirty-six views of Mt. Fuji*, by Iitsu 為一, formerly Hokusai. Single *aizuri* 藍摺 sheets. Each sheet features one view. To be released gradually. These pictures show that Fuji’s shape varies depending on where it is seen. For example, its shape as seen from the beach Shichirigahama 七里ヶ浜 and the view from the island Tsukudajima 佃島 show that all are not the same. This is useful for those studying landscapes. If he continues to carve such [prints], there will be even more than one hundred. Not limited to thirty-six.

*Aizuri* indicates that the images used Prussian Blue, the latest synthetic dye, at the time referred to as *Berurin burū* ベルリンブルー or, more commonly, *bero-ai* ベロ藍. The compositions also extensively use Western-style perspective, so they have usually been regarded as pronounced examples of Hokusai’s taste for the exotic. However, as I have

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<sup>9</sup> Kobayashi, *Kōrin, Fuji o egaku!*

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discussed, this series makes great use of *yamato-e*-like style and techniques.

For example, consider “The Great Wave off Kanagawa” (**Fig. 4**), one of the three major prints in the series. This piece has a calculated, multilayered structure, with medium-sized waves in the very near distance, behind them large waves and small express delivery boats called *oshiokuribune* 押送り舟 floating among the waves, and a small Mt. Fuji in the far distance. A similar composition can be seen in “Express Delivery Boats Rowing through Waves” (Oshi okuri hatôtsūsen no zu おしをくりはとうつうせん のづ) (**Fig. 13.1**), one of a series of works from the early Bunka years (1804–1818) during Hokusai's prime. The distinctive line drawings, which imitate Western copperplate print techniques, also feature alphabet-like characters in the upper right (**Fig. 13.2**), but if you change the angle, you can see that they are kana: “Oshi okuri hatôtsūsen no zu Hokusai Ekaku” (おしをくりはとうつうせん のづ ほくさいえかく). Hokusai's elegant attention to detail, despite his dynamic style, shows his skillful blending of Japanese and Western cultures.

On the other hand, the dynamic waves completely covering the picture follow the rich renderings of waves found, for example, in the bold compositions “Rough Waves” (Hatōzu byōbu 波濤図屏風; **Fig. 14**) and “Matsushima” (**Fig. 15**), which were published in the second volume of the follow-up installment (*zokuhen* 続編) of *Kōrin hyakuzu*, as well as in “The Immortal Qin Gao (Kinkō)” (*Kinkō sennin zu* 琴高仙人図). A fan painting that combines a boat and person in the waves (**Fig. 17**) overlaps with the concept of “The Great Wave off Kanagawa” (Fig. 4), which, as mentioned, also depicts people in the waves rowing *oshiokuribune*.

Hokusai's *Imayō sekkin hiinagata* 今様櫛さん雛形, published in Bunsei 文政 6 (1823), the year after the publication of the second part of *Kōrin hyakuzu*, contains both designs with connections to Kōrin's images as well as several works that foreshadow the appearance of *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* during the early Tenpō years (1830–1844)<sup>10</sup>. This book is a collection of practical designs for everyday items such as combs and tobacco pipes. It is an outstanding example of Hokusai's excellent sense of design. The cleanly stylized renderings in the comb design “Large Waves, Small Waves” (Tōnami, sazanami とうなみ・さざなみ; **Fig. 18**) is reminiscent of Kōrin-style waves. The idea of “Summer Mt. Fuji, The Back of Mt. Fuji, Winter Mt. Fuji, Daybreak Mt. Fuji” (Natsu no Fuji, Ura Fuji, Fuyu no Fuji, Yoake no Fuji なつのふじ・うらふじ・ふゆのふじ・よあけのふじ; **Fig. 19**), which depicts the mountain at different times and from different places during the seasons, was a precursor to the composition of the *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* series.

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<sup>10</sup> See Fujisawa, “Hokusai o aruku.”

