

Listen, Copy, Read

Popular Learning in Early Modern Japan

Edited by

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Learning Painting in Books: Typology, Readership and Uses of Printed Painting Manuals during the Edo Period

Christophe Marquet

Introduction

The production of printed books during the Edo period, from the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century, gave rise to a significant corpus of didactic works destined for the study of painting. Diverse in genre, this category covers a broad spectrum of publications—compilations and catalogues of pictorial themes and models, painting albums, technical manuals and treatises on painting—suggesting the emergence at that time of a new approach to knowledge and the introduction of new learning methods.

In a previous study, I dated the appearance of this new ‘genre’ of publications to the decades between 1680 and 1720, and defined its typology.¹ I will attempt here to address some of the issues surrounding the more general subject of educational works produced during the pre-modern era: the booksellers’ reasons for publishing such books, their readership and their uses. I have based my study on thirty or so examples, focusing principally on the ‘paratext’ (preface, postscript, book advertising) that sometimes provides valuable information on the works’ utilization and audience.

Particular attention will be paid to the *Gasen* 画筌 (Fishtrap of Painting) by the Kanō artist Hayashi Moriatsu 林守篤. Published in Osaka in 1721, this painting manual combining both theory and practice offers classified sets of pictorial themes as models for the study and practice of painting. The analysis of this prototypical work will, I hope, bring to light the significance of printed books in the development of self-tutorship in painting throughout the eighteenth century.

Book historians have documented the remarkable expansion of the publishing industry that occurred in Kyoto, and, more particularly, in Osaka in the late seventeenth century, as well as the rapid change in character of the publications.

1 Christophe Marquet, *Les premiers “livres de peinture” de l’époque d’Edo (1680–1720). Naissance d’un genre et essai de typologie* (habilitation thesis, typescript. Paris: INALCO, 2002).

The publishers' trade catalogues (*shojaku mokuroku* 書籍目録) issued at the time clearly show the growing predominance of recreational books and practical manuals over the scholarly and religious texts that originally made up the bulk of the booksellers' stock. A didactic, more accessible literary genre—largely in the form of compilations and an increasing number of *vade-mecum* (*chōhōki* 重宝記) and other types of 'how-to' literature—was developed to reach a new, lesser-educated audience. The phenomenon was such that this period is referred to as the 'publishing revolution'² or 'information revolution'.³ Over a period of just two decades, from 1670 to 1692, the production of books jumped from 3826 to 7181 titles, with an upsurge in the number of educational and practical works.⁴ The boom in the book trade thus accompanied the urban expansion and rise of a merchant class that marked the latter half of the seventeenth century.

Thus, by the turn of the century, this new, so-called 'popular readership', which sought to imitate the elite's manner and customs, had access to a broad range of manuals offering instruction in academic subjects, artistic accomplishments and leisurely pursuits. The number and variety of these publications continued to grow throughout the eighteenth century. The bibliographical classes in the 1699 trade catalogue⁵ include compendia, primers, manuals and treatises on subjects as varied as calligraphy, arithmetic, music, flower arranging, the tea ceremony, or board games.

The catalogue lists works related to painting and craftsmanship under the following heading: "paintings, seals and books of models" (*e narabi ni in hūnagata*). This mixed category comprises 44 titles, ten or so of which are *chōhōki*, handy digests of general knowledge or practical guides to gracious living. For example, the *Nan chōhōki* 男重宝記 (*Vade-mecum* for Men, 1693), in addition to giving a description of the feudal state and society (classes, functions, etc.), provides basic information on various arts of leisure such as poetic composition, flower display, the tea ceremony, singing, and the art of letter writing.⁶ One *chōhōki* in particular, the *Banmotsu ehon daizen chōhōki* 万物絵本大全

2 Suzuki Toshio, *Edo no hon'ya*, vol. 1 (Chūō kōronsha, 1980), 119–124.

3 This question has already been discussed, notably by Eiko Ikegami in *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) ch. 11, "The Information Revolution, Japanese Commercial Publishing and Style of Proto-modernity," and Mary Elizabeth Berry's *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

4 Suzuki, *Edo no hon'ya*, vol. 1, 122.

5 Abe Ryūichi, ed., *Edo jidai shorin shuppan shojaku mokuroku shūsei*, vol. 2 (Inoue shobō, 1963).

6 See Nagatomo Chiyoji, *Edo jidai no shomotsu to dokusho* (Tōkyōdō shuppan, 2001), 251.

調法記 (Complete and Illustrated *vade mecum* of All Creation), published in 1693 in Osaka and Edo simultaneously, is devoted to the study of painting.⁷

This small, oblong-shaped book (7 × 16 cm) acts as an illustrated pocket dictionary. The illustrations are classified according to theme: geography, architecture, personages, human body, clothes, quadrupeds, birds, fishes, insects, vegetables, etc. The work was compiled from several famous Chinese sources, such as the encyclopedia *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會 (Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Three Powers, 1609), the famous pharmacopoeia *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (Compendium of Materia Medica, 1596), and the *Shanhaijing* 山海經 (The Classic of Mountains and Rivers), an inventory of fantastical creatures and imaginary lands (end of Ming dynasty editions, 1593, 1619), as well as from numerous Japanese dictionaries. It is in fact a condensed version of the *Kinmō zui* 訓蒙図彙 (Illustrated Dictionary for Instruction), the first illustrated Japanese lexicon, published in 1666.

The *Kinmō zui* includes around 1200 text illustrations (Fig. 11.1) that were, according to the preface, reproduced “from life” or from information provided by experts. It was meant to serve as a painting manual and includes a short text on the supposedly “secret” preparation of pigments. Although the work is little more than a compilation focusing on the rudimentary vocabulary that children were expected to master, it was nonetheless one of the first of its kind to be published in Japan. The preface mentions that the work also provides information on “seasonal words” useful to amateur poets.⁸



FIGURE 11.1 Banmotsu ehon daizen chōhōki (*Complete and Illustrated vade mecum of All Creation*). Woodblock book, Osaka, Edo, 1693.

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7 Nagatomo Chiyoji, ed., *Chōhōki shiryō shūsei*, vol. 37: ‘Yūgei, yūri’ (Kyoto: Rinsen shoten, 2007).

8 See Nagatomo, *Edo jidai no shomotsu to dokusho*, 349–350.

The remarkable wealth of printed art manuals also reflects a radical shift in the transmission of knowledge. Traditions that were formerly passed down from master to disciple and circulated by means of secret, handwritten treatises (*hidden* 秘伝) within select circles were increasingly made available to the larger public through commercially published books enabling the student to learn on his own. The frequently recurring expression *hitorigeiko* 独り稽古 (solitary study) in the books' titles perfectly illustrates this change in attitude to learning.⁹ Thus, the late seventeenth century saw the popularization of painting, together with other leisure pursuits traditionally reserved for the elite, through books designed to reach a larger public.

Learning by Copying

Amateur drawing in Japan may be compared to the phenomenon of *dilettantismo pittorico* in Italy, which the Italian art historian Giulio Carlo Argan sees as a crucial marker of art's importance to society.¹⁰ This practice, which first appeared among the Florentine elite in the sixteenth century, spread throughout Northern Europe (the Netherlands, France and England) over the next two centuries. It is worth noting the simultaneous appearance of this phenomenon in both Europe and Japan. In Europe, the first printed drawing books appeared in the early seventeenth century in Italy. As in Japan, the study of drawing in Europe likewise involved meticulously copying printed reproductions of past artworks in order to train the hand and eye of the aspiring artist.

In Japan, painting manuals took the form of woodblock printed booklets that were commercially produced and distributed by renowned booksellers. Serving primarily as drawing books such as those published in France in the eighteenth century,¹¹ these publications exposed the standard learn-through-copying method applied in the Kanō workshops where the official painters to the ruling elite were trained. This method, known as *funpon shugi* 粉本主義 (or "copybook method"), was based on the faithful rendering of ancestral models passed down as secret documents from one generation of artists to the

- 9 The *Kokuscho sōmoku* 国書総目録 (General Catalog of Japanese Books) lists 78 "how-to" manuals of the Edo period on varied topics, including 8 on painting, comprising the expression *hitorigeiko* in their title. The other topics include cooking, dancing, tea making, sword expertise, calculation, magic, singing, *haikai*, fishing, massage, flower arranging, *bonsai*, sewing, *kendō*, *shamisen*, *shōgi*, etc.
- 10 See Marie-Reine Haillant, "La leçon de dessin: apprendre à dessiner à Rome au XVII^e siècle." *Dix-septième siècle* 244 (2009): 536.
- 11 See Charlotte Guichard, "Les livres à dessiner à l'usage des amateurs à Paris au XVIII^e siècle." *Revue de l'art* 143 (2004): 48–58.

next, rather than on direct observation of the natural world and individual creativity—which is why the method came under sharp criticism during the modern period with the advent of the ‘individual artist’.

Printed painting manuals were intended for a class of readers who, unlike the warrior class, had not received the basic training in art dispensed in *hankō*, or fief schools. The fact that the production of such publications increased with the development of education among the ‘common’ classes (through the creation of *terakoya* schools) is not fortuitous. Thus from the mid-1730s onwards, while the production of such works flourished, the number of new schools multiplied twofold. By the second half of the Edo period, painting alongside other arts of leisure such as poetry, the tea ceremony, flower arranging, and singing, was taught in a number of these schools in addition to the main subjects of reading, writing, and calculation. It is very likely that these books, especially the more didactic ones, served as class textbooks.¹²

One of the rare documents attesting to the inclusion of art as a subject matter in these schools is a book of ink drawings from a village school in the region of Tochigi known as the Seikōdō 精耕堂, and dated 1849 (Fig. 11.2).¹³ The drawings, accompanied by *haikai*, were probably copied from models, and depict scenes from everyday life and seasonal farming activities.

