"Biography: Details Lacking": Reimaging Torii Kiyotsune as a Kibyōshi Artist

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“BIOGRAPHY: DETAILS LACKING”

REIMAGING TORII KIYOTSUNE AS A KIBYŌSHI ARTIST

A Thesis Presented

by

JASON L. HEUER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
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Japanese Language and Literature
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
“BIOGRAPHY: DETAILS LACKING”

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ABSTRACT

“BIOGRAPHY: DETAILS LACKING”
REIMAGING TORII KIYOTSUNE AS A KIBYŌSHI ARTIST

SEPTEMBER 2012

JASON HEUER, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

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In the late 18th century an artist named Torii Kiyotsune 鳥居清経 inherited and mastered a style of ukiyo-e that was soon to go out of fashion. Few of his prints survived and he left little impression on Japanese art history, despite his association with such a prominent school as the Torii. Yet the very association may have contributed to his obscurity. The assumption that Kiyotsune was primarily an ukiyo-e artist led to the overshadowing of his work in another arena, popular books known as kusazōshi. In fact he was quite prolific in that medium, illustrating over 130 kibyōshi, as well as works in other genres. Analysis of one of his kibyōshi, Kaminari no hesokuigane 雷之臍喰金, shows that there is still much to be learned about him and his contributions to early modern Japanese visual culture.

Through an analysis of Kaminari no hesokuigane this thesis also explores the unique set of characteristics that distinguishes kibyōshi from other forms of visual-verbal narratives such as comics or illustrated books. Moreover it argues that, despite their having served as cheap, disposable fiction in their time, kibyōshi can serve as an informative lens through which to examine how the ordinary inhabitants of Edo identified with their city, creating a culture of their own and developing the Edokko type that has survived into the modern era.
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INTRODUCTION

Student of Kiyomitsu, biography: details lacking.  
(Ukiyo-e Bikō 1898)

Appearing conspicuously small among the many other entries detailing prominent Edo period ukiyo-e artists, the above quote is the entire entry on Torii Kiyotsune 鳥居清経 in Umemoto Shōtarō’s Ukiyo-e Bikō 浮世絵備考. I first came across the name Kiyotsune as a credit for the images in a kibyōshi 黄表紙, Kaminari no hesokuigane 雷之臍喰金 (1779) that was sitting in a library collection unnoticed, miscataloged as a similarly titled work by Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九. In my relatively few years as a student of kibyōshi, certain names have repeatedly come up as the prominent figures in the genre. Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春町 is the pioneer of the genre, having created the first, Kinkin sensei eiga no yume 金々先生栄花夢; Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 is often regarded as the medium’s greatest master, and not undeservedly so; Ikku, though better known for his kokkeibon 滑稽本 titled Tōkaidōchū hizakurige 東海道中膝栗毛, has emerged as the prolific eccentric of the group; and Nansenshō Somahito 南柚笑 楚満人 brought vendettas the genre. While there were certainly many more artists who contributed to the medium, few of them had careers in kibyōshi that were much more than dabbling. That is exactly what I assumed Kiyotsune to be: an unremarkable ukiyo-e artist with an even less remarkable foray into kibyōshi.

1 Kiyomitsu no montei, sono den tsumabiraka narazu 清満の門弟、其詳ならず
2 Umemoto 1898.
3 Ikku’s work is titled Hesokurigane 腹繚金, a phrase which hesokuigane is a play on.
4 Literally (but misleadingly) translated as comic books, kokkeibon were humorous books that consisted mostly of text.
"Details lacking" became more or less a refrain in my initial research on Kiyotsune. Some sources provided him with an alternate name, Nakajima Daijirō 中島大次郎, but no works from the correct period are associated with that name. Nakajima was also the surname of his father, and therefore Daijirō is could plausibly have been Kiyotsune’s given name. Not much else is known about his life: his birth and death dates are not recorded, though he is usually described as being active in the mid- to late 18th century (Hôreki 宝暦 to An'ei 安永 eras; 1751-1781). The many books that cover the history of ukiyo-e give Kiyotsune little more than a mention, at best, if they give anything at all. An initial search seemed to confirm the hypothesis that he had led a career of little significance, with no great body of work to his credit. However, delving deeper into the details of his activities and trying to fill in the gaps revealed a much more interesting story.

The primary goal of this thesis is to start telling the rest of that story. The driving force behind this project is a translation of Kiyotsune’s Kaminari no hesokuiigane, a kibyōshi from An'ei 7/1778. The term kibyōshi, which literally means “yellow covers”, refers simply to that physical feature of the books, but the genre did have a specific set of characteristics. They were cheap and disposable woodblock-printed visual-verbal narratives produced from 1775 to 1806.5 The stories were printed in no more than three volumes, each containing around ten pages. Not only were they short, but they were also relatively easy reads, written mainly in phonetic kana script with few Chinese characters. This made them accessible to a wider readership than texts designed for the educated elite. They were generally humorous, frequently utilizing puns and fake etymologies for common phrases (kojitsuke 故事付け), but there were also vendetta tales (katakiuchi 敵討ち or adauchi 仇討ち), such as those by

Nansenshō. Some authors, such as Santō Kyōden, used the genre’s reputation for frivolous humor as a disguise for satire and political commentary, though not always successfully.

*Kibyōshi* can also be placed in the larger category of *kusazōshi*. In addition to *kibyōshi*, this encompasses *akahon* 赤本, *aohon* 青本, *kurohon* 黒本, and *gōkan* 合巻, which all share the same basic visual-verbal format, but vary somewhat in content and length. Some of the arguments I will be making about *kibyōshi* apply to these other genres. Scholars occasionally also use *kusazōshi* to refer specifically to *gōkan*, or consider *akahon*, *aohon*, and *kurohon* in their own category as early *kusazōshi*, but in this thesis I will be using *kusazōshi* in the broadest sense of all five genres.

The reason *Hesokuigane* is such a driving force behind this study of Kiyotsune is that the *kibyōshi* genre played a much more significant role in his career than his standard biography suggests. Chapter 1 of this thesis explores that significance. In order to establish context and to give a better understanding of how the current perception of Kiyotsune’s work came about, I provide some background on the Torii school of ukiyo-e artists. I then give an overview of Kiyotsune’s work in the *kibyōshi* genre to paint a fuller picture of who he was as an artist. In addition, I argue that Kiyotsune was more than just a passing figure in the genre, and that he deserves attention as one of its more prominent creators. This research into Kiyotsune as an artist represents the start of my own endeavors in art history. As such, this retelling of Kiyotsune’s story is meant as a beginning, not a final word on the subject.

The second and third chapters explore what can be gained from studying *kibyōshi* such as *Hesokuigane*. Chapter 2 presents an analysis of how the text-image relationship works in *kibyōshi* in contrast to other similar genres. I show that *kibyōshi* utilizes a form of visual-verbal narrative common to *kusazōshi* that cannot be lumped in with modern forms of
visual-verbal narratives, such as manga and comic books. To do this I examine the structure of *Hesokuigane*, along with two other Edo era texts, Kyōden’s *Edo umare uwaki no kabayaki* 江戸生艶気蒲焼 and Jippensha Ikku’s *Yakuhan* やくはん. I then contrast these premodern texts with examples of modern comics, such as *The Killing Joke* by Alan Moore and *The Sandman* by Neil Gaiman, and draw out the characteristics that set each genre apart.

Chapter 3 explores what can be learned about the cultural life of Edo from *kibyōshi*. I argue that there is value in examining *kibyōshi* because of their popularity, even though their status as popular works has diminished their study in the past. Labels aside, *kibyōshi* were undoubtedly appealing to and consumed by a significant portion of the Edo population. Because widespread literacy was relatively new outside the samurai and court classes, these types of popular Edo works brought a new perspective to literature in Japan. By examining significant recurring themes, we can develop a clearer picture of the people of Edo. Although *kibyōshi* often contain significant fantastical elements, one of the most popular themes was the very real city of Edo itself. While fictional works that depict the everyday world are by no means obligated to do so accurately, what can be drawn reliably from these texts are ideals. It is clear from numerous *kibyōshi* that the ordinary people of Edo had an idealized conception of their city that placed it at the top, with all other places below. I suggest that these works not only reflected and reinforced this ideal-self, but may have also been necessary for its creation.

A complete, annotated translation of *Hesokuigane* follows after the conclusion of my critical introduction.

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6 Although there are differences between Japanese manga and Western comic books, I refer to them both collectively as comic books because they are similar enough in the aspects with which I will be contrasting them with *kibyōshi* that differentiation will not be useful here.
CHAPTER 1

TORII KIYOTSUNE

Torii School Background

The first person in the Torii lineage to work as an artist was an onnagata 女形7 in an Osaka kabuki troupe, Torii Kiyomoto 鳥居清元. In 1691, he began producing some of the posters to promote their kabuki performances.8 None of his works are known to exist today and he may have been more hobbyist than professional artist. As such, it is often not him, but his successor who is given credit for truly starting the Torii school. This successor, his son Kiyonobu 清信 (1664-1729), was born in Osaka, but the family moved to Edo in 1687. It was there that Kiyonobu began his own career in kabuki posters, which were successful enough to bring prominence to the Torii name and secure the Torii school’s position as the official illustrators of Edo kabuki. The success of Kiyonobu’s posters allowed him to branch out into other genres.

Kiyonobu’s path into other genres was led by his exposure to the works of Hishikawa Moronobu 菱川師宣 (1618-16940), one of the formative figures in ukiyo-e. Under his influence, Kiyonobu began producing ichimai-e9 一枚絵 and was the first to use kabuki actors as subjects in such prints. By 1695, he had a monopoly on producing prints of the most popular actors.10 His connection to kabuki influenced not only his choice of subjects, but also his style. That style was markedly different from that of preceding painters. The images of

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7 Onnagata were male actors that specialized in playing female roles, as women were not allowed to act in kabuki through most of its history.
8 Neuer 1979, p. 29.
9 Ichimai-e literally translates single-sheet print, as opposed to books of prints.
10 Neuer 1979, 29.
kabuki artists were not only dramatic, but also stylized and exaggerated. Kiyonobu also produced works in other genres, including prints of courtesans and book illustrations.

The Torii were not only significant because of the popularity of their works, but also because of their direct participation in the continual evolution of ukiyo-e. The trend set by Kiyonobu’s actor prints, for example, became one of the most popular in ukiyo-e styles. More importantly, the Torii were involved in many of the technological advances in print-making, particularly in coloring. Kiyonobu was one of the first to produce the hand-colored beni-e 紅絵, named for the crimson-colored beni pigment they featured. This style of hand-coloring was expanded upon by artists such as Torii Kiyonobu II (active 1725-1760) in the form of urushi-e 漆絵. These prints utilized the hand-coloring of beni-e with other elements, such as brass dust, to create a look similar to that of lacquerware.

