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The *kyōka* surimono of Ryūōtei
Edo no Hananari — the ukiyo-e
commissioned by the daimyo of
Chōshū (発表記録)

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Introduction

This article is based on a talk given at the conference on 'New insights into manuscripts and printed books in early-modern Japan' that was held 8-9 March 2017 at Heidelberg University in Germany. This conference was supported by the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research Program as part of the project 'Research into the relationship between hand-written manuscripts and printed books during the Muromachi and Edo periods' (project director Tōru Ishikawa). At previous conferences, I reported on topics arising from the *Santō Kyōzan shokanshū*,^{*1} a collection of letters containing valuable information about the world of publishing during the Tenpō era (1830-1844) of the Edo period. On this occasion, I focused on Ryūōtei Edo no Hananari, who commissioned a large number of *kyōka* surimono and whose true identity is revealed in the *Santō Kyōzan shokanshū*. In this article, I will discuss his identity, introduce his surimono and consider what we can learn about the fundamental nature of *kyōka* surimono from his work. In addition, based on my research into Edo no Hananari, I aim to demonstrate the importance of academic cooperation and the sharing of information across geographical boundaries and specialist fields.

The 'discovery' of the identity of Edo no Hananari

Edo no Hananari is known in the world of ukiyo-e as the pen name of a historical figure who commissioned a large number of *kyōka* surimono. These are privately commissioned woodblock prints that feature both a picture and a poem. They were often commissioned by members of a *kyōka* poetry circle, who exchanged them as gifts amongst themselves to celebrate New Year. Extravagant amounts of money were often spent on such commissions resulting in the creation of high-quality works of great artistic value. For this reason, surimono have long been highly regarded by both collectors and scholars in the West. In Japan, however, interest has always centred on ukiyo-e that were produced for general sale. Westerners tend to view ukiyo-e

* 1 From the collection of the Suzuki Bokushi Museum in Niigata prefecture. Although Suzuki Bokushi is widely regarded as the author of *Hokuetsu seppu*, Santō Kyōzan played a vital role in adapting and bringing this work to publication. The *Santō Kyōzan shokanshū* is a collection of Kyōzan's letters to Bokushi that records this process.

simply as an art form, but in Japan it is regarded as a medium combining image and text that reflects the print culture of the day. This may be the reason why ukiyo-e and surimono have been valued differently in Japan and the West and why many high-quality surimono, including those commissioned by Hananari, were bought and taken to the West quite early on. The fact that very few of his surimono remained in Japan is the main reason why Hananari's true identity vanished into the mists of time. Indeed, until my report in 2007, museums and researchers into the Chōshū clan were unaware of the existence of Hananari's surimono. Likewise, ukiyo-e scholars did not know the true identity of Hananari, even concluding that he was a musician of some kind due to the fact that some of his commissions feature his own compositions of *zokuyō* (ballads).

Let us see what we can learn about Hananari's identity from a passage from the *Santō Kyōzan shokanshū*. It is from a letter sent by Santō Kyōzan in 1830 (Bunsei 13) to Suzuki Bokushi, who was living in Echigo province (modern-day Niigata prefecture). The letter was sent to accompany a gift of surimono by Hananari, who is described as follows:

I am sending you five spring surimono. These are surimono commissioned by Matsudaira Daizen Dayū.

His haikai name:

Ryūōtei Hananari

Alternative versions of his name:

Ryūcatei Fūshi no Mizugaki

Tsukushitei Wake no Aritake

They are poems written for Danjūrō, Kikugorō and Kumesaburō, who are in Naniwa this spring. (Santō Kyōzan shokanshū, 16 March 1830)

So, from this letter we discover that Ryūōtei Hananari was the pen name of Matsudaira Daizen Dayū, which was one of the titles of Mōri Narimoto, the daimyo of Chōshū. We also learn that he used two other pen names, which had previously been thought to refer to two separate people. And it tells us that the surimono were commissioned to celebrate a visit by three leading kabuki actors to Osaka. *²

In 2007, I reported on this discovery at a workshop to lay the groundwork for producing the catalogue for an exhibition of surimono at Museum Rietberg in Zurich, Switzerland. *³ I was

invited to take part by John Carpenter, who currently works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as he had heard that I had discovered Hananari's true identity. Until attending this workshop, I had not realised that Hananari's identity was still regarded as a mystery by surimono scholars, nor that such a great quantity of Hananari's work existed in collections in the West. I had previously contacted the museums, art galleries and libraries in Yamaguchi prefecture but had not been able to locate a single surimono by Hananari. All that I had been able to find was a record from the Taishō period (in *Narimotokō ogesakushū*) of *kyōka* copied from some of Hananari's surimono. As a result, I had concluded that almost all of his surimono had been lost. *⁴

As we can see, Hananari's surimono appear to have slipped through the gap between Japan and the West and between the specialist fields of literature, history and art, resulting in their neglect for a long time. This is proof that an important body of material can still be overlooked, despite the ease with which information can be exchanged in this day and age.