The study of painting, like that of writing through *ōraimono* 往来物 (printed primers), consisted primarily in accurately reproducing models in order to attain perfect mastery over form. This slow, step-by-step process also allowed the art student to assimilate a repertoire of themes for later use in the construction of his own compositions. It is worthwhile recalling here that one of the “six rules” (*rikuhō*) of painting established by Xie He 謝赫 in his *Guhua-pin lu* 古画品錄 (Classified Record of Painters of Former Times, ca. 500), the earliest Chinese treatise on art theory, is that of “transmission through reproduction” (*den'i mosha* 伝移模写). It is not coincidental that this principle is reasserted in the first pages of most painting manuals of the Edo period, including the *Ehon hōkan* 絵本宝鑑 (Precious Mirror for the Study of Painting), published in Osaka in 1688, which makes it one of the earliest of its kind.

The pre-eminence of the copying method as a means of learning and transmitting knowledge in Edo Japan is perfectly illustrated by the *ryūgaki tekagami* 流書手鑑, compendia of “models of pictorial styles” similar to the *kohitsu*

12 Nagatomo, *Edo jidai no shomotsu to dokusho*, 355.

13 This school, located in the town of Mooka, between Mito and Utsunomiya, was active from 1842 to 1898. Until the early Meiji period, it was attended by around 80 students divided into four levels. This document may be found in Ichikawa Hiroaki and Ishiyama Hidekazu, *Zusetsu. Edo no manabi* (Kawade shobō shinsha, 2006), 10.



FIGURE 11.2 Draw-book used by Seikōdō school (Mooka, Tochigi Prefecture), 1849.
KARASAWA EDUCATION MUSEUM, TOKYO

tekagami 古筆手鑑, “models of antique writing styles”, employed for the study of calligraphy.

These collections function as pictorial ‘data bases’ providing samples depicting the painting styles of bygone masters. One example is a representation of a personage in “sketch style” (*genpitsu*) typical of Liang Kai, a celebrated painter of the Southern Song dynasty (active late 12th to early 13th century), executed in the fifteenth century by Sesshū, the great master of ink wash painting, and copied in the seventeenth century by the Kanō master Tsunenobu (1636–1713) (Fig. 11.3).¹⁴ This painting appears in a manuscript picture album representing different styles and periods and initially used by professional artists to fulfill commissions for “in the style of-” (*hitsuyō*) paintings.

14 Sesshū: *botsugo gohyaku-nen tobubetsu-ten*, exhibition catalogue (Tōkyō kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2002), no. 60, 84–85 and commentary, 258–259. Also see Christophe Marquet, “Le rôle des ‘livres de peinture’ (*gafu*) dans la transmission du savoir artistique au Japon à l’époque d’Edo,” in *La question de l’art en Asie orientale*, ed. Flora Blanchon (Paris: Presses universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne, 2008), 227–230.



FIGURE 11.3 Kanō Tsunenobu, copy of a painting by Sesshū in the style of Liang Kai, depicting the Immortal Huang Chuping, who transformed rocks into lambs. Ink on paper, 32 × 29,5 cm, 17th century.

TOKYO NATIONAL MUSEUM

These privately produced documents were the workshops' most treasured property; they were closely guarded and passed on from one generation of teachers to the next. One print (Fig. 11.4) depicting the interior of a Kanō workshop in Edo in the 1840s shows a backroom where scrolls that served as "models for folding screens" (*byōbu ehon*) were locked away. Such materials were accorded canonical status and played a vital role as reference works in the learning process.¹⁵

15 On the learning through copying method used in the Kanō school see Christophe Marquet, "L'évolution de l'enseignement de la peinture dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle," in *Éducation au Japon et en Chine. Éléments d'histoire*, ed. Annick Horiuchi (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2006), 49–76.

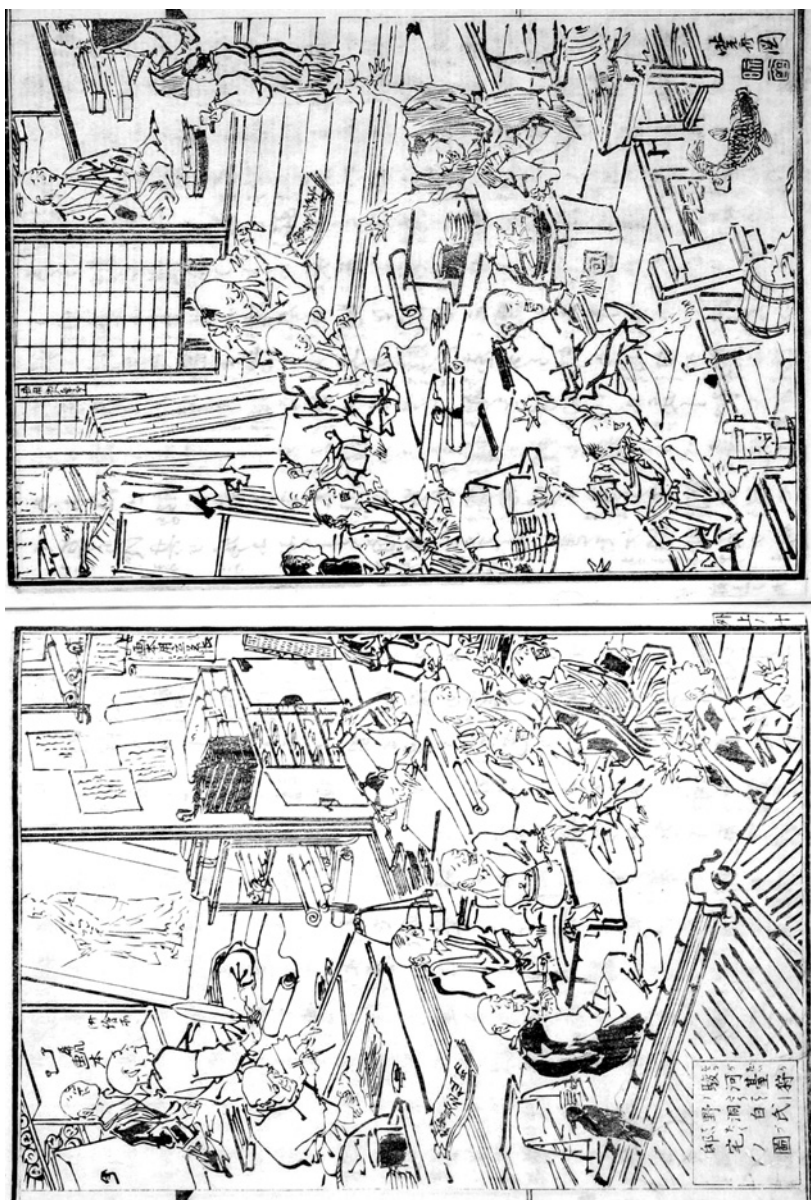


FIGURE 11.4 *Kanō Tōhaku's atelier in Edo c.1840, from Kyōsai gadan (Kyōsai's tales of painting). Woodblock book, Tokyo, 1887.*

WASEDA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

During the Edo period, printed painting manuals targeting a broader, amateur audience came to replace the studios' rare and precious collections of models. The printed editions were often hand-copied for individual study. One such example is a sketch book of around 40 folios (Fig. 11.5) signed Ekisai Kanjin 易斎閑人 and dated 1835. It contains a selection of motifs diligently reproduced from the *Wakan meihitsu gahō* 和漢名筆画宝 (Treasury of Celebrated Painters of Japan and China), Yoshimura Shūzan's 吉村周山 famous painting manual published in 1767 (Fig. 11.6), which the author of the sketch book claims to have copied by "the light a single lamp". Thus seventy years after it was first published, Shūzan's celebrated manual was still used as reference in the study of painting. Each motif is reproduced to scale and with great care, probably by tracing, and the name of the artist (but not that of the subjects) is indicated under each drawing. This document reveals that the material available in printed manuals, which remained fairly costly, was also diffused through manuscript copies. The same is true for the *ōraimono* (primers), and it is quite likely that while the masters of the *terakoya* possessed the original printed copies, students learnt from extracts copied by their masters.

Typology of Painting Manuals

Painting manuals of the Edo period form a greatly diverse category that evolved over the centuries together with the popularization of painting as an art of leisure and the development of printing techniques.

The first major study devoted to the subject was carried out by Nakada Katsunosuke (1886–1945) in the pre-war years. The author based his work on around 200 titles¹⁶ and adopted a chronological system of classification based on school and artist.

Rather than relying on criteria of style, I have based my typology on content and readership, and confined it to a production period of roughly 150 years, from the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Following this approach, I was able to establish six sub-categories for the bewildering array of publications devoted to the study of painting, which, taken altogether, are estimated to number no less than 1500 titles.¹⁷

¹⁶ Nakada Katsunosuke, *Ehon no kenkyū* (Bijutsu shuppansha, 1950).