These color techniques were further developed by Torii Kiyomitsu (c. 1735-1785), one of the pioneers of benizuri-e 紅摺絵. These prints expanded on the limited pallet of beni-e and utilized as many as five colors, not including the basic black, per print. Moreover, benizuri-e color was printed rather than added by hand. In addition to the original woodblock that laid down the main image, additional blocks had to be carved for each color. This meant as many as six blocks per print. In the mid-to-late 18th century, this was the height of printing technology, and Kiyomitsu was one of its masters. His actor prints and bijin-ga 美人画 were some of the most popular of the genre and, for a time, he was one of the greatest ukiyo-e artists in Edo. It was he who taught Torii Kiyotsune. Although Kiyomitsu had other pupils, Kiyotsune followed most closely in his footsteps. As such, Kiyotsune was apparently

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11 Lane 1978, p. 59.
12 Pictures of beautiful women, one of the more popular subjects for ukiyo-e.
13 Stern 1969, p. 110.
destined to follow in his success. As Richard Lane suggests in *Images From the Floating World*, "At his finest, he was one of the great ukiyo-e masters of naive, effeminate delicacy…[his] prints greatly resemble those of his master, but the innocent frailty of his figures often saves him from the monotony of some of Kiyomitsu’s work."\(^{14}\) In other words, he had the potential to not only equal, but even surpass Kiyomitsu. His legacy was poised to be anything but ‘details lacking.’

Although the Torii were involved in many of the advances in ukiyo-e, there was one major limiting factor that prevented techniques from developing even further: money. As with many of the popular arts of the time, ukiyo-e were mass-produced, cheap, and disposable. Despite the often impressive results, budgets generally did not allow for sudden new extravagances in the production of individual prints. In order for ukiyo-e to truly advance to the next level, someone needed to put up some cash. That money did come, but its recipient was not the Torii. It was Suzuki Harunobu.

The details of Harunobu’s initial education in ukiyo-e are uncertain, but both the style and use of *benizuri* techniques in his early works clearly show the influence of Kiyomitsu and Kiyotsune. However, in the 1760s, a group of wealthy samurai aesthetes, who were dabblers in the world of ukiyo-e, decided to commission the production of some prints for New Year’s greeting cards. They went to Harunobu. Because of the group’s wealth, Harunobu was able to produce prints that cost around ten times as much as the typical *benizuri-e*.\(^{15}\) Some of the extravagances utilized in these prints were wood blocks made of more expensive cherry wood instead of catalpa, expensive pigments that produced more

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\(^{14}\) Lane 1978, p. 89.
\(^{15}\) Lane 1978, p. 99.
opaque prints, and the creation of as many as ten separate blocks per print.\textsuperscript{16} This new style was referred to as \textit{nishiki-e} 錦絵, or brocade prints.

Although the results of this new style of printing were impressive, it is important to note that in terms of printing technique, nothing was really new. These \textit{nishiki-e} were more or less big-budget \textit{benizuri-e}. There were, however, changes in style. While the trend set by the Torii of kabuki-influenced stylization had reigned over prints up to that point, the greater complexity of \textit{nishiki-e} prints enabled ukiyo-e to participate in the rising interest in realism, brought on by the influence of Western art and science.\textsuperscript{17} Gone, too, was the monopolization of ukiyo-e prints by images of popular figures like actors and notable Yoshiwara courtesans. Although Harunobu did produce plenty of prints of courtesans, his main focus was on the beauty of everyday life in Edo.\textsuperscript{18} This blend of colorful realism and interest in everyday people was an appealing combination, and \textit{nishiki-e} quickly became the new standard for ukiyo-e. Despite his former popularity and greatness, Kiyomitsu was soon overshadowed by Harunobu’s success, and Kiyotsune found himself the new master of an already outmoded style.

As quickly as Kiyotsune may have been forgotten by the world of ukiyo-e, the Torii school as a whole did not suffer the same fate of obscurity. Kiyomitsu had another student, Kiyonaga (1752-1815). Although he shared the same master as Kiyotsune, Kiyonaga did not follow in the same traditional Torii style. He learned as much from the work of Harunobu as he did from his own master. The style of his work puts the same emphasis on realism as some of Harunobu’s \textit{nishiki-e}. His realism was not only in the reduction of stylization and

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} An extensive exploration of the increased interest in realism and the influence of Western science can be found in Timon Screech’s \textit{The Lens Within the Heart}.
\textsuperscript{18} Lane 1978, p. 102.
exaggeration, but also in increased detail and more realistic integration of characters and backgrounds.\textsuperscript{19} Although Kiyonaga did reach a level of mastery of such realistic details, Lane concedes that what he gained in realism he sometimes lost in individuality in his characters.\textsuperscript{20} It is difficult to identify specific faults within his prints, but their overall effect can evidently be a bit boring.

Whatever deficiencies there may have been in some of his prints, Kiyonaga's prompt adoption and mastery of the realist trends were enough to make his work extremely popular. His success was such that Kiyomitsu named him the next head of the Torii school. Being the head of the school, Kiyonaga eventually had to put his print-work aside, in order to focus on making \textit{banzuke}.\textsuperscript{21} During his active years as an ukiyo-e artist, he produced a strong enough body of work that, to this day, he is regarded as one of the best of the Torii and one of the greats of ukiyo-e. Some of his prints have even been made into commemorative postage stamps. Considering that Kiyotsune had followed the traditions of the school so faithfully, one might speculate how disheartening it must have been to be so overshadowed by someone who left the schools traditions behind. Even if the relatively low volume of Kiyotsune’s work was simply the result of its unpopularity, one is left with the question of why he gave up, rather than changing with the times. Still, as tempting as these speculations may be, they leave an overly simplified impression of Kiyotsune as the loser in a competition between two styles of ukiyo-e. Moreover, saying that he failed as a print artist relies entirely on the assumption that ukiyo-e print artist is the appropriate descriptor for Kiyotsune’s career.

\textsuperscript{19} Lane 1978, p. 130.
\textsuperscript{20} Lane 1978, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Banzuke} are documents that list rankings, generally of \textit{sumō} wrestlers, but the format was also applied to other categories, such as kabuki actors.
Authorship of Kiyotsune's Work

Like many ukiyo-e artists in the 18th century, Kiyotsune also did book illustrations. In the Torii school, illustration goes back as far as Kiyonobu, with theater-related works such as his kyōgenbon 狂言本,22 Shusse Sumidagawa 出世隅田川 (1701) and Kokusen’ya kassen 国姓爺合戦 (1715).23 However, discussions of his work focus almost entirely on ukiyo-e, and not on books. It is the same for Kiyotsune. Mention of his work as a kusazōshi artist is often entirely left out of descriptions of his career.

The lack of emphasis on his kusazōshi work can be partially explained by the fact that these descriptions are all in books on the history of ukiyo-e or books created to accompany ukiyo-e collections. Most of the books that provide an overview of ukiyo-e history discuss the Torii school as significant contributors to the medium, but Kiyotsune is never more than a minor figure. Studies such as Julia Meech and Jane Oliver’s Designed for Pleasure, Sandy Kita’s Floating World of Ukiyo-e, and Yutaka Tazawa’s Biographical Dictionary of Japanese Art leave Kiyotsune out entirely. Others, such as Arthur Davidson Ficke’s Chats on Japanese Prints, Harold Stern’s Master Prints of Japan, and Laurance Roberts’ Dictionary of Japanese Artists do include some information about Kiyotsune. However, they all have the same few pieces of information: that he was the student of Kiyomitsu, the son of a banzuke publisher, and that he worked during the transition from benizuri-e to nishiki-e.

Though it is not always directly cited, these few bits of information can be traced back to the Ukiyo-e ruikō 浮世類考. The Ukiyo-e ruikō is a collection of writings on ukiyo-e artists that was first compiled in 1789 by Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749-1823), and was

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22 Kyōgenbon, or kyōgen ehon, were a type of popular printed book, usually illustrated, that recounted the plots of kabuki plays.
23 Kern 2011, p. 172-173.
added to over time by other figures, such as Santō Kyūden and Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776-1822). Richard Lane expands on Kiyotsune somewhat in two of his books on ukiyo-e, *Master of the Japanese Print* and *Images from the Floating World*, but limits himself to his opinions on Kiyotsune’s talents as an ukiyo-e artist. He does not discuss Kiyotsune’s *kusazōshi* work. Howard Link briefly discusses Kiyotsune in the introductory passages to two of his collection companion works, *Theatrical Prints of the Torii Masters* and *Torii-ha hachidai ukiyo-e ten 鳥居派八代浮世絵展*. Similarly to the *Ukiyo-e ruikō*, Link mentions that Kiyotsune made book illustrations, and that those illustrations were in the Torii style, but does not delve any deeper.

While it makes sense for a book on ukiyo-e to focus on the ukiyo-e portion of an artist’s career, ukiyo-e and *kusazōshi* art are in fact closely related. For artists who worked in both genres, ukiyo-e and *kusazōshi* should not be treated as entirely isolated bodies of work. For an artist such as Kiyotsune, about whom writers on ukiyo-e had so little information to work with, the fact that his *kusazōshi* work is left out entirely implies that it was insignificant. One is left with the impression that Kiyotsune was an ukiyo-e artist who merely dabbled in books. I would argue that it was the complete opposite. In his *Kibyōshi sōran* 黄表紙総覧, Tanahashi Masahiro 棚橋正博 credits Kiyotsune with the illustrations for 133 books, and gives him sole credit for a further 21. This total of over 150 *kibyōshi* makes him the most prolific *kibyōshi* artist in the Torii school. The only other to have come close was Kiyonaga, who is credited with 117. Moreover, an examination of the *sōran’s* index reveals that even outside of the Torii school, only a handful of artists can claim an equal or larger body of work.

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24 Some of the more recent versions of the *ruikō* do contain more information. The *Sōkō nihon ukiyo-e ruikō 総校日本浮世絵類考* compiled in 1979 by Yura Tetsuji 由良哲次 suggests that Kiyotsune did write his own works, but cites no sources; it may simply be an assumption by more recent editors.

work. He was one of the most prolific artists in the entire genre. This is also not to mention his works in the kurohon and aohon. Clearly, there was more to Kiyotsune than an ukiyo-e artist left behind by the trends of time.

Some of the kibyōshi illustrated by Kiyotsune are clearly credited as collaborations between him and a writer. Katakiuchi kurama tengu敵討クラマ天狗, for example, was written by Yoneyama Teiga米山鼎峨. However, many more of his works credit no author. They simply say, “Illustrations by (Torii) Kiyotsune.” This leaves two questions: Who wrote these stories and why were they not credited? The first question, to be addressed later, may be impossible to answer definitively, but an overview of his works does provide a potential candidate. The second question, however, can be explained by examining the conditions of the Edo publishing industry.

One of the most notable aspects of the publishing industry in Edo arises from the fact that it was more or less new. There was a resurgence of woodblock printing and each part of the printing process became specialized, speeding up that process and allowing a much greater volume of works to be published. Not only were there these advances in printing, but there were also significant developments in audience. The urbanization and economic development of the period brought with it an increased emphasis on education, and for the first time, there was widespread literacy among the common people. In other words, there were more books being produced and more people were reading them. Because the industry grew so much during the Edo period, after having started from more or less nothing, many aspects of publishing were still undergoing change by the time kibyōshi grew popular in the

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26 Kurama is written on the book’s cover with an apparently invented kanji combining 馬 and 鞍.
27 Kornicki 1998, 137.
late eighteenth century. Consequently, the position of authors and artists within the culture of publication was changing as well.

Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693), for example, is well known as the one of the most influential authors of the Edo period. Surprisingly, his name was not necessarily on his books. According to Peter Kornicki, “…our knowledge of the extent of [Saikaku’s] oeuvre is based mainly on textual evidence and indications by his contemporaries.” It was not until later, with figures such as Santō Kyōden, that authors of popular fiction were able to establish a name for themselves. Although this transition to primacy of authorship finally occurred, it happened more slowly for writers than it did for illustrators. As Ekkehard May explains in his essay, “Books and Book Illustrations in Early Modern Japan”, image initially held primacy over text in kibyōshi. It was the artists who first had their names printed in the texts. For that reason, kibyōshi were perhaps less illustrated texts, and more texted images.