In 2014, I travelled to Europe and America to begin a survey of Hananari's surimono and discovered new works in collections such as at the Guimet Museum in Paris and the University of Cambridge. I was, however, keenly aware that there was much more still to be found, and so I created an internet database (<http://user.keio.ac.jp/~sakura/hananari>) to publish my results and request information from around the world.

The database contains links for all the surimono for which images are publicly available and also a sample image in the case of those for which the copyright has been obtained. At present, I

* 2 From its perfect match with the description in *kyōzan's* letter, it is likely that the surimono included the triptych 'Sukeroku under the weeping cherry' (MFA 11.26731). For further details, please refer to my thesis and the Introduction to the Hananari database.

* 3 My report 'The Daimyō as Kabuki Fan and *Kyōka* Poet: Surimono Commissioned by Edo no Hananari' can be found in the exhibition catalogue 'Reading Surimono: The Interplay of Text and Image in Japanese Prints' ed. John Carpenter, 2008.

* 4 Recently, I was able to give a presentation in Hagi to tell local people about the valuable works of art that had been lost from Yamaguchi prefecture. See 'The daimyo's inheritance that Yamaguchi forgot' in *Shinshito Hagi* 63, April 2017.

have been able to ascertain a total of 78 works, which includes 43 surimono series and two hand-drawn paintings.

Hananari (Narimoto) and the production of his *kyōka* surimono

Mōri Narimoto, who used the pen name Edo no Hananari, was the eleventh daimyo of Chōshū. He was born in 1794 (Kansei 6) as the grandson on the subsidiary family line of Mōri Shigetaka, the seventh daimyo of Chōshū. After being adopted into the family of a retainer, he was recalled to the Mōri family in 1814 (Bunka 11) and was adopted by the tenth daimyo, Mōri Narihiro, in 1819 (Bunsei 2). Narimoto became head of the domain in 1824 (Bunsei 7) at the age of 31. The fact that his earliest known surimono date back to 1821 (Bunsei 4) means that most of his commissions were made after he became a daimyo. A picture of Narimoto from this period appears in the *Azumaburi rokurokkasen jinmeiroku* (Figure 1), which was published in 1821 and introduces the pupils of Shikatsube no Magao, a *kyōka* teacher in Edo.

Shikatsube no Magao was well known for having several daimyo among his pupils. As a high-ranking samurai, Narimoto would naturally have studied *haikai* and *kanshi*, but his interest in *zokuyō*, which often appear in his surimono, may have been due to the influence of the tenth daimyo, Narihiro, who was a cultured man of letters and well versed in such musical



Figure 1. *Azumaburi rokurokkasen jinmeiroku*, 1821 (Central Tokyo Metropolitan Library, Kaga bunko)

compositions. Narimoto may also have been influenced by Mōri Motoyoshi, the daimyo of the subsidiary domain of Hōfu, who, under the pen name Umenoto Makado, composed the *kiyomoto* music *Ume no haru* (Plum-blossom spring), which is still popular today.

Figure 2 is a portrait of Narimoto in 1836 (Tenpō 7), aged 43. On 8th September of that year, he fell ill with a fever and died at his castle in Hagi. Hence, no surimono in the name of Edo no Hananari appear after this time.

There were many famines and uprisings when Narimoto was daimyo. Finances were difficult and the previous daimyo, who had large debts, still held much power. Maybe it was stress that led to Narimoto's early death. Was it wrong for Narimoto to spend so much money on works of art at such a time? When I asked the curator of the Mohri Museum this question, he replied that it would have only been a very small proportion of a daimyo's total personal expenditure. We do not know exactly how much Narimoto spent on his commissions but I like to think of them as his way of finding peace and calm in the midst of his stressful life.

