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d'Edo. Il s'agit d'un *kibyōshi* (« livre à la couverture jaune », désignant un genre de livres illustrés très en vogue à la fin du XVIII^e siècle et au début du XIX^e siècle) de Shikitei Sanba (1776-1822) dont la préface commence par une longue liste d'éditeurs et d'écrivains de littérature légère, d'artistes et d'illustrateurs, représentés aussi par des cartes géographiques qui dessinent un pays imaginaire et idéal de l'*ukiyo-e*. Cette *géographie* de l'*ukiyo-e* renvoie cette fois à la construction d'un monde imaginaire, idéalisé de l'*ukiyo-e*, mais nous invite en même temps à y voir un processus d'évaluation à l'œuvre. C'est en effet sur un processus d'évaluation constant – qui classe les filles, les clients, et en fin de compte aussi les auteurs et les artistes – que repose la production artistique de l'*ukiyo-e* et plus généralement, la vie du quartier de Yoshiwara. Ce phénomène se matérialise, notamment, sous la forme de guides, de listes, de

cartes ou encore de diagrammes qui rapprochent ou éloignent, mais aussi élisent ou excluent. L'auteur, en conclusion, s'adressant au lecteur et le prenant pour juge, cite son propre livre (« *the book you hold in your hands* »), qu'elle présente comme étant, lui aussi, un ouvrage consacré à la « visualité » et le fruit non d'une simple individualité, mais d'une collaboration impliquant de multiples acteurs. Il apparaît, au terme de la passionnante étude de J. N. Davis, que chez elle la notion de *réseau* – qui aplanit les positions – semble pouvoir être opposée à celle d'*évaluation* – qui les contraste –, mais que l'un et l'autre de ces principes coexistent dans bien des sociétés, celle du Japon d'Edo comme de notre monde moderne, régissant la vie des quartiers de plaisir, la production artistique, ou le développement de l'histoire de l'art.

Michel Maucuer,
MNAAG

KUSUNOSE Nichinen & Christophe MARQUET

Ôtsue-e. Imagerie populaire du Japon

Arles, Éditions Philippe Picquier, 2015.
252 pages, 132 illustrations en couleur, bibliographie.
ISBN 978-2-8097-0966-7

It is not often that a reviewer gets the chance to comment on a publication that is both pleasant *and* instructive to read, as well as lavishly illustrated and tastefully produced.

This book treats of a relatively little known subject belonging to what we would

now qualify, in the wake of Yanagi Sōetsu, as Japanese folk arts: the so-called “Ôtsu pictures.” The name designates a kind of image, drawn in quick and bold strokes of the brush, using ink and colour pigments, on a sheet of paper of standard size. These

paintings are so named because they were once the product of Ôtani and Oiwake, two hamlets of the bustling town of Ôtsu, the gateway to the imperial capital of Kyôto on the shore of Lake Biwa. Deftly turned out by lowly artisans, they used to be sold for a few pennies in the roadside shops along the Tôkaidô, the great highway of pre-modern Japan, as souvenirs to passersby, to pilgrims and travellers of all callings. A cheap and common article, run off in quantity throughout the Edo period, Ôtsu-e gradually lost their appeal and ceased to be sought after in the course of the Meiji era. By the beginning of the 20th century they had all but faded into oblivion. Of the original production, only a few hundred specimens have come down to us, the great majority now surviving in public, and some private, collections around the world.

The solid in-4° volume of some 250 pages is made up of two parts.

In the well-documented opening chapter, Christophe Marquet introduces the general reader to this particular genre of popular picture, anonymous, unpretentious if not crude, whose heyday seems to have lasted from the middle of the 18th century to the end of the pre-modern age. From the fair number of documents of the first half of the Edo period, both written and pictorial, we surmise that these paintings and prints initially figured what we would now call “religious” themes. Under this term are subsumed all manner of beliefs and persuasions, whether denominational or unaffiliated, that

the Westerner would associate with one form or another of Japanese religiosity. Thus, the foreigner tends to think of one of the most popular, indeed emblematic, motifs of Ôtsu-e, the “prayer-chanting goblin” (Onino-nenbutsu), as a Buddhist theme, because the demon is represented as an itinerant friar asking for alms while invoking the mercy of the Buddha Amida. Rather than illustrating the Buddhist practices of mendicancy and devotional incantation, however, the motif is said to portray the moral idea of a person who under a pious appearance hides an evil heart.