Kaminari no hesokuigane is one among many of Kiyotsune’s works that credits no author. As Kiyotsune was already an established member of the Torii school of ukiyo-e artists, this makes sense. Potential readers would be drawn to the work because they liked his prints. No matter how much his career may have been overshadowed by that of Kiyonaga, he was still closely associated with Kiyomitsu, and that alone may have been enough to attract readers. Kiyotsune might simply have done the writing himself, as a means to get his artwork out. Some characteristics of Hesokuigane support this theory. Not only is the writing minimal in volume, but it also shows some fairly consistent spelling errors. Those are not characteristics one would expect in a professional writer. On the other hand, secondary sources that discuss Kiyotsune never refer to him doing any writing. It is also possible that

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28 Kornicki 2001, p. 231.
Hesokuiigane was written by an unaccredited author. Although the text has deficiencies in length and spelling, it is still impressive in that every detail of the story seems deliberately thought out in service of the story’s many puns. In either case, the evidence is fairly circumstantial: there is no direct evidence in the text that points either way. There are, however, other artists we can consider in understanding Kiyotsune’s career and activities.

Ikku and Kyōden as Authors

The first artist to which Kiyotsune can potentially be compared is Jippensha Ikku. He was the best known, and perhaps only, Edo popular fiction writer who actually made a living entirely off his works, which included many kibyōshi. Few others were able to live on writing alone, even among the most popular authors. Even though he is said to have made a living through his writing, it was not like today, when popular authors can sell millions of copies and lead lives of relative wealth. On the contrary, Ikku barely made a living at all.

As with Kiyotsune, scholarship on Jippensha Ikku in English has been quite limited, though to a lesser extent. As such, it is useful to incorporate some fairly old sources. The first is W. G. Aston’s (1841-1911) History of Japanese Literature. This is a general overview of Japanese literature in which Ikku is just one of many writers discussed, but it does provide some helpful information. Aston also grants Ikku a more significant place in Japanese literature than do most overviews of the subject. The second source is a 1949 master’s thesis on Ikku by Mary Tomita. Most of the critical attention paid to Ikku has centered on his kokkeibon, Tōkaidōchū hizakurige. His prodigious work in kibyōshi has gone largely unexplored. Tomita’s thesis shares this focus on Hizakurige, but it also covers more general
information about him as a writer, including his kibyōshi work. Despite the relative dearth of information on Ikku, there is enough to make some comparisons to Kiyotsune.

As W. G. Aston relates in his History of Japanese Literature, Ikku was lacking in many of the typical home furnishings of the day, and instead placed pictures of them on the walls of his home. He is also purported to have surreptitiously borrowed a friend's bathtub and to have spent some time as an extended house-guest of fellow writer Santō Kyōden. While it is possible that some of these thrift-driven antics have been exaggerated over the years, it is clear that he was in no way wealthy, or even financially comfortable. This lack of material wealth was not due to a lack of productivity. Ikku is reported to have written as many as 170 kibyōshi, and over four hundred works in total. This makes him one of the most prolific writers of his time. If that was not enough, he also did both the writing and images for many of his kibyōshi and gōkan, preventing him from having to share the royalties with an artist. Granted, as is often true of writers who produce such an impressive volume, some works came out a bit better than others. As Tomita notes, many of his works were simply “potboilers,” i.e. what we would now call genre fiction. Considering his living conditions, it is difficult to gauge whether Ikku actually made much more money than other author/illustrators like Kyōden.

The likely reason Ikku chose to pull double-duty as an author and illustrator was that publishing was neither cheap nor simple. Although printing was much faster in the Edo period that it had been previously, that “fast” was still slow by the standards of today’s printing. Everything was still done entirely by hand. Even if the text had an author in addition

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30 Aston 1972, p. 270.
31 Tomita 1949, p. 23.
32 Tomita 1949, p. 34.
33 Tomita 1949, p. 23.
to the illustrator, there was also usually a scribe to make a neat copy of the text. This prepared copy, or *hanshita* 版下, was given to a carver, along with the images, to carve a woodblock for printing.\(^{34}\) This woodblock was then given to a printer, and if his prints came out right, those were given to a page aligner, the results of which, along with the cover from a cover maker, were given to a book binder. All of this work is done with materials, like ink and paper, bought from their respective sellers. There were thus many people involved with the production of *kibyōshi*, and all of them had to be paid. Because *kibyōshi* were relatively cheap books already, it’s almost surprising that any money could make it to the authors and artists at all. As such, Kiyotsune may have chosen to go the same route as Ikku as a means to expedite the production of books. Especially when Kiyotsune was first starting out in the genre, a package deal of images and words might have been preferable for publishers.

The second useful point of comparison for Kiyotsune’s career is Santō Kyōden. In terms of education, Kyōden too was trained as an ukiyo-e artist. His teacher was Kitao Shigemasa 北尾重政 (1739-1820), who was quite successful in his time, but was also coincidentally one of the apparently numerous artists to be overshadowed by the work of Kiyonaga.\(^{35}\) When Kyōden started his career as an artist, he took the name Kitao Masanobu 政演, which he used both for ukiyo-e and *kibyōshi* artwork. Similar to Kiyotsune, despite his ukiyo-e training, Kyōden did not have much of an ukiyo-e career. In Kyōden’s case, because he was so successful as an author/illustrator and so effusively enthusiastic about that work, the relative dearth of ukiyo-e work is clearly not the result of any failure. Rather than being something that he simply gave up, Kyōden’s ukiyo-e training was more a means to enable his *kibyōshi* career.

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\(^{34}\) Kern 2006, p. 47.  
Taking a name affiliated with a school, as Kyōden did with Kitao, presumably indicates an intent to work in that school's medium and genre. Given this practice and considering how well established the Torii school was, seeing the name Torii Kiyotsune leads one to immediately assume that it belongs to someone who was primarily an ukiyo-e artist. However, as we know from Kyōden's career, this was not always the case. Although Kyōden used the skills he had learned from his master, he used them in a somewhat different context. Even if Kyōden intended all along to deviate from the path of ukiyo-e, it still made sense for him to adopt the Kitao name because doing so would lend credibility to his identity as an artist. In Edo culture names were tied to aspects of a person’s career as much as they were to the person themself. Even the name Santō Kyōden, which is commonly used to refer to that author/illustrator in scholarship today, was a specific professional name tied to his identity as a writer. Kyōden was born as Iwase Samuru 岩瀬醒 and popularly known as Kyōya Denzō 京屋伝蔵. This practice of name adoption bears some resemblance to the use of pen-names by Western authors, but Edo practice was unusual in allowing multiple names per person, as well as multiple people for one name, as we will see.

While Kyōden is a good example of a single artist using multiple names, the Torii school has numerous examples of single names being used by multiple artists. Howard Link explores this topic thoroughly in his Ph.D. dissertation, A Theory on the Identity of Torii Kiyomasu I.36 Although the identity of the original Torii master, Kiyomoto, is known with some certainty, there is disagreement among scholars about the identity of the following two generations. There are four possible artists in questions: Kiyomasu, Kiyonobu, Kiyomasu II, and Kiyonobu II. The names signed on the prints created by these artists never indicate

36 Link 1969.
whether they are the First or Second. They only say Kiyomasu or Kiyonobu. Whether or not a work is by Kiyomasu II or Kiyonobu II is inferred. What Link argues is that these were not actually four separate people. He provides evidence that Kiyomasu II actually took up the name Kiyonobu, after the first Kiyonobu died.37 In that sense, these pseudonyms create an artistic identity that extends beyond a single person. Even the Kiyotsune being discussed here was not actually the first Torii Kiyotsune.38 Those who are labeled as second are not personally named after the first; rather, they are continuing the use of the name in a professional capacity. That is to say, the name Torii Kiyotsune should be thought of as something somewhat separate from the actual person behind it. As with Kyōden, then, taking a name as a member of a particular school did not permanently define Kiyotsune as an ukiyo-e artist. As such, his oeuvre as an ukiyo-e artist is not necessarily the appropriate perspective from which to explore his career. Based on his work in kusazōshi it makes more sense to think of him as an illustrator who did occasionally do prints.

While Kyōden and Kiyotsune have similarities in terms of the use of artistic identities, the ways in which they developed those identities are quite different. Kyōden was able to go beyond simply having a name that identified him as a kibyōshi artist/author by constructing a persona that linked the identity of the writer behind the work with characters within the work. One of Kyōden's kibyōshi, for example, Gozonji no Shōbaimono 御存商売物,39 begins with an introduction in which he relates trying to come up with a story and then rushing off to his publisher to deliver it. It specifies that the basis for the story was a dream Kyōden had. The

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37 The fact that these names are not used by multiple artists simultaneously distinguishes this concept from practices more familiar to Western literature, such as ghostwriting.
38 Nothing seems to be left of Kiyotsune I's work. The remaining prints signed “Kiyotsune” can be identified as Kiyotsune II thanks to the clear influence they show from his teacher, Kiyomitsu, and their use of beni-e techniques.
39 Translated in Adam Kern's Manga in the Floating World as Those Familiar Bestsellers.
first pages of the text-proper depict Kyōden asleep at his writing desk, with the story beginning in a thought bubble above his head. This makes the introduction seem less separated from the main text, and almost as if it is part of the narrative. Book publishing tends to strive for a level of transparency: the goal is to make a text available, and not to draw readers attention to the process while they are consuming the text. Yet through a blending of secondary text elements, like the introduction, into the diegesis of the main narrative, Kyōden leads the reader to think about the publication process as they read the book. By highlighting himself within the narrative of that publication process, Kyōden is ensuring that readers have an image of him writing the book in the back of their minds as they read it. This makes the connection to the author much more tangible and personal than a simple colophon ever could.

Kyōden further develops this personal relationship by expressing a desire for continued patronage directly to the readers. There is a definite familiarity with which he addresses the reader, exemplified in how he jokingly refers to them as “you kids.” Rather than just an interest in his individual works, through this relationship Kyōden is fostering an interest in himself as a writing personality. Ideally, readers would grow to want not simply the newest kibyōshi, but the newest Kyōden. By contrast, in all of the works by Kiyotsune that I have examined so far there are none of Kyōden’s persona building techniques. “Images by Kiyotsune” is the extent of his presence. It is possible that he was able to sustain a kibyōshi career on his talent as an artist alone. It is not hard to see why an Edo consumer would want to buy works with such great pictures. However, once his career was over, he did not leave readers with much to talk about. The success Kyōden had in creating his persona surely contributed not only to his commercial success, but also ensured a lasting legacy. It is much more exciting to read about a larger than life figure like Kyōden than it is to read about
someone who is completely unknown like Kiyotsune. Kyōden avoided the fate of “details lacking” by writing the details himself.

**Yanagawa Keishi**

To end this chapter I want to return to the question of who wrote the works credited to Kiyotsune that do not name a separate author: an examination of his known collaborators provides an interesting possibility. Kiyotsune worked with at least ten different writers.

According to Tanahashi’s *sōran*, most of those authors are people he only worked with a few times; they range from one to six collaborations each. There is only one author who has more than six collaborations: Yanagawa Keishi 柳川桂子. Kiyotsune and Keishi collaborated on a conspicuously larger number, a minimum of thirty-five works. Even more interesting is the fact that Keishi’s entry in the *sōran* index contains exactly thirty-five works. In other words, every *kibyōshi* he is known to have written was illustrated by Kiyotsune. Searching for Keishi’s name in databases such as the National Institute of Japanese Literature’s Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books returns a list of many of those *kibyōshi*, with the addition of some *kurohon* and *aohon*, all of which were also illustrated by Kiyotsune. No other artist seems to have worked together with this writer Keishi.