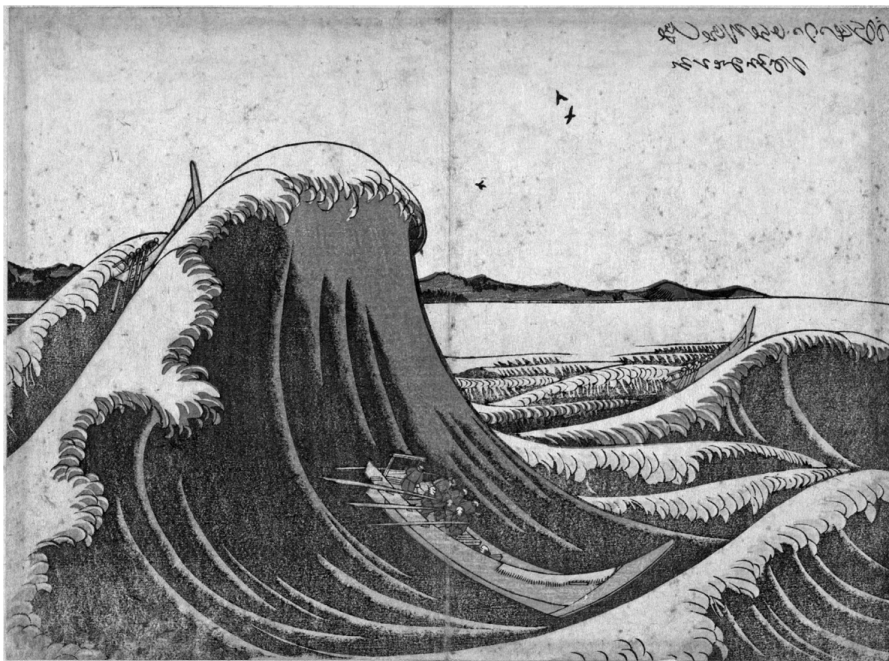


Fig. 13.1 Katsushika, “Oshi okuri hatôtsūsen no zu.” Cropped by the author.

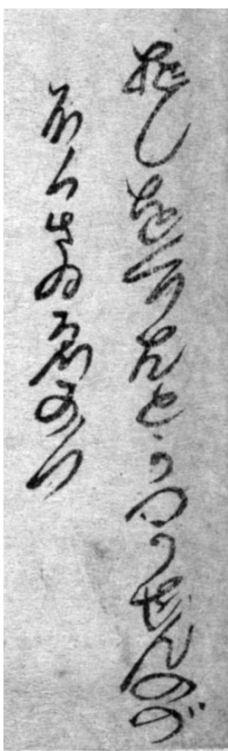


Fig. 13.2 Katsushika, “Oshi okuri hatôtsūsen no zu.” Cropped by the author.

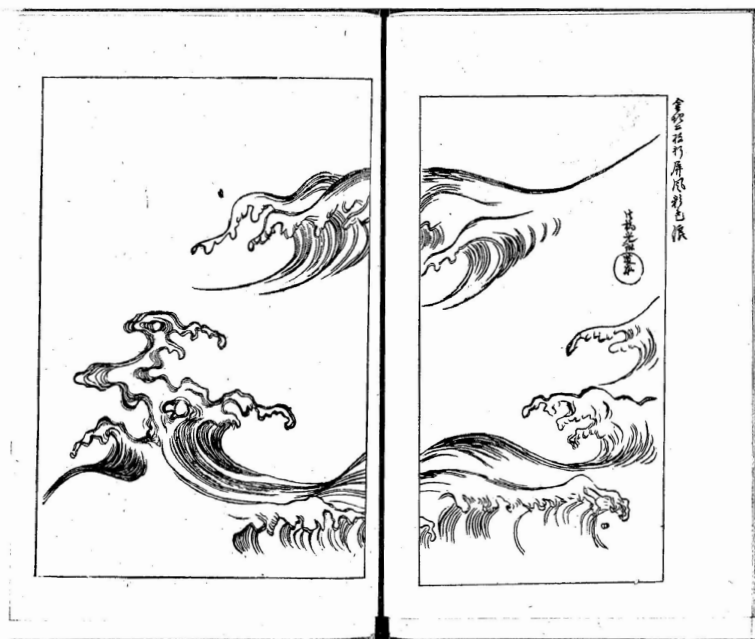


Fig. 14 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu zenpen*, frame 28.



Fig. 15 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 73.



Fig. 16 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu zenpen*, frame 11. Cropped by the author.

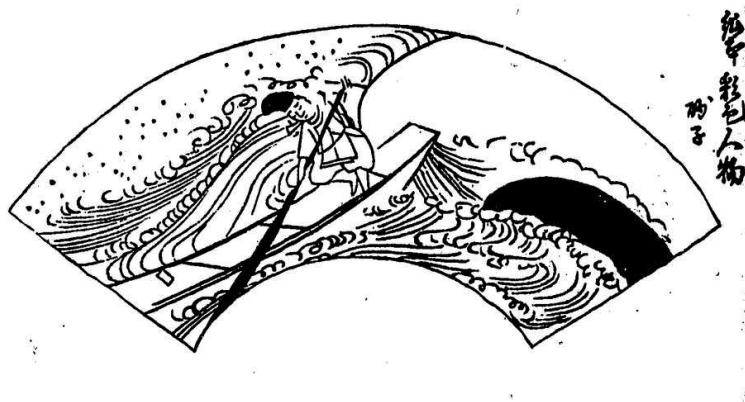


Fig. 17 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 26. Cropped by the author.