The themes depicted are numerous. In his three basic studies,¹ Yanagi Sōetsu (1889–1961) who must be considered the pioneer and foremost authority on the subject, identifies some eighty in the early 1920s, but a few decades later his last count amounts to a hundred and twenty, among which only about twenty are of some kind of religious import. This reckoning is not without significance, since contemporary evidence makes it clear that in the 19th century the repertoire had dwindled down to the ten conventional subjects we still know nowadays, all of which are of a secular nature (see pp. 22–35).

Ôtsu-e, though still sporadically produced today in a couple of shops near the entrance to the Mii-dera, have long ceased

1. YANAGI Sōetsu 柳宗悦, *Shoki Ôtsu-e* 初期大津繪 [“Early Ôtsu Paintings”], Tôkyô, Kōseiikai shuppan, 1929; YANAGI Muneyoshi, “The peasant paintings of Ôtsu, Japan,” in WARNER Langdon & JAYNE Horace, *Eastern Art*, vol. II, 1930, pp. 4–36; YANAGI Sōetsu & TANAKA Toyotarō (eds.), *Ôtsu-e zuroku* 大津繪図録 [“An Illustrated Catalogue of Ôtsu-e”], Tôkyô, Sansaisha, 1960.

to be a living tradition. The crucial questions that subsequent scholars, Sōetsu to begin with, have been trying to answer, is what these pictures signified and what may have been the purpose they actually served. C. Marquet is exhaustive and convincing enough in introducing the reader to all the reasons that can be deduced from materials of the past, from recent Japanese studies and from interpreting the pictures themselves (pp. 11–35 *passim*), so that there is no need to either criticise or add to his presentation. Nevertheless, I may perhaps be allowed to highlight here two points which, though duly mentioned, deserve to be given greater weight.

There is no doubt that, during the first half of the Edo period at least, when images of religious character prevailed, Ōtsu-e would have appealed to the numerous pilgrims who passed every day through Ōtsu town going to and fro, visiting the holy sites in and around the capital. However, one cannot sufficiently stress the fact that, underlying their religious charge, such images had the value of a “souvenir” (*miyage* 土産), a term, written as it is with the ideographs that also read *dosan*: “local product,” meaning a material token, a typical product of the place that it represents and to which it is a karmic “link.” In other words, an Ōtsu-e is, amongst many other things, an *engimono* (縁起物), a “material link” between a place and a person. As an object it contains and transmits, moreover, the merits ensuing not only from the representation itself, but also from the meritorious deed—the

pilgrimage—, of which it serves as an attestation.²

In the second place, being thus imbued with a kind of magical power, the Ōtsu-e, more than anything else, is a charm. Whether it functions as an amulet, i.e. wards off evil forces, danger, or disease, or as a talisman, able to attract fortune, happiness, or luck, it should be considered as a version of *ofuda*, a paper charm that for centuries hardly any visitor to a major temple or shrine had failed to purchase and carry home. On hearing the term *ofuda* the reader is wont to see in his mind’s eye the present-day paper slips, which are of much smaller size than the traditional Ōtsu-e. These were invariably painted on either one, two, or even more vertically arranged “half-sheets” of paper (*hanshi*) whose standard size measured some 32 × 25 cm, and were meant to be mounted as a hanging scroll, which was the case of many a votive print of the *ofuda* type of pre-modern times. What makes an *ofuda* of such a picture is, of course, not the size but its *function*: its immanent magic power to avert negative or/and to attract positive energies.³ That in this respect the subject of the image is not necessarily determinative, is shown by the example of the “prayer-chanting goblin” for whom C. Marquet lists the alternative roles of stopping children from wailing at night, of repelling insects, and protecting

2. See on this aspect KYBURZ Josef A., “Des liens et des choses : *engimono* et *omocha*,” *L’Homme*, 31(117), 1991, pp. 96–121 (especially pp. 108–113).