As with Kiyotsune, most encyclopedia entries about Keishi repeat the same few bits of information. In Keishi’s case, the only clear data these entries contain, beyond that which can be inferred from the texts themselves are two alternate names associated with him:

Kōsetsutei 耕雪亭 and Kinkatei 琴霞亭. As far as I can tell at the moment, neither of those names is associated with any books except where Keishi's name is also mentioned. Birth and death dates are unknown, as are the names of any teacher or school affiliation. By most
accounts, Keishi seems to be even more obscure and less appreciated as a writer than Kiyotsune is as an artist. There is one tantalizing exception to this familiar dearth of detail: the *Nihon jimei daijiten* 日本人名大辞典 quietly slips into its tiny entry on Keishi a short note that, together with Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春町, he was one of the pioneering authors of the *kibyoshi* genre. Considering how well known Harumachi is as one of the pioneers of *kibyōshi*, credited with creating the very first work of the genre, *Kinkin sensei eiga no yume* 金々先生栄花夢, it is strange for such an enigmatic figure as Keishi to be placed so unceremoniously on the same pedestal. There is clearly more about Keishi to be learned, although it must remain outside the scope of the present study.
CHAPTER 2

TEXT-IMAGE RELATIONSHIP

The primacy of the artist that led to works like *Hesokuigane* being authored anonymously also affected the formation of *kibyōshi* as a genre. Specifically, it influenced the interplay between text and image. When trying to characterize the text-image relationship in *kibyōshi* from a Western perspective, we have two main points of reference. On one end there are illustrated books, such as children's books, with a seemingly weak text-image relationship. On the other, there are comic books and manga, which have a much more inter-dependent text-image relationship. Although some level of equivalence is often drawn between *kibyōshi* and comic books, similarities can be drawn to illustrated books as well. If the text-image relationships of *kibyōshi* are thoroughly examined, however, it becomes clear that they have their own unique set of characteristics which set them apart from either category. Unlike the modern forms which are generally thought of as illustrated, i.e., the pictures are an addition or supplement to the text, *kibyōshi* are texted-images in which text is the addition. They were as much viewed as they were read.

As with most genres, however, there is significant variation among *kibyōshi*. One of the characteristics in which this variation is most noticeable is in the amount of text that is written on each page. By this I mean not only the actual number of words, but also the amount of space these words take up on the page. *Hesokuigane*, for example, has a relatively small amount of text. As you can see in the example page (figure 1), the text only takes up a small portion of the total space on the page. Throughout the book, there is a similar text to image ratio. It creates a sense that the images are the more important of the book's two elements. The text-image ratio in this book more or less represents one end of the *kibyōshi*
spectrum. On the other end are *kibyōshi* like Santō Kyōden's *Edo umare uwaki no kabayaki* 江戸生艶気蒲焼 (figure 2).\(^{40}\) Clearly, there is significantly more text there than in Kiyotsune's book. It takes a significant portion of the page. Although some pages in the book have less text than this, others have even more. Despite these differences in the amount of text per page, what does not vary much among *kibyōshi* is the length of each book. They are generally only ten to twenty pages.\(^{41}\) Because there is not much variation in length, the average amount of text per page is directly related to the amount of text in total.

In addition to the lower quantity of words, one of the other more noticeable characteristics of the text in *Hesokuigane* is what could be considered a lower quality of words. Specifically, there are numerous spelling errors, albeit with remarkable consistency. For example, the word *mae* 前, meaning before, is continually misspelled “*mai*”. Although the consistency of this mistake might lead one to think that it is a dialect issue of some kind, the presence of other unique spelling choices and almost complete lack of Chinese characters implies otherwise. Even though the writer is not explicitly identified, we can conclude that whoever it was, writing may not have been their primary creative skill. This conclusion is also somewhat corroborated by the content. The minimal overall length of the text means that there simply is not as much room to flesh out a narrative. Over the two books of *Hesokuigane*, the narrative tells a relatively simple story of a thunder deity, the *kaminari* of the title, being drawn down to earth by the smell of some tasty food. The book does not develop the characters deeply or create a particularly complex narrative. Although each page does advance the plot in some way or another, that plot often feels less like an end in itself, and

\(^{40}\) Translated as *Playboy Roasted à la Edo* in Adam Kern’s *Manga from the Floating World.*

\(^{41}\) Each page in a *kibyōshi* is actually two pages by modern page numbering. The front and back of each page are printed side by side on a single sheet, which is then folded in half to form that front and back.
more like a means to deliver jokes. Many of these jokes involve fake etymologies for, or transformations of, common place names or phrases. This is not to say that the writing is bad. Rather, the text's purpose is to support the images with a narrative backbone packed with jokes and puns. In that regard, it is undoubtedly effective.

*Edo umare,* on the other hand, given its larger volume of text, has more room to develop the narrative. While there certainly is no shortage of jokes and other fooling in *Edo umare,* the flow of the text on each page is not structured entirely around delivering these jokes. Its pages are as much about revealing incidents in the life of Enjirō, the playboy of the title, and developing him as a character. Whereas *Hesokuigane* only has short snippets of dialog, *Edo umare* gives characters entire speeches. This gives the reader a more fully developed impression of them.

In creating this contrast, I mean less to separate these texts as extremely different, and more to show the range possible within the genre, and to highlight some of the characteristics involved. As much as is different about these texts, much more is the same. While *Hesokuigane* may be lighter on what some would call elegance, its writing style has much in common with *Edo umare,* and indeed *kibyōshi* in general. They characteristically use few Chinese characters, and are relatively easy reads by Edo standards. Reading them would not have required a particularly high level of education. The language is fairly simple and repetitive. Of particular note is the extensive use of connecting words such as “*sate,*” meaning “well...” or “and then...”, and sentence endings such as “*-keri,*” which creates a storytelling tone. The repeated use of these words creates a sense of, “and then...and then...and then,” much like a person casually relating a story orally. Fun and humor clearly take precedence over *belles-lettres.* In cases like *Hesokuigane,* considering also the spelling
errors and limited volume, the simplicity of language could be, to some extent, the result of the author’s limitations. In Kyōden's case, however, it was more likely out of consideration for the potential readership and a desire to not limit that readership to the highly educated, or to at least create the impression that his works were purely frivolous, in order to avoid the attention of the censors.

Contrasts in quality are not limited to the text, but are present in the images as well. For example, Jippensha Ikku's *Yakuhan* (figure 3), contains relatively simple images lacking in detailed backgrounds. They are not poorly drawn or otherwise flawed; rather, they are economic in portraying their intended information. Considering their creator, this is perhaps unsurprising. As discussed earlier, Jippensha Ikku was both author and artist for many of his works and over the course of his career he produced hundreds of them. In order to achieve such a volume, some must have received more attention than others. In contrast to *Yakuhan*, there are works like Kiyotsune's *Katakiuchi kurama tengu* (figure 4), which contains much more detailed images and well developed backgrounds. While the *Yakuhan* image simply shows figures floating in white space, on the page from *Kurama tengu* there is no space that is not part of the image. Because, unlike Ikku, Kiyotsune was known primarily as an ukiyo-e artist, the images would have been the main selling point of the text. Even if he did write the unaccredited works like *Hesokuigane*, the relative sparseness of the text and the fact that he only took credit for the art implies that the images would still have been his primary focus. If nothing else, because of his reputation as an ukiyo-e artist, it would have been more important to meet readers’ expectations for quality images, rather than create a new reputation as a writer.
Ikku’s *Yakuhan* is also notable in that it provides a counterexample to image holding primacy over text in *kibyōshi*. While the technical quality of the images cannot be directly faulted, the lack of background or expressive quality to the characters prevents them from being inherently exciting. Granted, the example given has the least interesting images in the book, but when compared to the Kiyotsune and Kyōden examples which create detailed scenes that the reader’s imagination is able to inhabit, the whole book falls a bit flat. It is difficult to imagine a consumer being drawn to the book based on the quality of the images. They are clearly a supplement to the text, rather than the other way around.

However, despite this running counter to the idea of image-primacy, there are some good reasons for *Yakuhan* to be such an exception. First, Jippensha Ikku had already established a name as a writer outside of *kibyōshi*. At that point, Ikku had already been putting out volumes of *Tokaidōchū hizakurige* for four years. It grew popular enough that Ikku eventually wrote two sequel series. Therefore, there is no reason to think fans of those books who wanted to read more of his works would not also seek them out in other genres. Unlike the early *kibyōshi* authors who went unaccredited, Ikku’s name was something that could be used to draw interest. Second, *Yakuhan* was published in 1806, which is generally accepted as the final year *kibyōshi* truly existed as a genre. *Kibyōshi* had been around for a few decades and popular tastes were already shifting towards the more text-heavy and story-driven gōkan. It is not surprising that some *kibyōshi* would be moving away from the characteristics that originally defined the genre. Rather than being a true counterexample,

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42 *Tokaidōchū hizakurige* (translated as *Shanks’ Mare* by Thomas Satchell) is a kokkeibon. *Kokkeibon* were humorous books that, although containing some images, were mainly text and lacked the visual-verbal combinations of *kusazōshi*.

43 *Zoku hizakurige* and *Zoku zoku hizakurige*. Although the first sequel was popular enough to motivate a second, they are both regarded as inferior to the original.

44 Kern 2006, p. 236.
what *Yakuhan* does is show that image-primacy is what drove the formation of *kibyōshi* as genre, rather than define every single text.

In some respects, the quantity of images in different *kibyōshi* is more difficult to compare than the quantity of text, but this is largely the result of one of their defining characteristics. The images really only come in one of two sizes: full page or double-page spreads, which all of the example images but Ikku’s are. Although these images share the page with the text, the sharing is clearly less than equal. Unlike in comic books, the portions of text in *kibyōshi* are not given their own specifically delineated areas. Instead, the text is fitted into the white background spaces of the images. On the page from *Hesokuigane*, there is some breathing room for the text. This is even more noticeable in Ikku's *Yakuhan*, but the lack of background there is unusual. Even though one could potentially make an argument that the text sections on these pages are in spaces that are not part of the images, there is no clear demarcation. The lines of text are also not neatly cut off along a well defined border. Furthermore, in works like *Edo umare* and *Kurama tengu*, the text has barely any room at all. It is squeezed into any place possible, such as being written between window slats in *Edo umare* or all over the wall in *Kurama tengu*. The shape of the text is not only defined by the overall shape of the image on the page, but is even defined by the shape of the objects and architecture within the image. In some cases, one gets the feeling that the text should feel lucky to have any space at all.