¹⁷ Research on "picture books" (*ehon*) of the Edo period (model books, manuals, monographs by artists, as well as illustrated geographical accounts and illustrated anthologies of poetry, etc.) produced by Kanazawa College of Art provides a list of 1549 titles, classified by artist (323 artists in total). See Ōta Masako, ed., *Edo no shuppan bunka kara hajimatta*



FIGURE 11.5 *Zhongkui the demon hunter, sharpening his sword*, by Kanō Motonobu (1476–1559). Copy book of 1835, from the manual *Wakan meihitsu gahō* (*Treasury of Celebrated Painters of Japan and China*). Osaka, 1767.
PRIVATE COLLECTION



FIGURE 11.6 *Yoshimura Shūzan*, *Wakan meihitsu gahō* (*Treasury of Celebrated Painters of Japan and China*). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1767.
PRIVATE COLLECTION

Thematic Illustrated Catalogues

This category appeared in the early 1680s and consists of thematic picture albums. The illustrations are the work of a single artist, Hishikawa Moronobu 菱川師宣 (1618–1694), a painter of the *ukiyo-e* school established in Edo and credited as the school's primary producer of single-sheet prints. Around fifteen albums, published in the late years of his career (between 1680 and 1694), are recorded. Each album is devoted to a special theme: feminine beauty, artisans, warriors, birds, quadrupeds, etc., and the titles are followed by the expression *ezukushi* (or the suffix *zukushi*), literally meaning “complete pictorial collection” or “illustrated inventory”. This expression appears as a category of its own in the publishers' trade catalogues as early as 1685. Although the publication period for this category was fairly short, some works, like the *Kedamono ehon-zukushi* 獣絵本つくし (Complete Picture Book of Wild Beasts, 1694) (Fig. 11.7) were repeatedly reprinted and used as models in the study of painting well into the nineteenth century. The albums were designed to serve as manuals, as is clear from the preface and postscript, and a number of their motifs were used by illustrators of the *ukiyo-e* school in the early eighteenth century, such as Nishimura Shigenaga (ca. 1697–1765).¹⁸

Compendia of Iconographic Themes

This type of publication appears in the late seventeenth century and consists of dictionaries enumerating and expounding on various painting subjects largely borrowed from Chinese tradition. These codified themes, known as *gadai* 画題 in Japanese, were an essential part of the would-be artist's curriculum and by the early Edo period were circulating in the form of manuscript, un-illustrated catalogues, the earliest example of which is the *Kōso-shū* 後素集 (Compendium on Painting, 1623), a collection of around 700 themes divided into 32 categories.¹⁹

The first illustrated publication of this type is the 1688 edition of the *Ehon hōkan* (Precious Mirror for the Study of Painting) mentioned earlier (Fig. 11.8).

imēji kakumei (Kanazawa: Kanazawa bijutsu kōgei daigaku, 2007), 1–56. By contrast, Jack Hillier's capacious work, *The Art of the Japanese Book* (London: Sotheby's Publications, 1987), is based on 900 titles. Mitchell's bibliography (C.H. Mitchell, *The Illustrated Books of the Nanga, Maruyama, Shijo and other Related Schools of Japan. A Bibliography* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1972) lists around 680 books published between 1621 and 1867, 20 titles in the “old master works” category, 189 titles in the “*gafu*, *gajo*, and other collections of drawing” category, and 6 titles belonging to both categories.

18 See the examples given in Robert T. Paine, “Japanese Prints of Birds and Flowers by Masanobu and Shigenaga,” *Oriental Art* IX:1 (1963): 22–34.

19 See Sakazaki Shizuka, *Nihon gadan taikan* (Meiji shoin, 1918), 535–690.



FIGURE 11.7 Hishikawa Moronobu, *Kedamono ehon-zukushi* (*Complete Picture Book of Wild Beasts*). Woodblock book, Edo, 1694, reprint 1766.

PRIVATE COLLECTION



FIGURE 11.8 Lu Shang, minister of the first Zhou kings, as a fishing hermit. Tachibana Muneshige (compiler), Hasegawa Tōun (illustrator), *Ehon hōkan* (*Precious Mirror for the Study of Painting*). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1688.

PRIVATE COLLECTION

Like most contemporary books on the subject of painting—with the exception of Moronobu's illustrated albums—it first appeared in the Kamigata region, more specifically in Osaka. Unlike Moronobu's albums that were destined for children and a popular audience, the works included in this category targeted a more scholarly readership, and both their literary and visual contents largely derived from Chinese sources.

As indicated in the preface, the *Ehon hōkan* is not only intended for aspiring artists, but also for those intent on furthering their knowledge of iconographic themes, especially Buddhist figures and subjects, through historical anecdotes:

When those destined to become painters open this book, they need not learn the “six rules” as they are offered directly here. Those who do not aspire to be painters will gain perfect knowledge of the appearance and stories of past figures. It is with these aims in mind that (this work) was compiled and reviewed before it was entrusted to the publisher for printing and was to enjoy such long-lasting good fortune in this world.

This type of book may be compared to the emblem books or iconological dictionaries published in Europe in the late sixteenth century. The first among these was the *Iconologia overo descrizione dell'imagini universali cavate dall'antichità* by Cesare Ripa—“for the Instruction of Artists in their Study of Medals, Coins, Statues, Bassorelievo's, Paintings and Prints, and to help their Invention”, as mentioned in the 1709²⁰ English edition—, first published in Rome in 1593 and subsequently in many other European languages. Like Cesare's *Iconologia*, which compiled allegorical figures from Egyptian and Greco-Roman antiquity with explanations in vernacular language, the *Ehon hōkan* assembles around 200 canonical and mainly Chinese-inspired themes, illustrated and commented in vernacular Japanese.

The content was further popularized in the pirated edition published in Edo in 1689 under the title *Ezu no hayashi* 絵図の林 (The Forest of Paintings), which presents a considerably abbreviated version of the texts in cursive syllabic writing. In both editions, the drawings are still rudimentary and served mainly to introduce iconographic themes from the Chinese painting tradition rather than as reference for copy.

Another work in the same vein and also dealing with Chinese pictorial subjects is the *Bunrui ehon ryōzai* 分類画本良材 (Quality Documents Classified

20 *Iconologia or Moral Emblems* by Caesar Ripa. . . *Illustrated with Three Hundred Twenty-six Humane Figures with their Explanations*. . . (London: Benjamin Motte, 1709), “To the Reader.”

to Serve as Models, 1715) by Baba Nobunori 馬場信意 (1669–1728), which, unlike the *Ehon hōkan*, gives a classified presentation of the themes (numbering 158), making it easier to use (Fig. 11.9). The work peruses through the following subjects: enlightened rulers, loyal vassals, Confucian saints and sages, beautiful and virtuous ladies, brave and wise vassals, The Immortals, poets, and legends.

The compiler, a popular author of historical works, introduces the book by explaining its origin and purpose: “One fine day, a Tansui Koji who had retired to the Eastern Mountains (of Kyoto) presented me with a painted scroll and told me he wished to have it engraved on woodblocks for print so that it might be of benefit to children.” He concludes by stating the work’s dual purpose: “Aspiring painters must of course be familiar with the nature of men and things past. (This work) will also be useful to children in their study of the past.”²¹ This manual was therefore destined to assist both would-be painters (who were required to know the figures and legends of the past) and children in their study of history. The insertion of annotations on the art of painting, together with a catalogue describing colors and tones, heralds the development of painting manuals, which make up the following category.

Painting Manuals

This third category includes proper painting manuals combining theory, practice and iconography, and is best exemplified by the *Gasen* (1721), one of the first works of its kind.

The Osaka-based painter Tachibana Morikuni 橘守国 (1679–1748), was among the most prolific producers of such manuals, starting with the *Ehon shahō-bukuro* 絵本写宝袋 (Picture Book. Treasure Bag of Sketches) published in 1720 (Fig. 11.10). The latter work organizes the themes into three main categories—China, Japan and the animal realm—each comprising around 70 subjects. It not only provides finished compositions, but also motifs and details which artists could use to create their own compositions: interior decoration of palaces, finery, garments, weapons, etc. In his preface Morikuni

21 It should be noted that Baba Nobunori is the son of Baba Nobutake, a Genroku-era polymath who is credited by a bookseller catalogue of the Kyōhō Era (1716–1735) for a work with a similar title: *Gaten ryōzai* 画典良材 (Quality Painting Models). Although Nobunori does not mention his father in the introduction, its nature is perfectly congruent with the ‘pedagogical’ intentions shown by Nobutake in his other works. See Matthias Hayek’s contribution to this volume (ch. 10).



FIGURE 11.9 *The poet Tao Yuanming. Baba Nobunori, Bunrui ehon ryōzai (Quality Documents Classified to Serve as Models). Woodblock book, Kyoto, Edo, 1715. PRIVATE COLLECTION*

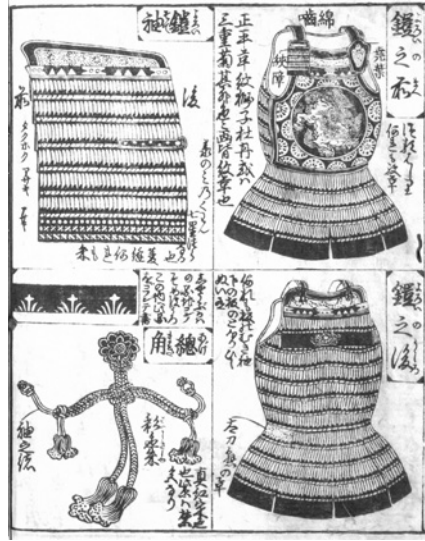


FIGURE 11.10 *Tachibana Morikuni, Ehon shahō-bukuro (Picture Book. Treasure Bag of Sketches). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1720. WASEDA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY*

stresses the importance of copybooks as a means of achieving formal truth as well as its educational value as a substitute for direct observation:

Without copybooks, it is impossible to replicate the form of subjects. Model books are like the compass and square. Furthermore, since things are diverse in form, it is impossible to know with certainty when seeing a beast with fangs or horns what it may be for real. Likewise, we may never know by its feathers alone the nature of a bird. Only a painting can allow one to identify a foreign bird or animal thanks to its distinctive rendering of the creature's form and colour, which enables one to distinguish it from others of its kind.

Picture Anthologies

This category is undoubtedly the most profuse in terms of number of works published in the eighteenth century, and features anthologies of paintings according to school or style generally designated under the generic term

of *gafu* 画譜. These anthologies are in fact nothing more than compilations of previous model books, but in some instances also offer reproductions (some of which were executed on the spot) of duly identified masterpieces. One such anthology is the *Gakō senran* 画巧潜覧 (Clandestine View of the Craft of Painting, 1741) (Fig. 11.11) by Ōoka Shunboku 大岡春卜 (1680–1763), an Osaka-based artist and the first to produce such manuals from the 1720s on. Thereafter, greater attention was paid to the quality of printed illustration through improved engraving techniques. This category also includes monographs by masters often compiled posthumously by their disciples.

Publications of this type enabled the would-be artist to train in various styles and thereby to trespass the boundaries of genre or style proper to each school.