3. See KYBURZ Josef (ed.), *Ofuda – Amulettes et talismans du Japon – On Japanese Charms – (おふだ) 雑考*, Paris, Institut des hautes études japonaises du Collège de France, 2014, pp. 386–389.

the household from disease and misfortune, in addition to keeping off burglars (p. 35). Kusunose Nichinen himself, the artist who tried to revive the Ōtsu-e tradition, repeatedly insisted on their resemblance to the votive pictures of the 15th and 16th centuries and to the style and function of the *ofuda*-type votive tablets called *ema* (p. 49, 50).

Nichinen (1888–1960), Kusunose Hitoshi’s *nom de plume*, is indeed the central figure of this book. An artist of many talents, known mainly for his brushwork and seal engraving, but also as a painter and classical poet, Nichinen’s interest lay in the folk arts rather than in the literati styles of the Edo period, somewhat in the same vein as Sōetsu. As his contemporary did, he took a liking to the unadulterated craftwork and unique expression of the Ōtsu pictures and set out to revive this obsolete style of painting. In a corpus of some one hundred pictures he reconstituted all the traditional themes he could find represented on specimens in private collections. In 1920 Nichinen then published, in Ōsaka, the result of his endeavour in a series of seventy-eight stencil-coloured woodblock prints under the title of *Ōtsue* [大津繪], originally issued as loose sheets in three separate folders.

C. Marquet presents the personage of Nichinen and his editorial undertaking in a second chapter (pp. 38–59), including a translation of the artist’s own reflections on the characteristics and history of the genre (pp. 48–50) published in the 1926 issue of the magazine *Dessan* (デッサン).

The main section consists of the faithful reproduction of the totality of the stencils of Nichinen’s *Ōtsue*, in their original size of 22 × 17 cm. C. Marquet has chosen to present the prints in seven chapters, inspired by the typology proposed by Yanagi Sōetsu in 1929. This helps the reader to put the whole lot into some kind of classified order, an option the original publication does not provide. One thus conveniently finds grouped together, in Chapter 3 for example, nine variations on the theme of the already mentioned demon.

Tribute must be paid to the publisher for the excellent quality, care and taste with which the volume has been fashioned. It lies well in one’s hand, is comfortable to handle, and stays open without breaking. Ichinose’s stencils are reproduced on matte stock that brings out the mineral colours on the ochery ground characteristic of the *torinoko*-paper of the local tradition.

In this almost cloudless sky, one may discern a couple of flaws, albeit of not much consequence except to the specialist. In the Bibliography at the end of the volume may be found two catalogues of the Ōtsu Municipal Museum of History, listed under the author’s name of YOKOYA 1995, and YOKOYA 2006. However, the colophon of both of these works has ŌTSUSHI REKISHI HAKUBUTSUKAN as editor and publisher, which means that it must be looked for under this name. In the case of *Ōtsu-e no sekai*, the catalogue of the exhibition presented in this museum in 2006, Yokoya Ken’ichirō, the local curator and

his two assistants, Yamazaki Kazuhiro and Wada Mitsuo are indeed briefly mentioned in the Acknowledgements—where, however, editorship is credited to Wada and Yokoya—, but none of the first three names are found together anywhere in print. It would have been a lot fairer to mention instead Kimura Yoshihiro and Ishimaru Masayuki, who sign the only two texts of the catalogue. This is in no way to belittle the importance of Yokoya's and his assistants' contribution, but solely to point out that the interested reader will not find these two titles in a public or university library under the name of YOKOYA, but under the museum's name. This is all the more important as both of these publications document exhibitions of major import, held by what is the most specialised museum on this subject, and feature pictorial materials otherwise not readily available.

This may be a good occasion to mention a seminal study that is omitted in the otherwise well furnished bibliography. Though it does not have an immediate bearing on Nichinen's revival endeavour, *Haitai Ôtsue-bushi* by Ichiba Naojirô (1928), must be considered an important step in the drawing up of the history of these pictures. In this "Decline of the Ôtsu-e Ditties" published the year preceding Yanagi's ground-breaking "Early Ôtsu-e," this Kyûshû folklorist of the Yanagita school traces the tradition of popular songs and ballads inspired by the more comic features of Ôtsu-e, back to the beginning of the 19th century.⁴