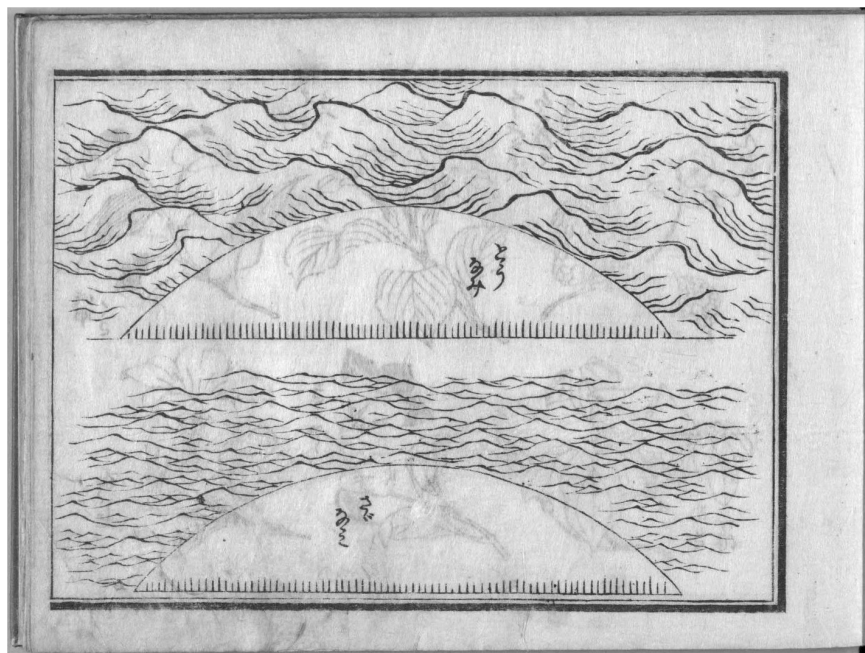


Fig. 18 Katsushika Hokusai Issei, *Imayō sekkin hiinagata*, frame 26. Cropped by the author.

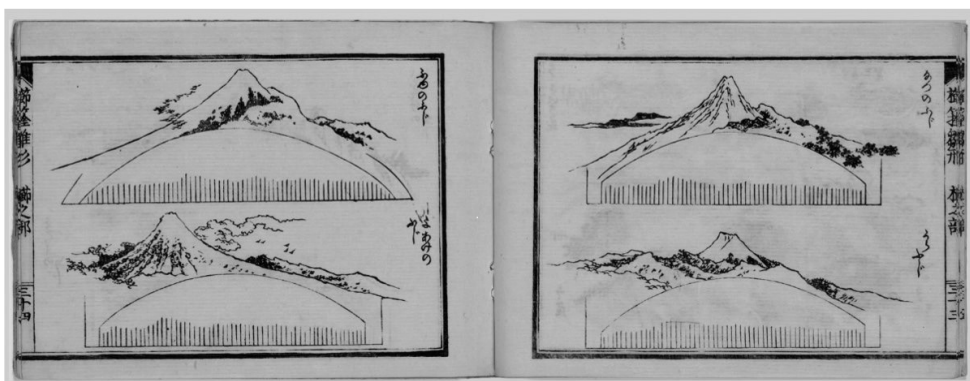


Fig. 19 Katsushika Hokusai, *Imayō sekkin hiinagata*.



Returning again to *Kōrin hyakuzu*, one notices that the bold composition of the pair of fans depicting Mt. Fuji (Fig. 11) and the delicate renderings of waves (Fig. 17) are similar to these comb designs by Hokusai. As a designer, Hokusai must have looked up to the style of Kōrin (also a talented crafts designer), particularly the examples he had set with his Mt. Fuji and wave motifs. The Rinpa school images inherited by Hokusai were transmitted through his works to many of his students and followers. Perhaps we could say that this was typical way to disseminate the Rinpa school—painters modeling their styles on the school’s artists they admired.