But how did Narimoto find the time to commission such a large number of surimono during a relatively short number of years? The following remark by Kyōzan, which describes the relationship between these two men, may well provide us with a helpful clue: 'When my lord Narimoto is in Edo, I am so busy



Figure 2. *Kyōka shōseishū*, 1836 (Sabaitei bunko)

carrying out private errands for him that I don't have a moment to pick up my pen' (*Santō Kyōzan shokanshū*, 13 December 1835).

But why was Kyōzan, a member of the merchant class, in such close contact with a high-ranking daimyo such as Narimoto? One reason was that Kyōzan was well acquainted with the personal affairs of high-ranking daimyo as several women in his family, including his mother and his aunt, had served in their households. In addition, Kyōzan's daughter, who was employed as a lady-in-waiting by Narimoto, had become his mistress and borne him two children. As a result, members of Kyōzan's family would visit Narimoto's residence (on the site of the current Hibiya Park) on a daily basis, making it easy for Narimoto to employ Kyōzan for personal errands. Due to these family connections, Kyōzan had previously worked as an attendant to the retired daimyo of Tanba Sasayama. He was also a leading pupil of Nomura Kyūsei, the tea ceremony instructor to the Tokugawa family, and would have been used to attending tea ceremonies at various daimyo and samurai houses.

Naturally, Kyōzan's skill as a writer of *gōkan* would have proved useful to Narimoto in the production of his *kyōka* surimono. Kyōzan worked closely with Kunisada, Eisen and Kuniyoshi, the same three artists favoured by Narimoto, and characters in *gōkan* books were often drawn in the guise of leading kabuki actors of the day. There is no proof, but from these connections and the fact that Kyōzan sent some of Narimoto's surimono as a gift to his friend Bokukshi, it is easy to imagine that Kyōzan was involved in some way in their production. Indeed, he may have overseen the practical aspects of this work in Edo at times when Narimoto was travelling between Edo and Hagi due to the *sankin kōtai* system of 'alternate attendance' at the shogunal court.

The distinguishing features of Hananari's *kyōka* surimono

We will now turn our attention to the content and characteristics of Hananari's surimono. Of the works ascertained so far, the greatest number were created by Utagawa Kunisada I (25 works), followed by Keisai Eisen (20 works) and Utagawa Kuniyoshi (16 works). From the latter part of the Bunsei era onwards, all of Hananari's commissions were carried out by these three artists. Kunisada specialised in prints of actors but also produced pictures of beautiful women, while Eisen's

pictures are nearly all of beautiful women, particularly geisha. During the early years of Hananari's activity, a small number of commissions were also carried out by Utagawa Toyokuni I, Utagawa Kuniyasu, Utagawa Kunimaru, Utagawa Kunimune, Yashima Gakutei and Takashima Chiharu.

Pictures of actors and beautiful women make up 96% of the total works. The breakdown is as follows:

1. Actors – 44 works (21 series) including two hand-painted pictures
2. Beautiful women – 31 works (20 series)
3. Others – 3 works

The two main categories of actors and beautiful women can be further divided into two groups: works in the first group contain only *kyōka*; works in the second group feature *zokuyō* composed by Hananari in addition to *kyōka*. In the world of surimono, one sometimes comes across prints in which *kyōka* appear alongside *kanshi* or *haiku*, but it is rare to find them in combination with *zokuyō*. It is this combination which is the main distinguishing feature of Hananari's work. *5

The works in the third category of 'Others' are all early works. From the point of view of form and content, they are typical of single prints commissioned by a poetry circle. For example, 'Preparing for a dance performance at the Fujima school' (Figure 3) in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge includes *kyōka* by Hananari, a fellow pupil and their *kyōka* teacher, Shikatsube no Magao. There is nothing remarkable about it. In later works, however, we see Hananari's poems replacing those of his teacher and the production of many more series of works that reflect his personal interest in actors and beautiful women.

We will begin by taking a look at the characteristics of the actor prints. These were produced in series consisting of several prints. Some are in the form of a triptych and show one scene from a kabuki play, as in the Sukeroku print discussed earlier, while others show variations on themes from the plays. They

* 5 In the database, I use the number 1 to indicate a picture with only *kyōka* and the number 2 for works that contain *zokuyō*. For example, actor prints are either Y-1 or Y-2 and prints of beautiful women are either B-1 or B-2.



Figure 3. Preparing for a dance performance at the Fujima school, mid-Bunsei (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University)

can be divided into the following categories: 1. those depicting actors in a single scene from a kabuki play; 2. those depicting actors offstage in their everyday lives; and 3. those depicting actors in imaginary situations created by Hananari.