4. ICHIBA Naojirô 市場直二郎, *Haitai Ôtsue-bushi* 廢類大津繪殺節 ["The Decline

The songs had apparently been all the rage around the 1850s, spawning a considerable amount of literature and books, only to give way, together with the pictures they were based on, to the "enlightened" civilisation that was to spell their disappearance during the Meiji period. The historical significance, however, and the reason why mention is made here of Ôtsue-bushi, is that the wording of one of the earliest versions, if not of the actual original "Ôtsue Ditty," gives testimony to the fact that by the 1800s already the subject matter depicted on Ôtsu-e, once considerably more diverse, had dwindled down to ten, all of more or less profane, random character.⁵ If not an explanation, Ichiba here nevertheless gives a vivid description of the period which saw, curiously enough, the once abundant repertory of over a hundred subjects melt down to the ten that to this day have remained the standards of the trade.⁶

Josef Kyburz,
CNRS (CRAO)

of the Ôtsue Ditty"], Tôkyô, Hassôdô shoin, 88 + ii pp., 10 pl. (of which two original colour woodblock prints), 1928, see pp. 13–17.

5. YANAGI 1930, pp. 20–21, muses on the problem of this momentous diminution in saying that "Its cause is not quite certain, but in some odd way it was connected with a popular song called *Ôtsu-e bushi* which listed these ten subjects [...] It is not quite determined whether it was the song itself which restricted the Ôtsu pictures to ten subjects or whether, this limit having become a fact the song records it." In a footnote he then points out that "This song appeared in print for the first time in 1807, contained in an anthology called *Sui no bento*, but it is obvious that it had been popular for some decades before that date."

6. For an overview of the ten subjects, which are also those reinterpreted by Nichinen, see the book under review, pp. 34–35.

Michel VIEILLARD-BARON

Recueil des bijoux d'or et autres poèmes

Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2015.

244 pages + 64 illustrations hors-texte en couleur, bibliographie.
ISBN 978-2-251-72225-2

Certains des trésors qu'ont rapportés du Japon de grands collectionneurs français du XIX^e siècle et qui enrichissent les fonds de nos bibliothèques n'ont pas encore été étudiés ni présentés au public. C'est donc une bienheureuse surprise que de voir exhumé, reproduit, traduit et analysé un précieux manuscrit japonais du XIV^e siècle, jadis offert par son possesseur à Émile Guimet et appartenant à la bibliothèque du musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet. À vrai dire, il avait en 1881 fait l'objet d'une présentation dans les *Annales du musée*, mais l'auteur du présent ouvrage montre le caractère parfaitement fantaisiste de cette note descriptive.

Le manuscrit, dont le colophon indique qu'il est de la main du « général en second de la garde du corps Fujiwara », c'est-à-dire Fujiwara no Tametada (1311-1373) et qu'il fut achevé « le 23^e jour du 12^e mois de la 1^{ère} année de Kenmu », c'est-à-dire en 1335, est, du point de vue philologique, extrêmement important : des trois recueils de poèmes qui y sont réunis, il représente, pour le premier, le manuscrit conservé le plus ancien et, pour le troisième, l'unique exemplaire connu.

Le volume de l'élégante collection Japon aux éditions Les Belles Lettres, intitulé *Recueil des bijoux d'or et autres poèmes* et dû au grand spécialiste de

la poésie japonaise classique Michel Vieillard-Baron, propose dans son intégralité, et quasi dans le format original, la reproduction du manuscrit, un cahier de trente-trois pages brochées, couvert de brocart vert foncé à motifs en fil d'or (ce brocart n'étant sans doute pas d'origine) et à revers en papier doré ; les deux cent trois poèmes sont notés sur un beau papier légèrement coloré, dans une écriture cursive très élégante. Une légère réserve : les pages du livret manuscrit se tournent bien sûr de droite à gauche, mais dans la présente édition les doubles pages se succèdent de gauche à droite, ce qui rend la lecture quelque peu difficile.

Le manuscrit de Tametada réunit donc trois recueils de poèmes courts ou *waka* (genre bien antérieur au trop connu *haiku*), recueils constitués eux-mêmes à partir d'anthologies préexistantes. On connaît la place éminente qu'occupent les anthologies dans la tradition poétique japonaise, où elles font figure de véritables œuvres, et, notamment l'auto-rité dont jouirent celles qui furent compilées sur ordre impérial au fil des siècles : elles représentaient le canon de la poésie à une époque donnée, consacraient les poètes du passé et du présent dont les œuvres avaient été retenues, et leur élaboration était confiée