Collections of Models for Beginners and Artisans

The early eighteenth century also saw the appearance of pictorial collections more specifically intended for the instruction of beginners and artisans. Among the earliest examples of this type book is the *Ehon shoshin hashiradate* 絵本初心柱立 (Model Book for the Beginner's Initiation), a collection of basic animal, fish and plant motifs with a few explanatory notes (Fig. 11.12), published in Osaka and Kyoto in 1715. Lengthy Chinese prefaces, theoretical texts and practical instructions are generally absent from these collections, which makes them more compact and thereby easier to use. Their purpose is to offer ready-to-use motifs bearing no particular historical, literary or stylistic reference. A number of these books explicitly promote this feature and their purely practical purpose in contrast to the more scholarly pictorial anthologies. One example is Keisai's 蕙斎 *Shoshoku ekagami* 諸職画鑑 (Mirror of Painting for the Artisans), published in Edo in 1794 (Fig. 11.13):

There are indeed many Chinese and Japanese model books circulating today, but they all offer reproductions of famous paintings, which make them impractical for everyday use. The present work, designed by Kitao Keisai, is destined for artisans who need drawing skills and for those who wish to initiate themselves quickly in the practice of this art. After I was secretly shown the manuscript, I begged the author to entrust it to me for publication, under the title of *Mirror of Painting for the Artisans*, in order to make it more largely known.



FIGURE 11.11 *Man trying to catch a catfish with a gourd. Painting by Josetsu (active 1394–1428) at Myōshin-ji temple, Kyoto. Ōoka Shunboku, Gakō senran (Clandestine View of the Craft of Painting). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1741.*



FIGURE 11.12
Dragon shape within a circle. Ehon shoshin hashiradate (Model Book for the Beginner's Initiation). Woodblock book, Osaka, Kyoto, 1715.

PRIVATE COLLECTION



FIGURE 11.13 *Keisai, Shoshoku ekagami* (*Mirror of Painting for the Artisans*), Woodblock book, Edo, 1794.

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Naturalist Albums

The sixth and final category comprises naturalist albums, which, by extension, were also intended for the study of painting and the instruction of children. A primary example is Ōoka Shunsen's 大岡春川 *Ehon fukujusō* 画本福寿草 (Model Book of Adonis) (Fig. 11.14), a collection of paintings representing various types of flora, published in 1737 by one of Ōoka Shunboku's pupils. The publisher presents the work as a "book of plant and flower models, with explanations on the nomenclature, colour application and a list of sources."²² The work does indeed end with a description of colors and their uses, clearly denoting its function as a painting manual. It is, however, as the artist himself admits, largely a compilation of previous manuscript books.

In contrast, the artist Tachibana Morikuni, in the preface to the fifth volume of his *Ehon ōshukubai* 絵本鶯宿梅 (Model Book. Nightingale in the Plum Tree) published in 1740 (Fig. 11.15), clearly defines the purpose of the work and its readership:

There are many books of models on the subject of plants throughout the four seasons but in general they merely reproduce the shape of flowers and leaves, without any concern for realism or detail. For this reason we have drawn the form of each plant represented here from life (...) so that the work may benefit aspiring painters and students of natural history alike.

This plea in favor of a more realistic way of drawing, based on direct observation of nature rather than on copybooks, serves to remind us that in addition to the development of popular literature on painting, the eighteenth century also witnessed the popularization of knowledge about 'natural productions' (*bussan*) through the production of illustrated encyclopedic works.

Thus many painters who devoted their time to producing painting manuals also created this type of album, notably for the purpose of botanical study. A good example is the *Ehon noyamagusa* 画本野山草 (Model Book of Field and Mountain Plants, 1755) by Tachibana Yasukuni 橘保国, Morikuni's son, who, following in his father's steps, produced this album of realistic and detailed illustrations featuring 165 species. This major work of reference was continually re-issued until the late nineteenth century.

22 This description appears in the catalogue following the colophon in the 1737 re-edition of the *Ehon karakurenai* 絵本唐紅 by Ōmori Yoshikio 大森善清 produced by the Osaka-based publisher, Fujiya (Asano) Yahei who also published the *Ehon fukujusō*.



FIGURE 11.14 Ōoka Shunsen, Ehon fukujusō (*Model Book of Adonis*). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1737, reprint 1755. PRIVATE COLLECTION



FIGURE 11.15 Tachibana Morikuni, Ehon ōshukubai (*Model Book. Nightingale in the Plum Tree*) vol. 5. Woodblock book, Osaka, 1740. PRIVATE COLLECTION

Readership and Uses of Painting Manuals

Growth in the publishing industry from the late seventeenth century on was accompanied by the emergence of a new, permeable community of readers transcending boundaries of social and professional status.²³ The diversity of painting manuals presented above suggests a mixed audience and multiple uses. As we shall see, a book's paratext (preface, postscript and colophon), in spite of its rhetorical and conventional character, often provides insight into the author's, or publisher's intentions with regard to the book's readership and purpose.

Children and Young Girls

Part of the literature described above was intended for children in view of their instruction and edification. This category of young readers is mentioned in the earliest manuals dating from the 1680s, such as the *Iwaki ezukushi* 岩木絵

23 See Berry, *Japan in Print*, 32–33.

つくし (Illustrated Collection of Rocks and Trees, 1683) by Hishikawa Moronobu who introduces his work as follows:

(...) From my earliest years onwards I developed a taste for drawing and I have assembled a collection of ancient Chinese and Japanese paintings whose essence I sought to capture through copying. These paintings are like a mirror's reflection. In addition to drawings representing the ancient tradition, I have included, for the sake of beginners and amateurs, drawings executed in today's style, proper to Hishikawa; I have named this collection *Illustrated Collection of Rocks and Trees* and compiled the texts published here for the entertainment of children.

I have already mentioned in a previous article the relatively early appearance of illustrated didactic works for children in Japan at end of the seventeenth century.²⁴ Early examples include the *Kinmō zui* and the *Teikin ōrai zusan* 庭訓往来図讃 (Illustrated primer for Home Education, 1688). Moreover, the very first illustrated literary works, such as the 1608 movable-type edition of the *Ise monogatari*, mention the use of illustration as a means by which to “delight children's eyes” and facilitate their understanding of fairly difficult texts. Thus the use of illustration as a pedagogical tool in domains other than drawing was developed at an early stage.

In the preface of another of his works, the aforementioned *Kedamono ehon-zukushi*, Moronobu explains yet again that the book was specifically designed for children and its content adapted from more scholarly sources that were too costly and too complex for the understanding of such an audience:

The *Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Three Powers* (*Sancai tuhui*) comprises many volumes, which makes it therefore inaccessible to commoners. The *Illustrated Dictionary for Instruction* (*Kinmō zui*) is more accessible, but likewise founded upon foreign models and beyond the grasp of children. Hishikawa Moronobu produced the book presently in your hands with the intention of making the subjects it illustrates largely known and named it the *Complete Picture Book of Wild Beasts*.

24 See Christophe Marquet, “Instruire par l'image: encyclopédies et manuels illustrés pour enfants à l'époque d'Edo,” in *La Pédagogie par l'image en France et au Japon*, ed. Annie Renonciat and Marianne Simon-Oikawa (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 75–91.

Moronobu's collection is indeed a work of popularization as opposed to the two sources he quotes in the above extract: the *Sancai tuihui* (1609), a Chinese encyclopedia comprising more than a hundred volumes, and the *Kinmō zui*, which, though written in Japanese, remained nevertheless beyond the reach of children.

This category of young readers is often associated with that of young women or girls for whose benefit a large number of instructional and literary works were produced in the late seventeenth century. This is clearly illustrated by the "catalogue of books useful for women" appearing at the end of Kaibara Ekiken's *Onna Daigaku takarabako* 女大学宝箱 (The Treasure Box of Greater Learning for Women, first edition, 1716)—a classic guide to women's education that was continually reprinted until the late Edo period. It contains entries on as many as 64 titles, all published by Kashiwaraya Seiemon, a famous bookseller in Osaka. The list features a dozen painting manuals published between 1720 and 1782, including three works by Morikuni, one of the primary producers of this literary genre.

Artists continued to produce picture albums for the initiation of children well into the late Edo period. Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 who produced several albums of this kind makes the following statement in the preface to his last manual, the *Ehon saishiki-tsū* 絵本彩色通 (An Illustrated Manual on the Proficient Use of Colors) (Fig. 11.16), published in 1848–49:

I created this little book, entitled *An Illustrated Manual on the Proficient Use of Colours*, for children who enjoy drawing, which is why I have deliberately selected colour models that can be easily reproduced.²⁵

Drawing books, however, were rarely destined exclusively for children or for girls; the latter were generally associated with the amateur public at large. It is also important to remember that dedicating a work to children was a rhetorical expression of modesty serving to signal the popular (as opposed to scholarly) nature of its content.