We have already noted Hananari's enthusiasm for *zokuyō* and this can be clearly seen in the triptych series 'Actors with images for snow, moon and flowers in the cartouches'.^{*6} The print with moon in the cartouche features a *hauta* (a short love song that is a sub-category of *zokuyō*) by Hananari; it can be found in various practice books and anthologies such as *Hautaburui* from the late Edo period and appears to have been widely known. The song depicts a woman elegantly sitting by a window waiting to hear the call of the cuckoo. But she immediately gets up and dashes outside when she hears the strong voice of the young fish-seller in the street. The song perfectly captures how the object of her attention changes in an instant. It is astonishing that Hananari, a daimyo, can so clearly portray the heart of a young girl and a scene of everyday life in Edo.

Another example of Hananari's use of music and song is the print in which the kabuki actors Kumesaburō on the right and Kikugorō on the left are shown as *torioi* street musicians. The *kiyomoto* narrative song which they are performing, *Hatsugasumi yanagi no kagerō*, is written as a long passage of

* 6 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA 11.26067 – 9 etc.)



Figure 4. Street musicians, Utagawa Kunisada I, early Tenpō (Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Asian Art Museum, National Museums in Berlin)



Figure 5. Kiyomoto text *Michiyukitabiji no hanamuko*, 1833 (Mayumi Tsuda collection)

text of about 620 characters in the same style of writing as that used in *kiyomoto* books from the same period (Figures 4 and 5).^{*7}

From the number of prints in which they appear, it is clear that the following three actors were Hananari's favourites:

1. Onoe Kikugorō III – 20 prints

* 7 We know that the *hauta* should be sung in the *kiyomoto* style as there is a *kyōka* by Hananari accompanying the picture of Kikugorō that refers to the *kiyomoto* music of the kabuki theatre. The *hauta* describes how two *torioi* street musicians perform in Edo at New Year. They complain about their hard lives and sing about the love suicides of Osome and Hisamatsu.

2. Iwai Kumesaburō II (also known as Hanshirō VI) – 16 prints
3. Ichikawa Danjūrō VII – 5 prints

We will now turn our attention to Hananari's prints of beautiful women, particularly focusing on his use of the 'cherry-blossom butterfly' crest.

The print below (Figure 6) is by Keisai Eisen and is a newly discovered work that was added to the database at the end of 2016. The enlarged detail shows the 'cherry-blossom butterfly' crest.

Hananari's trademark crest is referred to as a 'cherry-blossom butterfly' as the wings of the butterfly are in the shape of cherry blossom petals. Later reprints are not imprinted with this seal so it is an important means of identifying original works. Unfortunately the actual seal has not survived in the possessions of the Mōri family in Yamaguchi prefecture. Narimoto's use of the seal appears to follow two main rules: it is not used in prints commissioned for the poetry circles in which he was involved and it is most often used in prints connected with geisha in their role as musicians. There are also many prints in which the 'cherry-blossom butterfly' is not only imprinted as a seal but also appears as a crest on the kimono and other personal items of the geisha in the picture.

As the theme of the Heidelberg conference was handwritten manuscripts and printed books, I would like to conclude this section by looking at an example closely connected with

woodblock-printed books that can be regarded as the height of Hananari's achievement.

Utagawa Kuniyoshi's triptych 'Mitate of *Nise murasaki inaka genji*' (Figure 7) featuring the 'cherry-blossom butterfly' crest is based on *Nise murasaki inaka genji*, a parody of The Tale of Genji by Ryūtei Tanehiko, which was a hugely popular best-selling *gōkan*.^{*8}

The print on the right of the triptych shows Katsuragi, one of the characters in *Nise murasaki inaka genji*, who is a parody of



Figure 6. A beautiful woman and girl under the cherry blossom at Sumida River, Keisai Eisen, mid-Bunsei (Mayumi Tsuda collection)



Figure 7. Mitate of *Nise murasaki inaka genji*, Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1834-6 (National Museum of Scotland)

Oborozukiyo from The Tale of Genji. It is based on an illustration that appears in the twelfth chapter of the *gōkan*. The central print shows Tasogare, a parody of Yūgao from The Tale of Genji. Her costume exactly replicates the illustration in the fourth chapter of the *gōkan*. The print on the left shows Akogi, based on the character of Lady Rokujō, in a parody of the famous ox-carriage scene in The Tale of Genji. Instead of an ox-cart, she stands beside an Edo-style palanquin.