Although in description, this may sound sloppy, and even difficult to read, in practice it works quite effectively. There are instances, such as the chunk of text in the upper right corner of the *Hesokuigane* example (figure 1), that can be read simply as a normal chunk of text, much like a box of text in a comic book. However, in order to read all of the text on that
page, the eye must move across the page, and therefore across the image. While this is true to some extent for comics, there are two important differences. First, comic book text is clearly demarcated in boxes and bubbles; the eye has a much easier time jumping from one block to the next. Second, most pages are broken up into smaller panels, meaning the blocks of text in each image are fewer in number and closer together. In *kibyōshi*, however, once you finish the initial block of text, the location of the next is not always immediately clear. Your eye must take a moment to explore the page. In some cases, even once the whole page has been taken in and the location of text segments have been identified, there is not always a definite order. There is a further slight pause as the reader makes the decision of what to read next. Consequently, instead of reading the text completely and then viewing the image, or vice versa, there is a back and forth between image and text. This creates a greater sense of unity between the two. This unity can be seen at its peak in *Kurama tengu* (figure 4). The text does not just squeeze into the empty spaces in the background, but is actually shaped in such a way that it appears to be written on the walls of the room being depicted. The text is essentially a part of the image.

Another result of this movement across the page is demonstrated quite effectively by Scott McCloud in his book *Understanding Comics*. McCloud explains that modern readers are trained by photographs to interpret images as single moments in time. The example he provides (figure 5) shows that images are not limited to these single moments. On the left side of the picture, there is a man taking a photograph surrounded by three dialog balloons. From past experience, we know that these things cannot be happening in the same instant. The “SMILE!” comes before the flash and the response to the flash must come after. Continuing across the image to the right, there are two sets of speech balloons, each in which
one balloon is a response to the other. Again, these elements of speech are not necessarily happening in the same instance. It is exactly the same with *kibyōshi*. As you read across the page, not only does the act of reading take up a certain amount of time for the viewer, but it also creates a sense of passing time within the diegesis of the image. It is not the instant we are trained to expect; it is an entire scene. While McCloud is demonstrating this concept within the context of modern comics, such larger scene images are relatively uncommon. In *kibyōshi*, however, nearly every image falls into that category. There are some comics that featured scene images heavily, such as Richard F Outcault’s *The Yellow Kid* (figure 6). *The Yellow Kid* featured many complex scenes with many things going on at once. As in the example image, there were also often with blocks of text fitted into the white space of the images, just like *kibyōshi*. Unlike *kibyōshi*, however, these scene-images were single, isolated images and were not made into larger sequences.

This scenic nature of images in *kibyōshi* leads to another point about how text and image work concurrently. In a typical non-illustrated book, the page breaks are relatively inconsequential. Apart from chapter breaks, pages end simply for the physical limitation of lack of room for more words. Authors generally make no specific plans to cover a certain amount of narrative on a specific page. From a standpoint of narrative flow, these breaks do not exist. This is what allows the locations of these breaks to be different in different printings and phrases like “the above mentioned” to make sense, even if the referenced item is on a previous page. The breaks between pages or double-page spreads in *kibyōshi*, however, reflect their scenic nature. The text never continues a sentence, or even a paragraph, across these breaks. Similarly, the images on neighboring pages do not generally show immediate sequences. Turning to a new page is like changing to a new scene.
This connects back to the above mentioned ideas about language. The ever-popular “sate” often appears at the beginning of new pages. This not only acknowledges the transition between the pages, but also readies the reader and reorients them to a new scene in the narrative. Some texts go so far as to mention briefly the events of the previous page. Since readers are presumably not losing track of the story that quickly, one can conclude that there was an expectation that consumption of kibyōshi had the potential to be a segmented experience. Because the pages are so neatly separated into distinct scenes, kibyōshi could easily be picked up and enjoyed in short spaces of time. This could be a reason behind structures like that of Hesokuigane, where each page is as much narrative as it is a set-up for a joke. Each page can be seen as a short little sketch, and no matter which page a reader stops on, they get to enjoy a punch line. The segmented structure would also allow a reader to casually flip through the book, looking at the nice pictures, and only read pages that seem particularly interesting. On the other hand, this scenic nature could also lend credibility to the idea of reading as a group activity. Even if an individual can read a page relatively quickly, reading aloud takes more time. One could also imagine a few readers looking at a kibyōshi together, pointing out to each other their favorite jokes or interesting things they noticed in the pictures. Moreover, it makes it easier for someone to join in partway, without too awkward a transition.

Perhaps the most important question about the text-image relationship is that of interdependence. Looking through a kibyōshi and considering either text or image individually—hard as that may be, for the reasons explained above—makes this interdependence clear. If you only look at the pictures, it is difficult to piece together a coherent story. Once can certainly see connections and makes some guesses, but there are
still some huge gaps. In *Hesokuigane*, for example, there is a series of three pages in which the *kaminari* is eating on the first two, and then giving someone a large sum of money on the third. In this case, one might be able to guess that the pile of money was to pay for the food. At the beginning of the second book, however, the images focus on what appears to be a normal Edoite marked with the *kaminari*’s symbol. There is no way to know what happened or why the *kaminari* now looks human. Clearly, the image is dependent on the text for narrative clarity.

In modern comic books, the images are often less dependent on the text to create narrative. In these three panels from Alan Moore and Brian Bolland’s *The Killing Joke* (figure 7), one can see a clear sequence of events. Even though the Joker is standing inside being gripped by the collar in one panel, and is suddenly flying through the air outside a broken window in the next, the reader is not confused as to how he got there. Because we know that people do not end up in such a state spontaneously, and that encounters between these two characters generally go poorly, our minds immediately fill in the gap with Batman throwing the Joker. This process of perceiving the whole narrative through the observation of incomplete parts is known as closure.\(^{45}\) It is such a rapid and unconscious process that it is generally unavoidable. Most readers would probably not realize that they never actually saw the Joker being thrown. There are cases, such as in Neil Gaiman’s *The Sandman* (figure 8), in which the text will disappear for as much as a few pages and allow the narrative to be told entirely through the images. However, this does not mean that the images form entirely independent narratives.\(^{46}\) The text is still necessary to fill in the details of the narrative and is the force that drives the reader through the book. Moreover, using such a large number

\(^{45}\) McCloud 1994, p. 63.

\(^{46}\) There are entirely wordless books, such as Franz Masereel’s *Die Idee* (figure 9) that do form entirely independent narratives, but they belong in another category entirely.
individual panels on each page pulls focus away from individual images. The reader is continuously moving from panel to panel, propelled forward by the text. The images are experienced as part of a continuous flow, rather than individually viewed like a print.

There are some instances of image-dependent text in kibyōshi in the form of kakiire. The kakiire are small elements of text inserted into the image separately from the main narrative chunks. They can be as simple as a label on a character, or as much as a few lines of dialog. In either case, their location within the image indicates which character they are associated with. Moreover, the narrative context of the scene often must be understood for the kakiire to make sense. For example, this excerpt of kakiire from Hesokuigane makes little sense on its own:

“Oh my! Strange doesn’t even cover it!”
“Well, well, isn’t this curious! Ryōgoku’s where it’s at!”
“Alas! How tedious!”
“Is your boss in?”
“Well, that’s quite a curiosity!”

A continuous series of dialog like that implies a back and forth conversation. Viewed within the image, however, the positions of the kakiire make it clear that this is not a single conversation at all. They both create and rely on the sense of scene and time demonstrated with McCloud’s photo-shooting image.

Although these kakiire do represent image-dependent text, they are secondary to the main narrative and smaller in volume. One could conceivably read a transcription of the main narrative text chunks in the absence of the images. It would mean missing out on much of what made the work interesting, but it would at least be understandable. In this sense, text serves the same function in kibyōshi as it does in illustrated books. It is the readers’ primary source of narrative. The images in both genres also serve a similar function. Unlike the
continuous flow of comic book panels, the images in *kibyōshi* and illustrated books are something the reader stops and looks at. In terms of the individual function of each element, *kibyōshi* are more like illustrated books than they are comic books.

Unlike illustrated books, however, the images in *kibyōshi* not only take up more space than the text, but the creators also give them space priority. The text just gets to fill in the leftovers. This implies that images are the main attraction of *kibyōshi*. Therefore, even though it is the images that are dependent on the text for narrative, the text is dependent on the images for purpose. If potential readers were not drawn in by a *kibyōshi*'s images, they simply might not read it. This combination of narrative function-dependence on one side, and purpose dependence on the other, creates an inseparable combination. Considering this, in conjunction with the way the text moves the eye across the page, creating a sense of time, there is clearly a strong text-image relationship. This relationship is central to how *kibyōshi* operate as a genre.
Figure 1: Torii Kiyotsune's *Hesokuigane*. Note there is little more text than the small block in the upper right corner.

Figure 2: Santō Kyōden's *Playboy Roasted à la Edo*. The text has a much more significant presence on the page, but is still subordinate to the image.
Figure 3: Jippensha Ikku's *Yakuhan*. The images are drawn decently enough, but are entirely lacking in background and are a bid bland.

Figure 4: Torii Kiyotsune's *Katakiuchi kurama tengu*. More than just present, this background is extremely detailed, and creates a tangible scene.
Figure 6: Non-simultaneous events depicted in a single scene-image

Figure 5: A scene-image from Richard F. Outcault’s *The Yellow Kid*. 
Figure 7: A visually told sequence of narrative from The Killing Joke. Even with the words removed, the scene is clear.

Figure 8: A text-free sequence from The Sandman. The events are unclear without the context of the rest of the book.
Figure 9: Two pages from Franz Masereel’s *Die Idee*. The book forms a narrative about the evolution of an idea entirely through a series of wordless, full-page images.
CHAPTER 3

EDO EXCEPTIONALISM

The lack of coverage given to the voluminous kusazōshi portion of Kiyotsune’s career cannot be blamed solely on his perceived identity as an ukiyo-e artist. Kusazōshi remains a growing field of study, and much of what has been written to date has focused on those who have been identified as its major figures, such as Kyōden. In the study of Edo popular culture it has been theater, particularly kabuki, which has traditionally received the most attention. Unlike kibyōshi, which along with the other forms of kusazōshi died out long ago, kabuki continues to be performed to this day, and maintains a position of national cultural significance. However, this concept of kabuki as high culture is an entirely modern construction and it creates a hierarchy among the stage and other Edo arts that did not exist in the Edo period itself. Adam Kern argues this point extensively in his essay in Publishing the Stage.47 The general perception of the relationship between the stage and the world of print has been that kabuki was the cultural center, and that books fed off this, reproducing what it created. However, Kern makes it clear that this borrowing was not unidirectional. As he states, “cultural hybridity was the rule, not the exception.”48 The stage borrowed from books as well. This borrowing was also not limited just to kabuki and kibyōshi, but was a larger cultural trend. Shimada Daisuke addresses this issue in an article on one of Kiyotsune’s works.49 He discusses the seemingly plagiaristic tendency of Kiyotsune’s books to lift stories from other works. Hesokuigane happens to be one such book. Its plot bears a striking

47 Kern 2011.
48 Kern 2011, p. 163.
49 Shimada 2000.
resemblance to a kyōgen play titled Kaminari, about a thunder deity who descends to earth and comes under the care of a doctor. What Kiyotsune did was use that story as a base; he then added his own images and humorous variations to the plot. Shimada argues that this was not at all an unusual practice and was in no way an attempt on Kiyotsune’s part to defraud his audience.