Beginner Painters and Apprentices

Another category of readership comprises amateurs, beginners and those aspiring to understand the painting subjects, as noted above with the *Ehon hōkan*. Some manuals addressed a given master's students. The fourth volume of the celebrated *Denshin kaishu*. Hokusai manga 伝神開手・北斎漫画 (Education for Beginners through the Spirit of Things. Random Sketches by Hokusai, 1816) contains the following passage in its preface:

25 Nagata Seiji, ed., *Hokusai no edehon*, vol. 3 (Iwasaki bijutsusha, 1986), 118.

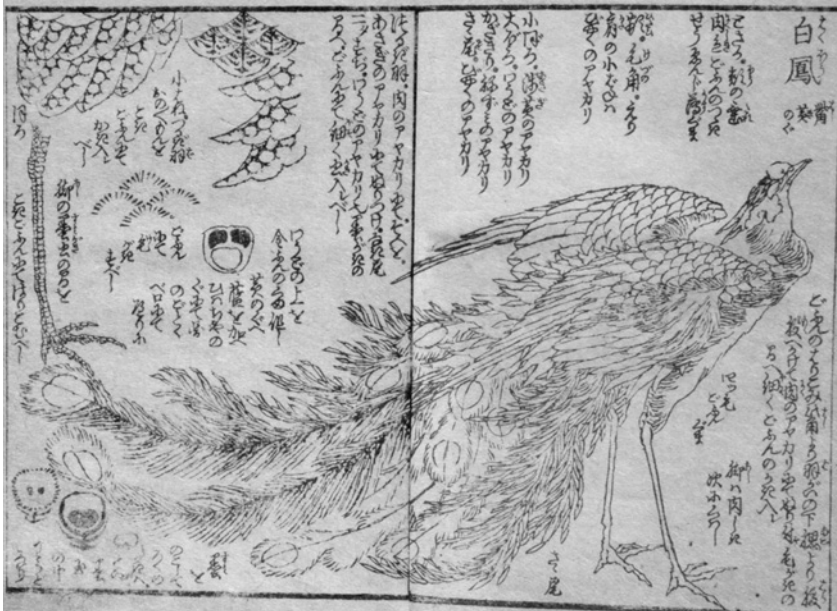


FIGURE 11.16 Hokusai, Ehon saishiki-tsū (*An Illustrated Manual on the Proficient Use of Colours*). Woodblock book, Edo, 1848.

Master Katsushika Taitō is now celebrated for his drawing talent and receives so many orders that paper is hard to come by now in the city; thus having no respite, his students complain that the models he provides are insufficient. Taking to heart their complaints, the master has sketched various landscapes, figures, animals and objects in his spare time and has had them printed on woodblocks so as to provide instruction for his pupils and initiation for beginners.

It is difficult to ascertain whether this claim is merely a sales pitch on the publisher's behalf or whether it is founded, but in any case Hokusai is known to have had around two hundred and fifty pupils throughout his long career and the production of the first volumes of his *Manga* were supervised by his closest disciples and derived from his own model books.

Artisans

As seen above, painting manuals played a vital role in the training of artists; the same may be said for artisans, such as woodblock engravers and fabric dyers. These professions necessitated drawing skills and access to models for decorative purposes. The first manuals specifically destined for artisans

appeared in the early eighteenth century. The *Somemono-rui moyō-gata. Ehon keiko-chō* 染物類模様方・絵本稽古帳 (Motifs for Dyed Fabric. Study Book of Pictures), published in Osaka in 1718 by Imura Katsuyoshi 井村勝吉, a fabric designer in Kyoto, contains the following postscript:

There are myriad model books today. The prints included here will enable one to create fashionable designs for fabric, motifs in today's style for cloth squares and designs for tobacco pouches.

The book comprises illustrations of scenes taken from the *Tale of Genji*, fan designs, famous Japanese landscapes, a chapter detailing and illustrating a Chinese treatise on landscape painting (Fig. 11.17),²⁶ and around sixty tree and flower motifs.

This type of manual, which was produced till the end of the Edo period, promoted the reliance on models as requiring no particular artistic talent. One example is the following passage from the *Sōmoku chōjū. Shoshoku edehon* 草木鳥獸・諸職絵手本 (Plants and Trees, Birds and Animals. Painting Manual for Different Crafts) (Fig. 11.18), published a century later in 1818 in Osaka:

This model book, with its vivid reproductions of trees, birds and animals book, is ideal for making preparatory drawings for engraving and dying. Other artisans may also employ it; he who uses it will avoid all error in (the representation of) form.

Hokusai himself, in addition to beginner's painting manuals, produced a great number of model books for artisans, such as the *Shoshoku ehon. Shin-hinagata* 諸職絵本・新鄙形 (Picture Book for Different Crafts. New Patterns, 1836), which was intended for both "art students and artisans."²⁷

Many craftsmen, namely ceramic designers and manufacturers of *inrō* (medicine cases), resorted to painting manuals that were not necessarily intended for their use.²⁸

26 "Master Yuzhang's Poem on the Art of Painting Mountain and Water Landscapes" 豫章先生論画山水賦 by the painter Jing Hao 荆浩 (active late ninth–early tenth century) in the *Wang-shi huayuan buyi* 王氏画苑補益 version (Supplement to the Garden of Painting by M. Wang) compiled in the sixteenth century.

27 This indication features in the catalogue following the colophon. See Nagata, *Hokusai no edehon*, vol. 3, 282.

28 There are a great many examples of *inrō* featuring designs borrowed from eighteenth and early nineteenth century painting manuals by Morikuni, Shūzan, Sō Shiseki or Sakai Hōitsu, in Julia Hutt, *Japanese Inrō* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum Publications, 1997), 74–89.



FIGURE 11.17 *Imura Katsuyoshi, Somemono-rui moyō-gata. Ehon keiko-chō (Motifs for Dyed Fabric. Study Book of Pictures). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1718. PRIVATE COLLECTION*



FIGURE 11.18 *Sōmoku chōjū. Shoshoku edehon (Plants and Trees, Birds and Animals. Painting Manual for Different Crafts). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1818. PRIVATE COLLECTION*



FIGURE 11.19 *Kawamura Bunpō*, *Bunpō sogā* (*Rough Sketches by Bunpō*). Woodblock book, Nagoya, 1800.
PRIVATE COLLECTION



FIGURE 11.20 *Hokusai*, *Ono ga bakamura mudaji ezukushi* (*Series of images made from useless characters by the idiot that I am*). Woodblock book, Edo, 1810.

Poets

A number of drawing manuals were also specifically designed to provide poets with simple and ready-to-use models. Indeed, it was common during poetic gatherings to illustrate one's poetic composition with an improvised and amusing sketch known as *sekiga* 席画 (on-the-spot sketch). For this specific purpose, the *Donga hayageiko* 鈍画早稽古 (*How to Draw Quick and Simple Sketches*) published in Kyoto in 1802, recommends—particularly for the sketching of figures—resorting to models (*funpon*) from manuals such as the *Ryakuga-shiki* 略画式 (*Abbreviated Style of Drawing*) published by Keisai in 1795, or the *Bunpō sogā* 文鳳麿画 (*Rough Sketches by Bunpō*) (Fig. 11.19) by Kawamura Bunpō, published in 1800, two major works introducing the sketch style.

Hokusai also produced, from 1810 on, several manuals in the same vein presenting a sketch-style method based on combining syllabic characters and simple geometric shapes and requiring no particular skill in drawing. In the preface to his *Ono ga bakamura mudaji ezukushi* 己痴羣夢多字画尽 (*Series of images made from useless characters by the idiot that I am*, 1810) (Fig. 11.20), he expresses the same intention as Keisai above:

This work will not only be of use to children but also to poets of *haikai* and *kyōka* in order to satisfy the demand for improvised sketches; it is indeed an introductory guide to the sketch style.²⁹

The *Gasen*, the Prototype of Painting Manuals

The *Gasen* (Fishtrap of Painting)³⁰ was the first proper painting manual to be published. Its title refers to a proverb ascribed to Zhuangzi—“when the fish is caught discard the fishtrap”—signifying that the tool is but a means of attaining the goal. Compiled in 1712, the *Gasen* wasn’t published until 1721 in Osaka—a thriving publishing center at the time. The author, Hayashi Moriatsu 林守篤, also known as Roken 魯軒, however, was a provincial artist in attendance to the fief of Nōgata (today Fukuoka) in the northern part of the southern island of Kyūshū. Moriatsu was a student of the fief’s official painter, Ogata Morifusa 小方守房 (?–1732), commonly known as Yūgen 幽元 (or 友元). The latter was in turn a pupil of the great Kanō master Tan’yū 狩野探幽 (1602–1674), founder of one of the four main Edo workshop in 1621.

Although Moriatsu was not himself a renowned, high-ranking artist, he was nevertheless affiliated to the line of great Kanō masters that served the shogunate. He stresses this affiliation in the preface to the *Gasen* and in the lineage’s genealogical table at the end of the first volume (“Origin and transmission of the pictorial heritage of our school”) tracing the origin of this major pictorial movement back to the monk Josetsu (1394–1428), the father of Chinese-style ink wash painting, and to the founders of the Kanō school, Kanō Masanobu 狩野正信 (1434–1530) and Kanō Motonobu 狩野元信 (1476–1559).

This prestigious affiliation gave Moriatsu access to the workshop’s ‘secret’ heritage of manuscripts and rare Chinese documents on painting, and, more crucially, its model books. Moriatsu’s work is, in fact, the first manual to reveal the workshop’s secret methods and iconographical sources that were hitherto passed on as secret transmissions and circulated in manuscript form. This point is crucial, for the early eighteenth century marked a turning point in attitudes to knowledge and learning generally speaking: the growing availability of commercially printed material in the eighteenth century opened up new domains of knowledge—including art—previously reserved for specialists.

Thus, a great number of manuals by other Kanō painters, such as Morikuni, Shunboku or Shūzan, were produced in Osaka in the first half of the eighteenth

29 Nagata Seiji, ed., *Hokusai no edehon*, vol. 1 (Iwasaki bijutsusha, 1986), 45.

30 See partial transcription of the *Gasen*, in Sakazaki, *Nihon gadan taikan*, 1–26.

century. These ‘town’ or ‘bourgeois’ painters (*machi eshi*) made a living from teaching and selling their artworks as opposed to official painters who received a stipend. As a result Osaka saw the development of a new, popularized culture that could never have occurred in Edo at the time owing to the restrictions imposed by the official workshops. The criticism Morikuni (another student of the Kanō Tan’yū lineage) is said to have received for disclosing, by means of printed manuals, the workshop’s secrets to the public at large reveals the threat such manuals posed to the official artists who considered themselves the legitimate repositories of pictorial knowledge.³¹

Diffusion of Treatises and Secret Traditions

Moriatsu’s preface to the *Gasen* provides some interesting information on the manual’s composition and purpose:

In my youth I taught myself the art of painting while shaping my mind through contact with valleys and rocks and deepening my reflection through observation of mountain and water landscapes. Then, a long time ago, I received teachings from the venerable master Yūgen, for whom I prepared the pigments. Recently, I have assembled a number of albums from China and our country in a copybook of study models and called it the *Fishtrap of Painting*. I pass on here, without any omission, the threads of secret tradition based on my daily work for the master and my own personal experience in painting. However, I hope my work will serve as a guide to ordinary rather than accomplished artists.