The twelve chapters of *Nise murasaki inaka genji* were published in 1834 (Tenpō 5), so these prints must have been commissioned in the two years before Narimoto's death in 1836 (Tenpō 7). The triptych contains his cherry-blossom butterfly crest, *kyōka* and *zokuyō*, and is based on a popular work of contemporary fiction. By adding this *gesaku* twist, it adds a new dimension to the world of surimono. This triptych can be regarded as the peak of his achievement and is a fine example of how he moved towards more complex prints in his later years.

As we have seen, Hananari's prints developed from standard, somewhat commonplace *kyōka* surimono into a distinctive form that reflected his personal liking for the stage and musical performance and contained his own compositions of *zokuyō*. Their development may well reflect the trend towards increasingly lengthy *gōkan* due to the demand from readers for more developed stories. Hananari's surimono developed in the context of a poetry circle and as objects to be presented as a gift, so it is likely that their development was influenced not only by Hananari's personal interests in the stage and music but also by the tastes and wishes of those around him.

What can we learn about the fundamental nature of *kyōka* surimono from Hananari's prints?

We have seen how Hananari's surimono developed to reflect his personal interests. Despite these changes, however, some features remained constant. These help us to understand the fundamental characteristics of *kyōka* surimono as a genre.

When we examine the poems that are at the heart of *kyōka* surimono, we find that Hananari's 78 works contain a total of 101

kyōka composed either by himself or by those in his poetry circle. Unlike *zokuyō* that contain a range of subjects unrelated to spring, almost all of the *kyōka* contain words connected with celebrating spring and the New Year. Of the total 101 *kyōka*, 91 (90%) contain spring words, whereas of the total 13 *zokuyō*, only 5 (38%) contain spring words.

The *kyōka* that do not contain spring words appear in series such as 'Actors with images of snow, moon and flowers in the cartouches' and 'Mitate of *Nise murasaki inaka genji*' in which the theme and the content take priority. However, even within each of these series, there is always one print that contains a *kyōka* celebrating the arrival of spring. Also, in the prints containing *zokuyō* unrelated to spring, the accompanying *kyōka* always contains spring words. Clearly, although the focus in Hananari's surimono sometimes shifts away from spring, they still maintain their fundamental character of being gifts for distribution at New Year. It is important to note that it is the *kyōka* that enable them to maintain this character and role regardless of the content of the picture.

Willow and cherry blossom, willow branches like shamisen strings, plum blossom, morning mist, actors stage names – all of these spring words appear time and again in Hananari's *kyōka*. Some later critics, such as Masaoka Shiki, condemned them as stale and hackneyed phrases, but they are repeated in this way for a purpose. Unlike *tanka* of a later period, *kyōka* make no attempt to present fresh and individual ways of seeing the world. Their main purpose is to celebrate New Year and the arrival of spring with fitting words for the occasion and, for this purpose, stock phrases are more suitable than new forms of words. In this respect, *kyōka* are rather like New Years cards today and are similar to classical *waka* that were composed on formal occasions.

From looking carefully at Hananari's *kyōka* surimono, we can see that while they reflect his own individual interests in actors and music, they also reveal the fundamental nature of *kyōka* surimono as works of art created to celebrate the arrival of spring.

Summary

In this article, I have discussed the large number of *kyōka* surimono commissioned by Mōri Narimoto under the pen name Edo no Hananari and what they tell us about the fundamental

* 8 The illustration here from the National Museum of Scotland does not contain the crest, but the version in the Lusy Collection, Museum of Design, Zurich is imprinted with the seal.

characteristics of *kyōka* surimono. These surimono are of great value in our study of art, literature and the history of the Chōshū domain. But when we consider that they were produced by a daimyo, their significance extends beyond these fields of research. Such works could not have been produced without Narimoto interacting in his private life with many people of different social status and class. As such, they are a valuable resource for helping us understand important aspects of Edo culture and society

I have also explained why Hananari's true identity remained a mystery for so long in ukiyo-e circles and how I chanced upon this so-called 'discovery'. This is proof that even in this day and age we need to improve our sharing of information and the results of our research across geographical boundaries and research fields. So I would like to conclude with a request to all those reading this article to remember the name of Edo no Hananari and his 'cherry-blossom butterfly' crest and to contact me with any information which might lead to new discoveries of his work. (maytsuda@ecom.keio.ac.jp)