The type of narrative borrowing Kiyotsune was doing can be compared to the borrowing that occurs with Western fairy tales. The same stories are continuously and openly borrowed from and remade, the results of which are never judged negatively as plagiarism. Audiences want to see the familiar stories retold. This year alone, for example, there have been two adaptations of the story of Snow White among U.S. film releases. The degree to which these films were able to differentiate themselves from each other, with one turning the story into a family comedy and the other turning it into a dark fantasy epic, was enough to prevent audiences (though perhaps not critics) from being entirely turned off. In Kiyotsune’s case, the addition of images and a new humorous take on the kaminari story was not merely acceptable for his readers, but something they enjoyed. Rather than hoping that his audience would not be familiar with the play he borrowed the story from, he was likely counting on the fact that they knew it and would enjoy seeing it in a new light. This is not to say that concepts like plagiarism did not exist at all, or that the wholesale copying of a work would not be problematic. Otherwise, commercially successful works like Ikku’s Hizakurige would have been lost in a sea of copies. Rather, it was that these works participated in a collective culture. Thus instead of one medium taking unidirectionally from another, it makes more sense to say that all mediums both contributed to and benefited from a common pool of tropes, stories, and images.
Such an environment of cultural hybridity more or less prevents a hierarchy of genres. Even though it can be said that studying *kibyōshi* is therefore not inherently less substantive than studying kabuki, that still leaves the questions of what substance there is to be gained from them. After all, there are those who doubt the value of popular forms entirely. While it may be true *kibyōshi* do not conform to traditional notions of literary excellence and may not have tried to deeply probe the human condition, one thing they can do is speak volumes about those who created and consumed them. To be sure, these works are by no means accurate historical records. They are, however, useful records of the ideals and stories that appealed to Edo readers. Particularly interesting to me among these ideals are the ones rooted not in any moral or philosophical concepts, but in the identity of the city of Edo. In the remainder of this chapter I will explore these ideals.

Notions of what we might recognise as a modern national identity did not begin forming in Japan until quite late in the Edo period, developing very rapidly then in the early Meiji. Throughout the 19th century Japan began to interact more with the rest of the world, eventually opening up to the West as a result of the changes that followed Commodore Perry's arrival in 1853 and the 1868 Meiji Restoration. As Japan began to become aware of and interact with other countries in a more meaningful way, many felt that Japan needed to form an identity with which to present itself on the world stage. This was part of the inspiration behind works such as *Kojikiden* 古事記伝, a study in which Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801) claimed to present the *Kojiki* as it originally was.\(^{50}\) His intention was to give readers access to a Japan that existed before Chinese influence. Studies of this sort were expanded with the Meiji Restoration and the intensified focus on the Emperor and national

\(^{50}\) Burns 2003, p. 68.
status that came along with it. There were many scholars engaged in this kokubungaku 国文学, or national literature study, who sought to discover (i.e. create) a concept of what

Japaneseess was during the Meiji era; when discussing the formation of modern Japanese identity, it is common to look back to this period as the beginning. However, doing so ignores much of the identity development that occurred throughout the Edo period. Although this development may not have been of a complete national identity, there is more to Edo identity than simple local pride.

The ideals of this Edo identity were typified in the Edokko 江戸っ子, or child of Edo. The Edokko was not simply a person who lived in the city, but someone who was truly a product of Edo. Although birth as a towns person, or chōnin 町人, was an important factor in identifying as an Edokko, perhaps just as important was subscribing and aspiring to the ideals rooted in the culture of the city. One of the main components of this ideal was the concept of iki 意気 (also written 粋). Iki was an aesthetic principle born from the culture of the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, and consisted of three primary concepts.51 The first, hari 張り, represented a sense of bravado and unwillingness to compromise, and at the same time, straightforwardness. Second was bitai 媚態, which was an eroticism that was charming, but not excessive. The final concept was akanuke 塗抜け, which was more or less having knowledge of what one needed to be without being pretentious about it. Those who displayed these ideals, along with other qualities, such as generosity and urbanity, were known as tsū 通. Adam Kern nicely sums up the potentially confusing mash of qualities that constitute the tsū as, “…an ironic detachment that was nonetheless grounded in a mastery of the particular

51 Nishiyama 1997, p. 54.
details of Edo's cultural hotspots."\(^{52}\) Over time, the *tsū* became less ideal Edoite and more expert of the pleasure quarters, but the very concept that someone could be identified in a potentially positive light as a expert in the pleasure quarters was still very Edo.

It is important to note that the significance of someone being a *tsū* is not only that they meet these abstract ideals, but also how well they meet these ideals in comparison to those who do not. This comparative structure of “those who are and those are not” drives much of the Edo identity. As Nishiyama Matsunosuke notes in *Edo Culture*, Edo was the only city to have a term like *Edokko*.\(^{53}\) There was no *Kyotokko* or *Osakakko*. Only the Edoites felt the need to distinguish themselves and their city. Not only were they placing themselves as separate, but also above. In her book *Yoshiwara*, Cecilia Seigle discusses a *sharebon* \(^{54}\) that depicts an Osaka millionaire, Koinoike Den’emon, who travels to Yoshiwara.\(^{55}\) Because he is from Osaka, however, he does not know that ways of the Yoshiwara, and no amount of money is able to keep him from embarrassment. It is not that he is presented as a particularly uncouth Osakan. Rather it is a basic expectation that Osakans are uncouth by Edo standards, and are far from being *tsū*.

In trying to understand where an ideal such as *tsū* originates, some of the clearest answers come from examining its opposite. People like the fictional Den'emon were known as *yabo* 野暮, meaning bumpkin or boor. Although it literally refers to someone who makes a living working in a field, *yabo* was still used to refer to even city dwellers who were seen as having manners no better than country farmers. Edo was not simply a location a person could

\(^{52}\) Kern 2006, p. 102.

\(^{53}\) Nishiyama 1997, p. 45.

\(^{54}\) *Sharebon* 落本 were Edo period books in which the humor was rooted in the customs and mannerisms of various types of people, usually associated with the pleasure quarters.

live; rather, it was quite specifically a new place to live that had risen out of and above the countryside. Although there are many surface details to the various aspects of identity in the Edo period, they are all layers on top of a core desire for an urban modernity. In that sense, people outside of Edo are not simply from the country but are effectively from the past.

This interplay between past and present surfaces quite interestingly in the portrayal of monsters in popular culture. As Michael Dylan Foster discusses in *Pandemonium and Parade*, the Edo period saw an increased focus on knowledge and education. One of the manifestations of this trend was the numerous encyclopedias and bestiaries. Some of these bestiaries, such as Toriyama Sekien's *Gazu hyakkiyagyō*, included fabulous creatures such as the *kappa*. Rather than an acknowledgment of the supernatural, however, these inclusions are more an intellectualization of these supernatural entities. By identifying and explaining these creatures, they are being removed from the realm of mystery and superstition. They are no longer fearful specters of twilight. Fearing monsters was for *yabo*; having knowledge about them is what the modern, forward thinking *Edokko* did.

This association between country *yabo* and belief in monsters and the supernatural takes on a fascinating form in works of popular literature, particularly *kibyōshi*. The expectation might be for such works to depict the unlearned country folk believing in monsters and whatever other behaviors that would lead to. Instead, there are many works, such as Torii Kiyotsune's *Kaidan mame ningyō* 怪談豆人形, in which the *yabo* are actually represented by the monsters they fear. This *kibyōshi* is about a group of monsters who come from the rural *Shikoku* 四国 who disguise themselves to go on a sight-seeing tour of Edo.

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56 Foster 2009, p. 30-76.
57 Foster 2009, p. 55.
58 *Shikoku* 四国 is the smallest and least populous of Japan’s four main islands.
Although this is largely for humor’s sake, there are a number of interesting things going on in the background. First, as mentioned before, as relics from the past, these monsters are not only from the country themselves, but are representations of country beliefs. Second, at the end of the book, the monsters are discovered for their true nature and are sent away from Edo. This is not only reflective of modern Edoites banishing supernatural beliefs from their modern society, but it is also exactly what happens to Koinoike Zen’emon. When his backward Osaka ways are exposed, the courtesan he was visiting sends him back where he came from. The monsters offer a clever way to make humor based on the stereotypes of yabo.

Not all of these supernatural tales are stories of outsiders end expulsion. Throughout the course of *Hesokuigane*, for example, the once supernatural *kaminari* goes through a transformation into a proper, human-looking *Edokko*. This transformation is in no way forced on the *kaminari*. It is entirely his choice. Even a thunder god, who presumably has powers beyond that of any human, would rather be an Edoite. He does eventually leave Edo, and return to the sky, but only when called away by his fellow *kaminari*. Even then, he maintains his much of his human appearance, and brings his Edoite wife along. Although this is a very different trajectory than *Kaidan mame ningyō*, they both clearly hold Edo as the ideal. In one, the monsters are banished for not matching this ideal; in the other, a monster is allowed to stay for accepting them. What is also interesting about the stories is that they are stories about visiting Edo, for an Edo audience. Travel literature is normally seen as a means to experience what the reader is unable to in their everyday life. Edoties clearly do not need books to show them what Edo is like. In these depictions of outsiders, *kibyōshi* are providing Edoites with a lens to look at themselves, and to an extent, marvel at their own greatness.
Nishiyama attributes the unique development of Edo identity to the presence of outsiders in the city. Whether it was farmers traveling to the city to sell their goods, or samurai on their biennial trips to the capital, these outsiders created contrasts against which Edoites could compare themselves. While this is no doubt true, stories like the *kibyōshi* examples also play an important role in this process. The role can be best explained by drawing comparisons to what Jaques Lacan calls the mirror stage. This concept refers to the period in an infant’s development when it begins to recognize itself in mirrors. In this moment, the infant sees itself not as its constituent parts, but as an external gestalt. This creates an imago, or ideal self. The theory continues that an individual spends their life seeking this ideal self. One might argue whether or not humans in general spend their lives seeking their ideal selves, but Lacan's theory seems quite accurately to describe the formation process of Edo ideals. The action of Edoites looking at themselves through a constructed gestalt image creates an ideal which they can in turn follow. While it is certainly not uncommon for residents of a particular town to have a sense of town pride, in Edo's case it was something different. Town pride is a positive outward projection based on promoting what makes a particular town great. Edo identity, however, was projected inward as much as it was projected outward. Moreover, it did not simply praise the qualities of Edo, but also created a hierarchy in which Edo was above everything else. Therefore, these ideas constitute something more than town pride; something I would argue we can appropriately term Edo exceptionalism.
While it is easy to identify a number of individual texts in which there is a strong sense of Edo exceptionalism, establishing a more precise idea of how this theme plays out across a whole genre is more of a challenge. So far, many of the studies of kibyōshi have focused on single text or a group of texts from a single author. In order to most effectively establish and explore the themes found in kibyōshi, more narrowly focused studies would benefit from being complemented by broader studies of trends across the entire genre. Some work has already been done in that direction. Tanahashi Masahiro 柿橋正博, for example, has already done the staggering amount of work needed to produce a comprehensive catalog of kibyōshi in his creation of the Kibyōshi sōran. Tanahashi’s Sōran contains not only titles and known bibliographic data, but also summaries for each work. The entries are organized chronologically and indexed by author, which means that to use it to explore texts by theme, though certainly much faster than randomly searching through individual books, would require considerable extra effort.

At least one such project has, however, been undertaken. Shinonome Kijin 東雲騎人, a Japanese author/illustrator who specializes in yōkai 妖怪 (monsters), began a project to compile a list of monster-themed kibyōshi based on what he could find in the Sōran. While creating such as list is only a first step, Shinonome demonstrated the prevalence of that particular theme and laid a foundation for further investigation. The basic concept of his project could easily be applied to the exploration of other themes such as Edo exceptionalism.

59 The website on which he maintained that list was taken down shortly before the completion of this thesis, perhaps (it may be hoped) as a prelude to its publication in print form.
Developing a broader picture of these themes would not only illuminate *kibyōshi* itself, but also help connect *kibyōshi* to what was going on thematically in other genres.