Thus the *Gasen* may be best described as a cross between a compilation of printed sources and a synthesis of secret, orally transmitted traditions addressing ‘ordinary artists’ aspiring to learn the art of painting rather than professionals. Like most eighteenth century painting manuals, the *Gasen* is not an original production, but a reorganization of various sources aimed at reaching a wider public.

The foreword following the two prefaces mentions two types of source materials: the oral instructions of master Ogata Morifusa himself and the written sources, half of which are Chinese. It lists no less than 13 titles published for

31 This criticism against Morikuni is mentioned in the *Zōho Ukiyo-e ruikō* 増補浮世絵類考 (Considerations on Currents of Ukiyo-e, augmented edition, 1844): “There are many reputed painters in the *yamato-e* style, starting with the Kanō and Tosa masters, but they jealously guard their craft, whereas Morikuni has worked for the benefit of others, which is why his engravings are disparaged.” Nakada Katsunosuke, ed., *Ukiyo-e ruikō* (Iwanami shoten, 1991), 74.

the most part in the seventeenth century and informs us that Moriatsu based his manual on a corpus of popular literature pertaining chiefly to painting and botany. Except for one title, all the Chinese sources were re-published in Japan between the mid-seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The Japanese editions (*wakoku*) are in fact adaptations in which diacritical marks have been added to facilitate the reading of Sino-Japanese characters.

These sources include two encyclopedias of major Chinese and Japanese artists (*Tuhui baojian* 図繪寶鑑, 1366, Japanese edition 1652; *Honchō gashi* 本朝画史, 1693), a painting manual (*Liweng huazhuan* 立翁画伝, better known as *Jieziyuan huazhuan* 芥子園画伝, 1679), a book of seals (*Wakan inzu* 倭漢印図), iconographical albums of legendary, religious or historical figures (*Liexian quanzhuan* 列仙全伝, 1600, Japanese edition, 1650; *Shengxian xiangzan* 聖賢像贊, 1593, Japanese edition 1643; *Tuhui zongyi* 図繪宗彝, 1607, Japanese edition, 1702; *Butsuzō zui* 仏像図彙, 1690), botanical texts and *materia medica* (*Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目, 1596, Japanese edition, 1637; *Honchō shokkan* 本朝食鑑, 1695; Kaibara Ekiken, *Kafu* 花譜, 1698; Kaibara Ekiken, *Yamato honzō* 大和本草, 1709), and lastly, a Japanese dictionary (*Wajiga* 和爾雅, 1694).

All the Japanese sources are encyclopedic dictionaries published from 1690 onwards—another reminder that the Genroku period saw the flourishing of commercial publishing and the mass production of illustrated texts popularizing information on almost every imaginable subject. It is important to note the inclusion of the celebrated *Jieziyuan huazhuan* (Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden), the only Chinese reference that had not yet been published in Japanese at the time (since it was not published until 1748).³²

In another section of the *Gasen* relating to the depiction of bamboo, Moriatsu mentions another Chinese source that played a fundamental role in the dissemination of pictorial models in Edo Japan, the *Bazhong huapu* 八種画譜 (Eight Varieties Painting Manual, 1573–1628). The Japanese edition was printed in Kyoto in 1672 and again in 1710, and includes an entire volume devoted to plants.

Moriatsu's main task in compiling the *Gasen* consisted in selecting, translating and reassembling information from a vast array of Chinese and Japanese books, to which, as already noted, the majority of readers had no access at the time. By offering explanations and adapting them in vernacular Japanese—a process defined as *wage* 和解 in the foreword—he rendered them accessible to a wider public.

32 On the *Jieziyuan huazhuan*'s introduction and reception in Japan, see Christophe Marquet, "La réception au Japon des albums de peinture chinois (*huapu*) du XVII^e siècle." *Histoire et civilisation du livre. Revue internationale* 3 (2007): 91–133.

Book I is entirely devoted to treatises (Chinese pictorial treatises, secret traditions and a secret treatise on colors), Books II to V present an ordered selection of motifs with explanatory notes, and Book VI deals with various technical aspects of painting.

In Book I, Moriatsu begins with the “six rules” of painting and provides a lengthy interpretation of each. The sixth rule covers the notion of copying and transmission:

Borrowing and copying models (*ehon*) from a master by tracing them onto paper treated with glue, then keeping them safely as if they were one's most treasured possessions is the first step in assembling a proper “copybook” (*funpon*). The study of painting consists primarily in copying from copybooks. If one does not possess such a book it is impossible to study painting and to train one's eye. Copying from copybooks allows one to learn the rules and develop one's own style (*ichiryū*). Collecting and familiarizing oneself with artworks by the hand (*hisseki*) of former masters through copying also sharpens one's perception. When a beginner practices copying, his brush is weak, his strokes are uneven and his painting lacks unity and life. But after years of training, ease and firmness are achieved and beauty is attained. If (painting) does not conform to past models, style itself is nipped in the bud.

This passage appropriates the ideas set forth in the *Honchō gahō taiden* 本朝画法大伝 (The Great Tradition of Painting Methods in Our Country, 1690), a secret treatise by Tosa Mitsuoki 土佐光起 (1617–1691) who is credited with re-establishing the Tosa school and the Imperial Painting Bureau in the mid-seventeenth century.³³

According to this tradition, the constitution of a ‘copybook’ is the first and fundamental step in an artist's training, even before direct exposure to the original artworks. Moriatsu promotes learning by imitation as the only means of ensuring consistency in style. This method basically involved accurately tracing models onto a special type of transparent paper hardened with animal glue. According to Mitsuoki, copying directly from a model without tracing is “bad, for if one proceeds thus, the brushwork will lack harmony, only the shape will be discernable, which is of no use.” Thus the principle of learning through copying artworks of previous masters was also true for the Kanō school, which is simply to say that despite their stylistic differences, both schools relied heavily on Chinese sources and shared similar training concepts and methods.

33 Sakazaki Shizuka, ed., *Nihon kaiga-ron takei*, vol. 6 (Meicho fukyūkai, 1980), 29.

In Moriatsu's text, the terms *ehon* 絵本 (pictorial model) and *funpon* 粉本 (copybooks) are used synonymously. *Ehon* is defined in the Japanese-Portuguese dictionary compiled by the Jesuits in the early seventeenth century as "treslado, & original pera pintar por elle" (reproductions or original (artworks) for use as models).³⁴ The character *fun* 粉 in *funpon* refers to the white pigment (*gofun* 胡粉) made from ground shells and used to make preparatory sketches or to treat the surface for painting. This Chinese term appears in the first major treatise on painting of the Edo period, the *Kōso-shū* (Compendium on Painting, 1623) by Kanō Ikkei 狩野一溪 which gives the following definition:

Copybooks by masters of the past are called *funpon* (Ch. *fenben*); our predecessors regarded them as treasures and accumulated a great number of them. They were executed hastily, but the resulting lack of detail confers a naturally sublime character. *Funpon* dating from the Xuanhe (1119–1125) and Shaoxing (1131–1162) eras are often of a divine and sublime quality.³⁵

This text is particularly interesting because it shows that copybooks had been highly prized in China for quite some time, and that despite their unrefined character, the drawings were valued as precious instructional tools for future generations, so much so that they were often attributed the so-called "sublime" (*myō* 妙) and "divine" (*shin* 神) qualities, the highest of the "three classes" of art (*sanpin* 三品).

In the second chapter of Book I entitled "the secret oral transmission of pictorial theories" (*Garon denju hiji kuketsu* 画論伝授秘事口訣), Moriatsu again stresses the importance of copybooks and to illustrate his point relates the words of his master Morifusa and those of Ogata Moriyoshi 小方守義 (1643–1682)—second official painter of Fukuoka fief and a former student of Tan'yū in Edo—in dialogue form between master and pupil:

Question: "To paint, some always use copybooks whereas others don't; who is right and who is wrong?"

Moriyoshi's answer: "He who discards models, always entrusting to his own inspiration, will become the clumsiest of artists. He who claims to paint without models will produce poor works indeed, although ordinary

34 *Yefon* according to the supplement to *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam* (Nagasaki, 1604).

35 Sakazaki, *Nihon gadan taikan*, 540. This definition is literally borrowed from a famous Chinese treatise and encyclopedia of artists, the *Tuhui baojian* 図繪寶鑑 (Precious Mirror for Painting, 1366), circulated in Japan from the Muromachi period on and reprinted at the beginning of the Edo period, in 1652.

people may not notice and believe him to be skilful. For this reason, his knowledge will be perverted and he will never achieve fame.”

The dialogue echoes the ideas expressed by Kanō Yasunobu 狩野安信 (1613–1685), the great theorist of the Kanō school, in his *Gadō yōketsu* 画道要訣 (Secret Keys to the Way of Painting, 1680). Yasunobu introduces his work by opposing painting based on ‘resources’ (*shitsuga*)—in other words, the artist’s innate talent and disposition—and painting produced through ‘learning’ (*gakuga*)—i.e. practice and mastering technique—according to the precepts of the great masters.³⁶

He argues in favor of tradition over talent, since the latter is by definition unique and therefore cannot be inherited. Tradition on the other hand can be transmitted from one generation to the next by means of manuals. This secret treatise, a copy of which was given as a certificate to every artist on completing his training, epitomizes the essential teachings and methods of the Kanō school which maintained its status as the ruling power’s official academy for four centuries.³⁷

This is not to say however that the learning methods lauded in the *Gasen* can be reduced to the mere copying of ancestral models. When referring to his master’s teachings, Moriatsu also emphasizes that once the training period is over, sole reliance on copying cannot produce a ‘lively’ painting, a quality considered essential:

My master told me: “When one begins, one must paint without departing from the original; if one relies excessively on models once one has grasped the essential principles of the art of painting, the brush strokes will appear hesitant, (the painting) without life and the style dull.”