### **Conclusion**

Below is the postscript to Hokusai’s Tenpō 5 (1834) *Fugaku hyakkei* 富嶽百景 (One hundred views of Mt. Fuji). This ukiyo-e print book was produced in response to the popularity of *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, and Hokusai included a reflection on his seventy-year career entitled “Seventy-five Years Old” (Shichi jū go sai 七十五齡):

From the age of six years old, I had the habit of sketching the shapes of things, and from around fifty years old, I made many pictures of things, but none of my depictions before seventy deserve attention. At the age of seventy-three, I awoke somewhat to the anatomy of birds, beasts, bugs, and fish, and the formation of plants. Therefore, at the age of eighty, I will progress more and more, and at the age of ninety, I will master the depths, and at the age of one hundred years, will I not have reached the divinely profound? Well into my hundreds, it will be as if each dot and line is alive. I hope the ruler of long life will see that my words are not deluded. Written by Gakyō Rōjin Manji 画狂老人己 [“The Old Man Mad for Pictures”]

Here, Hokusai states that the ages of six, fifty, and seventy have been turning points in his career and that works made before the age of seventy are insignificant. What is particularly noteworthy is his statement “At the age of seventy-three, I awoke somewhat to the anatomy of birds, beasts, bugs, and fish, and the formation of plants.” He was seventy-three years old (per the traditional East Asian age reckoning system; same below) in Tenpō 3 (1832), about the time when the publication of the *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* was nearing its end. We can infer that for Hokusai, this series was the culmination of his career. Hokusai’s declaration that he will continue to devote himself to his art until he is over one hundred years old, even though he is seventy-five, shows that he still had an

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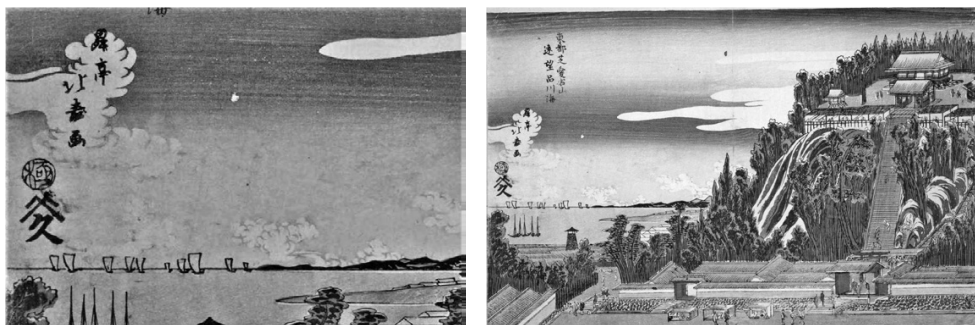


Fig. 20 Shōtei, *Tōto shiba atagoyama enbō shinagawakai zu*.

insatiable drive to explore.

Iijima Kyoshin, in his aforementioned biography, depicts Hokusai on his deathbed as follows: “Facing death, the old man took a deep breath and said, ‘Heaven, if you extend my life by ten years . . .’ Pausing, he then said, ‘Heaven, if you ensure me five more years of life, I can become a true master of art.’ With those final words, he passed away.” At the age of ninety, Hokusai wished for another ten, or at least five, years, to become a true painter. In other words, he wanted to further improve his artistic skills. Hokusai always favored change and innovation, and, as mentioned earlier, it appears that at the root of his love of this was his “Fusenkyo” mindset—his dislike of being colored by one single hue. As discussed in this article, the core of Hokusai’s innovative activities was always traditional *yamato-e* techniques and style.

Looking again at the three major works in *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, one notices that the clouds in each are distinctive. The ornate cirrocumulus clouds of “Fine Wind, Clear Morning” recall the horizontal bands of mist, referred to as *suyarigasumi* すやり霞, in picture scrolls and other works of *yamato-e*. The rounded nimbostratus clouds in “Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit” are often used in *kanga* dragon cloud and other paintings, and are rarely found in ukiyo-e. The billowing cumulonimbus clouds depicted in “The Great Wave off Kanagawa” are of the same shape as the Western-style *nishiki-e* (Fig. 20) created by Hokusai and his pupil Shōtei Hokuju 昇亭北寿 (1763–1824?) with copperplate engraving techniques in mind. Even just looking at a single part of these paintings, clouds, it can be seen that they are carefully depicted in different ways. Hokusai aimed to fuse the different qualities of Japanese, Chinese, and Western pictorial techniques. Hokusai’s use of the distorted images characteristic of Kōrin’s works and the unchanging theme of nature was an important element in achieving this goal. To avoid being colored by one hue, an unchanging core is necessary. Part of the reason why Hokusai is still so highly regarded in Japan and abroad today is probably due to his

careful study of the classics that supported his flexible thinking.

(Translated by Dylan L. Toda)

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