As much as *kibyōshi* is still a relatively small area of study, it is still the most widely researched of the *kusazōshi* genres. *Kurohon, aohon, akahon,* and *gōkan* have attracted even less coverage, with very little published in English language scholarship. Although I was able to briefly make comparisons to *gōkan* in my analysis of the text-image relationship in *kibyōshi,* comparisons to the other *kusazōshi* were, unfortunately, outside the scope of this project. Although each genre of *kusazōshi* certainly has its own characteristics, they are all still closely related. Many artists moved seamlessly from one genre of *kusazōshi* to another. Kiyotsune, for example, worked in *kurohon* and *aohon* before he started in *kibyōshi.* As such, an understanding of *kibyōshi* ultimately seems incomplete without an understanding of the others. Further study of *kibyōshi,*s text-image relationship should not only include examinations of more texts, but also examinations of these other genres to track how the text-image relationship changed over time. Including these other genres in thematic analysis would also be beneficial, allowing thematic changes to be better connected to outside influences, such as changes in readership and other major social and cultural changes over time.

The importance of these concepts of thematic and inter-genre studies can be demonstrated for the case of *Kaminari no hesokuigane.* It is clear that the portion of Kiyotsune’s career devoted to *kusazōshi* was not simply an afterthought, but more likely its primary focus. However, what is still unclear is whether he was only an illustrator or also a writer. That the lack of credited authorship apparent in many of his works was consistent with the practices of the time only makes this question more difficult. Were it not common
for authors to be anonymous, it would be easy to assume Kiyotsune wrote the works himself. If Kiyotsune himself did not write, the best candidate for some of these anonymously-authored works would be his primary recorded collaborator, Yanagawa Keishi. To test this hypothesis more work would need to be done in analyzing and comparing the writing style of works definitively credited to Keishi. However, whether or not Keishi could be established as the author of some of Kiyotsune’s works with no credited author, his participation raises other questions, as noted earlier. The *Nihon jinmei daijiten* may be accurate in citing him as one of the pioneers of *kibyōshi*, but to this point very little investigation seems to have been carried out into his works or into who he was. The name Yanagawa Keishi sounds like that of a samurai, but that does not necessarily mean he actually was one. If an author without a preexisting reputation wanted to write *gunki monogatari* 軍記物語, as the Yanagawa Keishi works generally are, using a samurai-sounding name as a pseudonym would be an effective method to create instant credibility on martial matters. Even though Kiyotsune already had the benefit of the well-established Torii name, that name was associated entirely with ukiyo-e and kabuki. If Kiyotsune was doing some of the writing himself, and if he wanted to venture into *gunki monogatari*, using a name such as Keishi could have been quite useful. And if Keishi were just a pseudonym for Kiyotsune, this would explain why Keishi never worked with anyone else—but without further study and evidence that remains pure speculation.

If anything can be said of Kiyotsune, it is that there is more to be done. Japanese-language scholarship has begun to scratch the surface of his *kusazōshi* work. Shimada Daisuke’s article “*Torii Kiyotsune -- kibyōshi-jitate hanashibon kenkyū*” 鳥居清経・黄表紙

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60 Tales of war.
仕立噺本の研究, for example, examines the sources from which Kiyotsune took many of his stories. There are also articles that provide full transcriptions of some of his books, such as Sato Satoko’s publications in the journal Kusamura, but these tend to be very light on explication. Scholars in Japan are evidently still in the exploratory stages of research and are only beginning to form a picture of the person behind the name Kiyotsune. English language scholarship, on the other hand, has barely addressed his kusazōshi work at all. I have found nothing beyond brief mentions in books on ukiyo-e history. Howard A. Link does have two works specifically on the Torii school, his doctoral dissertation (cited earlier) and a companion publication to a collection, but Kiyotsune is not a significant factor in either. The conception of Kiyotsune as primarily a relatively unsuccessful ukiyo-e artist is still the overriding one, and that seems, so far, to have limited further investigation into his work. I hope I have shown, however, that kibyōshi were not an afterthought for him. In this genre he was not only one of the most prolific artists, but also one of the first artists to reach such a high level of output. He may not have developed a persona as Kyōden did, and he certainly does not have the popular legacy of Kyōden or Ikku, but with over 130 published kibyōshi, as well as a number of kurohon and aohon, he created a volume of work that few others in the medium did. While some of his works show simplicity in image, others show a level of skill and detail indicative of his ukiyo-e roots. In terms of artistry, he had the potential to compete with the best. As the field of kusazōshi study continues to develop, both Kiyotsune and Keishi are going to be important pieces of the image that eventually emerges.

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62 Link 1977.
Preface to the Translation

As discussed above, the text-image relationship is one of the defining characteristics of kibyōshi. As such, I felt it was important to translate this work in a way that maintains that relationship. There are numerous methods for presenting translations of visual-verbal narratives like kibyōshi, and they all have their caveats. There was only one of these methods that was easy to leave out of consideration and that was providing a text-only translation: not including the images was out of the question. There are two methods that include the images in more or less their original form. The first presents each page of the book individually, followed by a transcription and translation. While this method includes the images, and results in what is perhaps the most straightforward-to-read text, placing the images and the translated text on separate pages breaks their relationship entirely. Moreover, presenting the text as an isolated block creates a misleading sense of textual-primacy. The second of these methods, employed by Keller Kimbrough in some translations for the journal Japanese Language and Literature, places the translated text in the margins surrounding the image with lines pointing to their associate chunk of original text. This method has the advantage of maintaining the images in a nearly unaltered state, while at the same time giving the reader a sense of where each block of text belongs on the page.

However, as slight as that text-image separation is, it is still a separation. Reading the text and viewing the image should be as close as possible to a unified experience. As such, I have employed the method used by Adam Kern in his translations for Manga from the Floating World. This method removes the original text from the image and replaces it with the translations. From the perspective of a modern, type-set world, this switching of text may

63 Kern 2006.
not seem like a particularly big deal. Given that *kibyōshi* pages were printed from (mostly) one of a kind woodblocks, erasing that original text does feel wrong, if only for reasons of artistic integrity. Moreover, moving from the vertically-oriented Japanese to the horizontally-oriented English text does present a few situations in which the text does not fit quite perfectly. However, in service of best enabling those unfamiliar with pre-modern Japanese to experience this *kibyōshi* as a *kibyōshi*, those caveats are worth the ability to maintain the text-image unity.

The vertical orientation of the original Japanese text also has an effect on reading order. As I argued above, there is not necessarily an absolute order in which the blocks of text must be read. However, because each line of Japanese is written top to bottom, and the lines flow from right to left, there is a general right to left flow.

Also central to this text is its humor. As explained, it is specifically the author’s own humorous twists that give the text originality (and prevent the book from drifting into plagiarism). Therefore, I have also tried to maintain that humor in the translation. In some cases, the jokes and puns are too culturally rooted to make sense without explanation. As a joke explained is a joke ruined, I reworked some of the puns, to the best of my admittedly limited comedic abilities, with the hope that they could be enjoyed without explanation. Some of these reworkings resulted in significant deviations from the original words used, and may seem to overly domesticate the translation, but all the changes have been explained in the notes, which, along with a section-by-section transcription of the text, follow each page or spread in the translation. Having only a few years experience in the world of Edo wordplay and *mitate*, there may also be a couple puns I have missed.
A long time ago, just as these folks were noticing that it was growing cloudy, a terrifying bolt of lightning heralded a sudden rainstorm. They burned incense and invoked the name of the Kannon sutra, and after a while, the lightning struck the doctor's place next door with a terrifying sound...

Get the Setsubun Beans!

Stewing Away Your Money

Book 1
昔々の事なりしが少し暁りしと思ひしに 忽 ちおふ夕立にて凄まじき 雷にてありければ、こうをたき、
観 音 経を唱へけば、暫くあって、凄まじき程厳しくとなりの医者の所へ落ちける。
また光ったぞ。
節分の豆を尋ねや。

Setsubun Beans - On the day before spring begins, Japan celebrates the spring setsubun (lit. seasonal division). Part of this festival is a practice called mamemaki, or bean-throwing, in which roasted soybeans are thrown outside as a means to drive away evil spirits, i.e. whichever spirit is causing the lightning.
“How excellent! Mmm... let’s make some fried eggplant later.”

“Smelling some fish stew as Kaminari forgot all landed himself in front. The phrase “tempest in a teapot” can actually be traced this thunder with a cookpot.”

“I’ll make some fried eggplant later.”

“Since it was a doctor’s house, after all, Kaminari appeared entirely unannounced, the doctor still asked, “Are you hurt? That was dangerous!”

Ahh, I’m so scared!
雷 は州走の臍の匂においにつつむし、おっくみを失うな、御釜おかまの前まいへ落おち、臍へそを強したたかか食くいければ、世の人々の口ずさみに御釜の前で臍が笑うことはこの事なり。

おお怖こわい。

医者の家なければ、さっそく台所へ出で來で来しでも、痛みはしませぬか、危ない事をなされた。

それが好きならいっそこっちに行きっしゃれ、そのくちへいっぱい参まいれ。

それは奈じけ茄子のしきやを後で焼きましょう。

**Spread A2 Transcription**

Upper Right: 雷は州走の臍の匂いに通を失い、御釜の前へ落ち、臍を強か食いければ、世の人々の口ずさみに御釜の前で臍が笑うことはこの事なり。

Middle Right: おお怖い。

Lower Right: 医者の家なければ、さっそく台所へ出て来しでも、痛みはしませぬか、危ない事をなされた。

Center: それが好きならいっそこっちに行きっしゃれ、そのくちへいっぱい参まいれ。

*それは奈じけ茄子のしきやを後で焼きましょう。

**Spread A2 Notes**

**Lightning** - This character is a raijin 雷神, a Shintō thunder god who is often more casually referred to as kaminari-sama 雷様. He is generally depicted as he is in this illustration, with a horned, demonic visage and a surrounding ring of taiko 太鼓 drums.

**Fish stew** - The food referenced in the source text is not actually fish stew, but subashiri no heso 州走のへそ, which is more commonly known as bora no heso ボラのへそ, both of which mean mullet navel. Bora and subashiri are both refer to mullet fish,
with the later referring to young fry. The dish is actually the fried stomach of the mullet fish, but is called *heso*, or navel, for its navel-like appearance. The fact that the kaminari comes down to eat something called *heso* is a joke on a folk belief that *kaminari* eat people’s navels. In the translation I have replaced *heso* with fish stew for the purposes of the upcoming pun referenced by the title of the story.

2 - The symbol inside a circle on a characters sleeve is common identification device used in *kibyōshi*. In the doctor’s case, I have replaced the *kō* 功 from the name *Kōan 功庵* with a “2” to represent the name Dr. Twice.

**Fried Eggplant** - *Nasu no shigiyaki* -- Eggplant that has been fried with a miso-based sauce. Kaminari’s line of dialog forms a pun by changing the “naku” at the end of *katajikenaku 恬い* (which expresses gratitude/indebtedness) with *nasu no shigikayaki*.

**ABC** – Originally printed on the fan were some of the beginning characters of the *iroha* いろは poem, which contains one of each character in the Japanese syllabary and, like the alphabet, can be used for ordering.