Book I ends with a section on the “secrets of pigment preparation” (Fig. 11.21) explaining the preparation and uses of around sixty colors. This information is partly taken from the *Honchō gashi* (History of Japanese Painting) published thirty years earlier in 1691.

36 Kobayashi Tadashi, Kōno Motoaki, ed., *Teihon Nihon kaiga-ron taisei*, vol. 4 (Perikansha, 1997), 10. This secret treatise was first published in 1935.

37 On Kanō methods of training during the Edo period, see Karen M. Gerhart, “Talent, Training, and Power. The Kano Painting Workshop in the Seventeenth Century,” and Brenda G. Jordan, “Copying from Beginning to End? Student Life in the Kano School,” in *Copying the Master and Stealing his Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*, ed. B.G. Jordan and Victoria Weston (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003), 9–30; 31–59.

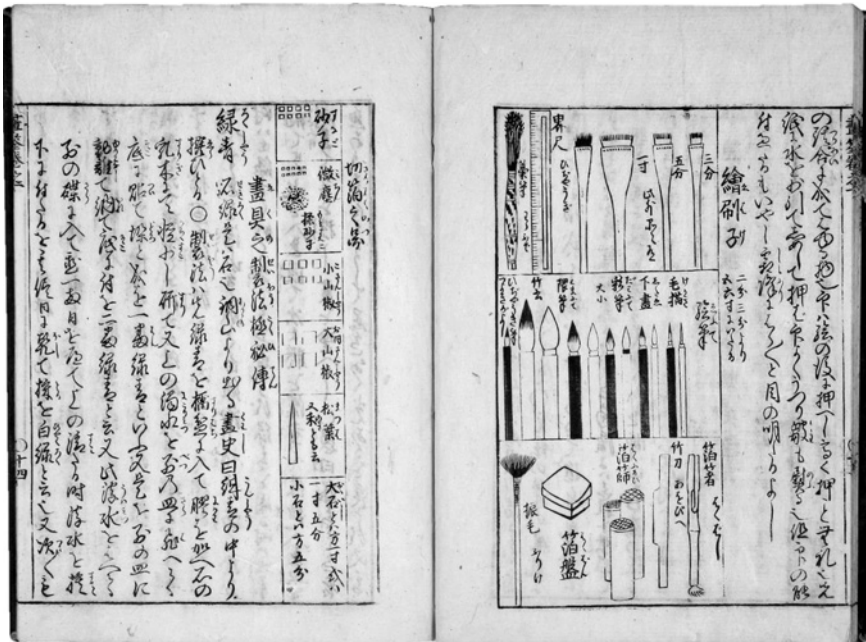


FIGURE 11.21 Hayashi Moriatsu, *Gasen* (Fishtrap of Painting). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1721.
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An Iconographical Dictionary

In addition to the theoretical and practical information it offers, the *Gasen*'s main appeal as a self-study manual lies in its coherent collection of illustrations featuring around 450 motifs organized by theme, much in the manner of iconological dictionaries. Books II to V survey the following topics successively: the natural world, the animal kingdom, and finally personae, both Chinese and Japanese. Although this order does not correspond strictly speaking to a prescribed order of progression in the learning process, artists in the Kanō workshops did in effect begin their training with the study of nature and animals before broaching the subject of human figures.

Most of the models are anonymous but some are signed by celebrated masters of the past. These include paintings of bamboo groves by the Chinese artists Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 (1037–1101) and Tan Zhirui 檀芝瑞 (late thirteenth to early fourteenth century), and works by the following Japanese artists: Sesshū and Tosa Mitsunobu (1434–1525), and more significantly, the Kanō masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Kanō Motonobu (1476–1559), Kanō Morinobu (or Tan'yū) and his brother, Kanō Yasunobu (1613–1695), founder of the official Nakabashi workshop in Edo; Tan'yū's son, Kanō Morimasa 狩野守政 (1653–1718), as well as three of Tan'yū's pupils, Ogata Moriyoshi, Ogata

Morifusa (who both became official painters of Fukuoka fief) and Momota Ryūei 桃田柳栄 (1647–1698).

Thus, nearly all the models Moriatsu selected for the *Gasen* were drawn from the Kanō school's heritage preserved in his master's workshop and from his own copybooks. Four of the illustrations by Tan'yū are dated and of the same type as those found in the *Tan'yū shukuzu* 探幽縮図 (Reduced Paintings by Tan'yū), a collection of Chinese and Japanese masterpieces reproduced in Tan'yū's Kajibashi workshop between 1658 and 1674, and intended for use as reference in the assessment of artworks.

The main purpose of the *Gasen* was therefore to propagate the teachings and methods of the Kanō school and its great masters, namely Tan'yū and his descendants. With time this concept evolved and painting manuals, notably those produced by Shunboku, came to be more eclectic. Moreover, the primitive character of the illustrations indicates that the rendering of style was not yet a concern.

One of the *Gasen*'s singularities is its dual purpose as book of motifs and picture album: Moriatsu takes up a method exposed in certain Chinese manuals, such as the *Jieziyuan huazhuan*, which consists in decomposing a painting subject, especially landscapes, into micro-components. In Book II devoted to "landscape", "plants and trees" and containing 109 illustrations, Moriatsu presents a selection of celebrated landscapes depicted in both Chinese and Japanese styles and then decomposes the paintings by presenting each component separately, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to be assembled. He begins with the water's movements (Fig. 11.22) and then moves on to flora "of the four seasons", itemizing around sixty species and giving brief instructions on color application for each. Next are trees and branches, followed by rocks and plants, notably bamboo and pine, all of which constituted the painter's core repertoire.

Book III is devoted to the subject of birds, animals (quadrupeds) and fish, and contains 125 illustrations (Fig. 11.23). Particular attention is paid to the specific coloring of birds.

The most important section however is that devoted to human figures, which alone take up two volumes. Book IV deals with "Chinese figures" (Fig. 11.24) and includes 135 illustrations classified according to the following themes: saints and sages, Daoist immortals, warriors, ascetics, sages and Buddhist personages.

Kobayashi Hiromitsu,³⁸ a Chinese art historian, has shown that around half of the 48 Daoist immortals included in the manual were taken from the *Liexian*

38 Kobayashi Hiromitsu, "Chūgoku gafu no hakusai, honkoku to wasei gafu no tanjō," in *Kinsei nihon kaiga to gafu edehon ten*, vol. 2 (Machida: Machida shiritsu kokusai hanga bijutsukan, 1990), 106–123.



FIGURE 11.22 Hayashi Moriatsu, *Gasen (Fishtrap of Painting)*. Woodblock book, Osaka, 1721.
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FIGURE 11.23 Hayashi Moriatsu, *Gasen (Fishtrap of Painting)*. Woodblock book, Osaka, 1721.
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FIGURE 11.24 Hayashi Moriatsu, *Gasen (Fishtrap of Painting)*. Woodblock book, Osaka, 1721.

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quanzhuan (Collected Biographies of Immortals, 1600), while the other half were borrowed from the *Xianfo qizong* 仙仏奇踪 (Marvelous Traces of Immortals and Buddhist Saints, 1602), a Chinese album of Daoist and Buddhist figures which is not mentioned among the sources. This work was not reprinted in Japan but a number of Japanese artists in the seventeenth century, including the great painter Sōtatsu, used it for reference in the composition of their paintings.

Book V is devoted to “Japanese figures” (Fig. 11.25), and contains 74 illustrations whose themes are classified according to hierarchical order: the “seven deities of Good fortune”, the “three gods of poetry”, the “five immortals of poetry”, the god of study Tenjin, scenes from the *Genji monogatari*, and the “three poems of dusk”, followed by more prosaic scenes (acrobats, puppet theater, sumo wrestlers, etc.) and lastly, warriors and various details (finery, hairstyles, garments) necessary for the depiction of historical scenes.

In the final chapter of Book V, entitled “the human body and the art of painting licentious subjects and ‘Spring paintings’ (‘pillow images’)” (Fig. 11.26), Moriatsu relates his teacher’s advice in this field. Most of the instructions concern colors and their specific application with regard to the subject’s gender and age. The presence of this theme among classical subjects may startle but it also shows that the *Gasen* was indeed intended for the instruction of professional artists who derived considerable income from the depiction



FIGURE 11.25 Hayashi Moriatsu, *Gasen (Fishtrap of Painting)*. Woodblock book, Osaka, 1721.
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of erotica, hence the inclusion of this subject matter in the accomplished artist's curriculum.

Book VI deals with various technical aspects of painting: tools, surface preparation, brush techniques, marouflage of folding screens, painting assemblage, rolling scrolls, etc. (Fig. 11.27).

Conclusion: Painting Manuals under Criticism

The production of painting manuals was not exempt from criticism on the part of the artists themselves. Their reactions are worthwhile examining in order to understand the conceptions of learning at the time and the changes brought about by the publication of self-teaching manuals.

One such critic was Yanagisawa Kien 柳澤淇園 (1704–1758), who, in his essay *Hitorine* 独寝 (Sleeping Alone),³⁹ which he wrote in 1724 at the age of 20, describes the *Gasen* (published three years earlier) as “useless” and its illustrations as “pathetic”. He recommends instead the use of Chinese manuals, and enumerates at least 15 titles including the *Jieziyuan huazhuan*. Coming as he did from an influential background and having trained under the best masters

39 In Iwamoto Kattōshi, ed., *Enseki jissu*, vol. 2 (Kokusho kankōkai, 1907), 42.



FIGURE 11.26 Hayashi Moriatsu, *Gasen (Fishtrap of Painting)*. Woodblock book, Osaka, 1721.
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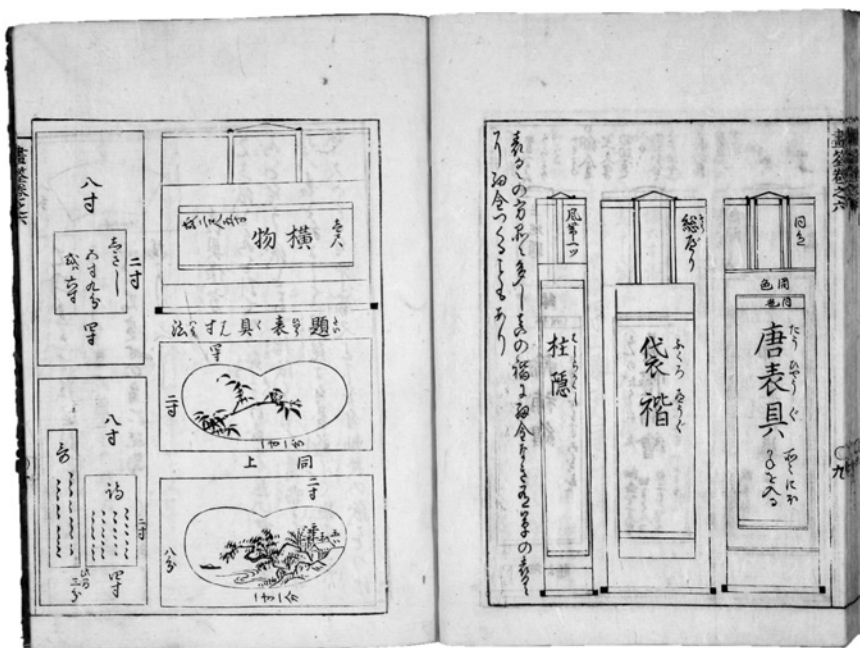


FIGURE 11.27 Hayashi Moriatsu, *Gasen (Fishtrap of Painting)*. Woodblock book, Osaka, 1721.
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of his time, this young literati artist was bound to favor paintings and books from China. This attitude reflects the prevailing value system that accorded canonical status to Mainland sources whereas adaptations were viewed with scorn. The latter have, regardless, played a determining role in the dissemination of theoretical texts and, more especially, iconographic models by making them available to the public at large.

Another critic of printed manuals was Sakurai Sekkan 桜井雪館 (1715–1790), an official painter to the Mito fief and self-proclaimed descendant of Sesshū's tradition. His workshop reportedly trained over two hundred artists. In his *Gasoku* 画則 (Principles of Painting) published in 1776, he denounces the excessive reliance on printed painting manuals, a practice, which, in the eyes of most professional artists like him, had grown rampant by the latter half of the eighteenth century:

A pupil asks: Lately a good many books on painting have been published in our country. Are they of any benefit in the study of painting?

Answer: Most have nothing to offer. Generally, they claim to represent the works of past artists, but since they have no regard for the rules of painting, the brush's intention eludes them. Moreover, the artisan's skill or lack of it in making the woodcut only serves to emphasize the errors in the brushwork. They merely show the form of things.⁴⁰

His disapproval reflects the professional painters' defiant attitude towards printed painting manuals that failed to convey all the inherent subtleties of the original artworks. The authors of early eighteenth century painting manuals were already aware of the limitations of woodblock printing as a form of transmission. Shunboku in his *Wakan meihitsu ehon tekagami* 和漢名筆画面本手鑑 (Mirror of Painting from Celebrated Painters of China and Japan, 1720) confesses "that woodblock prints fail to render the ink's graduated tones".⁴¹ The *Gasoku*, however, pays greater attention to the depiction of the subtle shades produced by ink wash painting (Fig. 11.28), and the quality of its prints is comparable to those found in Morikuni's *Unpitsu soja* 運筆鹿画 (Rough Pictures to Learn Brush Strokes) in 1748.⁴²

40 Sakazaki Shizuka, ed., *Nihonga no seishin* (Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1942), 107–108.

41 See Christophe Marquet, "Shunboku et Morikuni: deux maîtres de la gravure d'interprétation japonaise du XVIII^e siècle," in Ōoka Shunboku and Tachibana Morikuni, *Esquisses au fil du pinceau* (Paris: INHA; Arles: Editions Philippe Picquier, 2007), 10–14.

42 The *Unpitsu soja* is partly reproduced in Marquet, *Esquisses au fil du pinceau*, 2007.



FIGURE 11.28 Sakurai Sekkan, *Gasoku (Principles of Painting)*. Woodblock book, Edo, 1776. EBI COLLECTION (EBI0705), RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY

Sekkan's criticism reflects the professional artists' fear of losing their privileged status as sole repositories of knowledge as a result of its diffusion through readily available printed manuals. Sekkan makes an interesting distinction between formal reproduction and the effect of the 'brush's intention' (*hitsui*), i.e. 'style', which only the master can transmit. In other words, he differentiates proper 'manuals of transmission' (*denfu*) providing instruction on the rules of painting with the aid of pictorial models, from simple 'copybooks' (*funpon*) that merely reproduce ancient masterpieces or the oeuvre of a given master. The latter category of painting manuals, which grew extremely popular in the last decades of the eighteenth century, encouraged art students to copy the masterpieces without learning the rules of painting. Sekkan likens these copiers who regard themselves as artists to those who, because they can recite an ancient poem, consider themselves composers.

Among the critics there were those who believed that such manuals, namely the albums produced by Morikuni, should not be used by "real painters", but only by illustrators of the *ukiyo-e* school and children. This opinion is expressed by Kurihara Tōzuisha 栗原東随舎, a popular writer of the late eighteenth century, in his evaluation of a votive painting depicting the warrior Minamoto Yorimasa striking down a fantastical, monkey-headed beast (Fig. 11.29), a theme

inspired by the *Tale of Heike*. The painting was given to the temple of Asakusa in 1787, which earned its author, the artist Kō Sūkoku 高嵩谷 (1730–1804), a certain amount of fame. Tōzuisha reckons that the painting was copied from printed model books such as Morikuni's *Ehon shahō-bukuro* (Fig. 11.30), rather than from copybooks of antique models, hence the errors and anachronisms in the painting.⁴³ He berates the artist and others of his kind for resorting to printed illustrated manuals instead of relying on knowledge passed down across generations of teachers by means of secret copybooks—which is the only way of ensuring consistency in style over the ages.

In contrast to critics who believed that the popularization of learning painting lead to oversimplification and error, there were those who promoted the use of such manuals for educational purposes, owing to their illustrations that were perceived as particularly effective teaching tools. In his essay *Jugyō-hen* 授業編 (On Teaching, 1783)⁴⁴ Emura Hokkai 江村北海, a Confucian thinker of the late eighteenth century, recommends showing children encyclopedias and illustrated manuals, such as the *Kinmō zui* or Morikuni's *Ehon kojidan* 絵本故事談 (Model Book of Things Past, 1714) (Fig. 11.31), a famous collection of legends and painting subjects, in order to waken their natural curiosity and prompt them to inquire about the images' meaning (*etoki*). Thus a number of painting manuals were also intended as household primers for the instruction of children in addition to serving as models for artists.

Painting manuals published throughout the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century provided artists from all schools, including the *ukiyo-e* illustrators, with a formidable repertoire of subjects and an abundant source of inspiration as is clear from the exhibition held at the Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts in 1990.⁴⁵ The widespread use of printed painting manuals among amateur painters and trained professionals alike brought about the development of new approaches to artistic creation. Since access to visual models—previously reserved for a select few—was facilitated by the circulation of picture albums, a growing number of artists sought to distinguish themselves in new ways, by emphasizing for instance, certain stylistic

43 Kurihara Tōzuisha, *Kokon zōdan omoide sōshi*, in *Nihon zuihitsu taisei*, 3rd series, vol. 2 (*Nihon zuihitsu taisei kankōkai*, 1929), 508–512.

44 Nagasawa Kikuya, ed., *Edo jidai Shina-gaku nyūmon-sho kaidai shūsei*, vol. 3 (Kyūkyo shoin, 1975), 264.

45 *Kinsei nihon kaiga to gafu edehon ten* (Machida: Machida shiritsu kokusai hanga bijutsukan, 1990).



FIGURE 11.29 *Kō Sūkoku*, Genzanmi Yorimasa nue taiji-zu (*Minamoto Yorimasa defeating the chimera called Nue*), Votive painting, 265 × 352 cm, 1787. ASAKUSA TEMPLE, TOKYO



FIGURE 11.30 *Tachibana Morikuni*, Ehon shahō-bukuro (*Picture Book. Treasure Bag of Sketches*). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1720. WASEDA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



FIGURE 11.31 Tachibana Morikuni, *Ehon kojidan* (*Model Book of Things Past*). Woodblock book, Osaka, 1714.

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features. Satō Yasuhiro,⁴⁶ an art historian on the Edo painting, even goes so far as to say that the production of painting manuals in this “era of technical reproduction”—to take up Benjamin’s expression—had the ‘backlash’ effect of favoring the cultivation of artistic originality among artists active in Kyoto in the second half of the eighteenth century. Painting with one’s fingertips and fingernails (*shitō-ga*), improvising under the effect of liquor (*suisaku*) (wherein painting becomes performance), distortion/exaggeration, and the special attention some artists (such as Taiga, Buson, Jakuchū or Shōhaku) accorded to the depiction of matter reflect the many ways in which artists of that time sought to set themselves apart from painters who simply reproduced motifs from printed copybooks. The ‘publishing revolution’ that occurred in the late seventeenth century had a profound impact not only on learning methods but also, as a ripple effect, on all aspects of artistic creation during the Edo period.

(Translated by Véronique Martin)

46 See Satō Yasuhiro, “Juhasseiki no zen’ei shinwa,” in *Edo bunka no hen’yō: Juhasseiki no keiken*, ed. Momokawa Takahito (Heibonsha, 1994), 121–161.

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