- - A punctuation mark known as an *ioriten* 窪点 or part alteration mark. In this case, it clarifies for the reader that the speaker is changing.
Top Right: 雷、医者の家へ落ち州走の臍に食らい込み帰る事を忘れ、医者の掛かり人となり。あまり暇故、門番になりければ、夥しく見物人、これを雷門という。

Lower Right: おや々怪しからぬ!
さて、さて、珍じゃ！両国は跣だ！

Upper Center: ああ、退屈だ

Lower Left: 旦那はお出ですか
さて、物見高い事じゃ。

Spread A3 Notes

Kaminari Gate – This is a play on the actual gate (still there in contemporary Tokyo) in Asakusa named Kaminarimon 雷門 (mon meaning gate), outside of the Buddhist temple Sensō-ji 浅草寺. The gate contains a statue of a taijin.
Ryōgoku’s where it’s at! – Ryōgoku 両国 is an area now located in the Sumida 墨田区 ward of Tokyo. The speaker refers to Ryōgoku with the word hadashi 赤, which literally means barefoot, but can also be used to identify something as superior.
Because he had those drums, when Kôan went out with his friends from time to time, they'd all call him a player, even though he didn't actually use them. "I'm just holding them, you've got it all wrong!"

The night is still young! It is not yet time to sleep!

Because the doctor, named Dr. Twice, was a man of generosity and allowed the fallen Kaminari to stay at his house, Kaminari became a man of this world, and gave his Taiko drums to the doctor.

Let's cruise downtown a bit.
桑原功庵という医者、心広者故、雷の落ちしを、我が家に置きければ、雷も下界のものとなられば、太鼓もいらず、医者に遣りけり。功庵は友人にして、時々は遊びに行きけるを皆々あの医者は太鼓持ちじゃといえども、太鼓もちではなし。太鼓を持もっているのなり。心へ違いないなり。

仲の町としゃれかふ。

今夜はお早うございます。まだ寝り前でございます。

Dr. Twice - Kuwabara Kōan 桑原功庵 in the original. The name has been changed to facilitate a joke later on.

Nakanochō 仲の町 - The main street through the center of Edo’s Yoshiwara red-light district.

Player - Taiko mochi 太鼓持ち Literally "drum-carrier," this originally referred to a geisha-like male entertainer. In the Edo period, however, it also came refer to men steeped in the ways of the Yoshiwara red-light district, general enthusiasts of merry-making. As these characters are in the midst of cavorting about and cruising Yoshiwara, I took it as the latter meaning. I translate it as “player” to elicit both the meaning of an instrument player and the colloquial implication of sexual libertine and womanizer.
Kaminari became and while leisurely passing aforesaid stew-lover a pile of debt with the and spent all his money. "Well then, that's one heck of a stew-lover!"

I see, so you're stewing away all your money.

Koan's houseguest, his time, the managed to accrue fishmonger. That's 50 helpings of the stew and 30 helpings of red bean buns.

At one point, though still unsure of what sort of strange place he had fallen to, the Kaminari had already saved up enough money in his pockets to go to the fishmonger and pay off his fish stew tab. When people safely "stew" away money, They are actually referring back to this money for "stew"
Right: 雷と言う者はいつ何時、どのような不定64な所へ落ちようも知れず、かねて懐中に用意の金を蓄えおきけるが、

これを魚屋へ州走の臍代に払う。せんにて、用意の金を臍繰り金と言うは此臍食い金の事なり。

Center: 雷は功庵の家に掛かり人となり、ふらふらとしているうち、例の臍好きにて、魚屋に夥しく借金して残らず払う。

Lower Center: 鮫が五千本、腹太が三千本でございます。

Middle Left: さてもきつい臍付きだ。

Lower Left: なるほど。臍食い金を貯えてじゃ。

Spread A5 Notes

Harabuto 腹太 – Short for harabuto mochi 腹太餅. Despite having mochi in the name, they are not made of pounded rice, but are steamed buns filled with red bean paste.

64 This fujō 不定 could also be fujō 不浄, meaning unclean or impure, rather than expressing uncertainty.
雷は功庵の所に掛かり人となりけれども、共、角のあるゆえ人交わりもならず。角を折らんがため、毎日、談義参りに出ける。

なむあみだぶつ、なむあみだぶつ...

Sign: 傳岸 読法 當寺

"Praise be to Buddha..."
"Although he was lodging at Twic's place, because he still had horns, it was difficult for him to make friends.

and in order to get rid of the horns, he went to Buddhist sermons every day."
It was a strange and Kaminari, Equinoctial sermons, horn-losing "coming of age", and became a normal person.

wonderful thing: having gone daily to Buddhist had a

Let's give you something a bit more gentlemanly.

Well, well... How curious.

Stewing Away Your Money

Book 2
Page B1 Transcription

Upper Center: 不思議なるかな、 雷は彼岸中談義まいりせしに角落ちしゆえ元服して常の人となる。

Bottom: 本多に致します。

さて、さて、奇妙々。

Page B1 Notes

Something a bit more gentlemanly – The barber is actually offering a Hondamage 本多髷, a style of topknot used by male Edoites. It is significant in that the hair-style he is switching to is not only human, but it was also one of the most common male styles in Edo. I.e., he doesn’t just become human, but also becomes a typical Edoite.

The large crest on the wall in the upper left was originally Mimasu no naka ni Ikazuchi 三升の中に雷, a crest of the Raizō 雷蔵 lineage of kabuki actors, who are referenced on a later page. The character in the middle of the crest, which is also the first character in the name Raizō, is kaminari 雷, implying that this is Kaminari’s house.
It's all thanks to you...

Kaminari, you've got a new name and now Oina's said yes to marriage! How joyous!

Kaminari became normal, assuming the name Kina Kijirou, and thanks to Twice, I was able to find a nice wife. Kaminari was quite proud of her, and the couple got along nicely with everyone.

Congrats! Congrats!

How thunderously they stomp!
雷元服して名を衣九郎と就き、功庵の世話にて女坊を持たせけるが、衣九郎至極立て引きものにて世間よく夫婦仲良く暮らしける。

めでたい、めでたい。

何かとお世話でございます。
It is because these rustic kaminari...people still do so today when they search for lost children.

Although Kaminari came down to earth for fish stew, he had become an or something. They went searching around Dōtonbori, Shiroko Kannon, and Ryōgoku. Perhaps exhibit he was looked after by Kōan, and lived married to Oina because he never returned home, his comrades in the sky were worried that...
衣九郎は臍のために下界に落ち、功庵に世話になり、お稲と夫婦になり暮す。天竺にて返らぬ事を仲間の物案じもし見世物にでもなり。しかと、道頓堀、白子の観音、両国のあたりを尋ねる。

お客か。

何だ。騒々しい。

日光の雷、筑波の雷、太鼓にて尋ねの出で、ようと巡り追う今子共の迷い子にたいこを打つはこの因縁なり。

ここでござろう。

Tenjiku 天竺 – This word often refers to India, but it can also refer to the sky, as the context in this case implies.
The “exhibit” Kaminari’s cohorts worry he has become refers to *misemono* 見世物. *Misemono* were exhibits of performances, novelties, and oddities in temporary enclosures that were popular during the Edo period. They are often compared to carnivals and freak shows, but unlike their western equivalents, *misemono* were often set up at shrines and temples as a means of fundraising.

*Dōtonbori* 道頓堀, *Shiroko Kannon* 白子の観音, and *Ryōgoku* 両国 – The locations given establish a route for the kaminari’s search. They start in *dōtonbori*, which is in Osaka, and stop by the *Shiroko Kannon*, which is located on the coast of *Ise* Bay in *Mie* prefecture, on their way west to *Ryōgoku* in Edo.

*Nikkō* 日光 and *Tsukuba* 筑波 – The original text indicates that the searching kaminari are from these two areas north of Tokyo. Coming from areas outside of the city implies that these other kaminari are country-folk, providing a contrast to the newly urbane Kinu Kyūrō.
Lady Oina

It's because these two got married that thunder and rain are stuck with each other.

...the splendors of the heavens, and that they were even good actors like Raizō in the plays above the clouds.

Kina Kyūrō was a chivalrous man, and wanted to return to Koan's kindness, he was anxious to return to the sky.

The two other kaminari were happy to be seeing Kyūrō, and in order to encourage his wife to come along, they told her of...

Finding stew like this is a rare treat!

I say, this fish stew is a feast!

hmm... cooked just right!
Middle Left: これはこれは臍焼きとはごちそうごちそう。

Lower Left: なるほど。焼き加減がよい。

Upper Center: このような臍は珍しい。

Lower Center: 二人の雷、衣九郎に訪ね合い喜び、女坊お稲も当道せんと色々勧め、天上の栄華、雲の上人になり給え、あつちに芝居もあって雷蔵こそは良い役者でござる。

「お稲も旦夫婦になりければ、雷は雨が商売ゆえ、腐れ縁とはこの事なり。」

Upper Left: 衣九郎は男気な者にて、功庵の世話もただしけれども、天竺へ帰る気になる。

Character Labels: 雷 衣九郎 女方お稲

Spread B4 Notes

Raizō – Like the crest on the first page on this book, this refers to the Raizō 雷蔵 lineage of kabuki actors.
Kaminari and Oina’s Marriage – The word *inazuma* 稲妻 (a flash of lightning) is comprised of the *ina* 稲 (rice plant) in Oina’s name and *tsuma* 妻 (wife). In reality, it is the boon of rain that always comes with lightning that made it the rice plant’s “wife”, but the text is suggesting that the word refers to Kaminari’s wife Oina, and that it is because they married that thunder and rain occur together.
I guess there's no use pointing out that the rainy season will still come...

Here's the rest of your bill...

Since his kaminari friends summoned him back home, Kinu Kyūdō decided to return. As Dr. Twice helped him with one thing after another, as thanks for the aid, Kaminari named him consul to the heavens.

The doctor gave the Taiko drums back to Kaminari, thus he was no longer known as a player, and was left speechless by his appointment as consul to the heavens.

Treatment like this is quite rare.

"I'm grateful for the aid you've given me so far. In exchange, the kaminari will always respect your surname, and make sure that lightning never strikes Twice."
衣九郎は雷仲間迎いに帰る故、帰るつもりになり。功庵にだんだん世話になりし故、世話めの恩返しに

天竺にて施策し、天漢の領事を功庵にはなしければ。

Kaminari: 危殆の法なりと、関心する。

功庵は太鼓を衣九郎に返し故、太鼓持ちの異名もなく、天漢の領事にて復帰に違へる。

これまでのお世話忝なし。その換わり、お前の苗字、桑原々と申す所へはこの雷でも、落としは致しませぬ。

これはお残りおうござる。

又ちょっとちょっと雨天の節ござれといいたがご無用。

Never strike Twice - As mentioned above, the doctor’s real name is Kuwabara, which is also the name of the hometown of Suguwara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903). Michizane was purported to have become a raijin after death. As such he was believed
to have wrought destruction on the capital, Kyoto, but he left Kuwabara alone. The text is jokingly suggesting that the events of this book are a more up to date reason that lightning supposedly never strikes there.
Page 6

Page 6 Transcription

Center: 衣九郎は天竺より向かいに来りし故、女方お稲を

連れ立帰る。お伊那を妻にしたる故稲妻とは是なり。

Bottom: 功庵、楼殿しを買い給え、五穀常住に守るべし。

Lower Left: おさらばだ。

Page 6 Notes

The five grains – Refers to the primary grains grown in Japan. The five are generally listed as rice, wheat, millet, and beans (with two types of either beans or millet), but vary based on time and place. The meaning of the sentence is somewhat unclear, but may be further punning on the connection between lighting and rice growing.
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