Rethinking 'Beauties': Women and Humor in the Late Edo *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui*

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The *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui* (1844-1847, 東海道五十三対) is a Japanese ukiyo-e prints series created in collaboration by three of the foremost Japanese print artists of the nineteenth century: Hiroshige (1797-1858), Kuniyoshi (1797-1861), and Kunisada (1786-1864). The *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui* differs from other, mostly earlier, series on the theme of stations along the Tōkaidō Road such as landscapes, or beauties set in landscapes, by taking historical legends and folklore as its predominant subject matter, and combining figures and landscape. A literal rendition of the title of the series is 'Fifty-three Pairings along the Tōkaidō Road.'[1] Timothy Clark suggests that the term *tsui* 対, 'pairings,' might refer to the linking of a legendary event, or some subject associated with the place, to each station of the highway.[2] Writ large, this series may be read as a compendium of encounters en route. Many of the figures depicted in the scene for each station are themselves travellers, some famous, others ordinary folk. While the majority of the prints in the series depict male subjects, or illustrate scenes that include both men and women, there are a fair number that depict individual women. In addition to the portrayal of noted women of history, paramours of famous military heroes, supernatural female figures of traditional folklore, and female ghosts, the *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui* depicts anonymous women performing daily activities, primarily in transit or at labour. In the case of anonymous women, humour and beauty work in tandem to engage the viewer's imagination.

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to identify the strategies these three artists used to make depictions of ordinary women of interest, and second, to explicate the ways in which suggestive humour gave a subtle clue as to the identity of the woman featured in a scene as that of a noted tragic heroine of a *bunraku* puppet or *kabuki* theatrical play. Each of the print images is accompanied by a cartouche that contains a poem, story, or description that provides an explanation of the images in the print, or gives some background

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[1] The series is sometimes referred to as the *Parallel Tōkaidō*.

[2] Timothy Clark, *Kuniyoshi: From the Arthur R. Miller Collection* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2009), p. 151.

about the station. Especially in the case of poems and of background descriptions of the stations, it is necessary to have an understanding of the contents of the cartouche text in order to fully appreciate the significance of the images in the print, as the links between the two are not always straightforward.

The *bijin-ga* ('Pictures of Beautiful Women') Genre

The women depicted in this series do not appear to be framed under a dominant gaze of desire, and this marks a departure from the qualities ordinarily associated with this print genre. *Ukiyo-e* ('pictures of the floating world') featuring women are classified by genre as *bijin-ga* (美人画) 'pictures of beautiful women.' Favoured female subjects in such prints were "courtesans, geisha, and tea house attendants."[3] Clark has explained the purpose of this genre as follows:

> The essential dynamic of "pictures of beautiful women" (*bijin-ga*) was to present a beautiful woman dressed in fine robes in a seductive pose for the delectation of the viewer. The genre had been at the heart of the ukiyo-e ("pictures of the floating world") school since it first developed at the end of the seventeenth century.[4]

Keizaburō Yamaguchi observes that prior to the Muromachi period (1392-1568), images of women in sculpture had been restricted largely to deities of Buddhism and Shintoism, and that while commoner women were depicted in crowd scenes in Buddhist scrolls and paintings, it was not until the beginning of the Edo period (1600-1867) that portraits depicting the beauty of individual women appeared, in the form of portraits of wives of noted samurai.[5] It was in the urban street life of Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka that a keen interest in the social customs and life of commoners emerged. In the estimation of Muneshige Narazaki, the adoption of motifs featuring women of stigmatised occupations, working women, and commoner women in the street in the new media of ukiyo-e in the Edo period represents a major revolution in the history of Japanese art.[6] Like Clark, Narazaki finds that the charm of the beauties in the beauty-print genre was dictated by the male gaze. Rather than attracting appreciation as objects of pure beauty, such women compelled fascination and allure. The fact that many of the images were portraits of individual women, especially those of noted courtesans, was also part of this attraction.

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[3] John T. Carpenter, ed., *Reading Surimono: The Interplay of Text and Image in Japanese Prints* (Leiden; Boston: Hotei Publishing, 2008), p. 392.
[4] Clark, *Kuniyoshi*, p.125.
[5] Keizaburō Yamazaki, 'Bijin-ga no keimyaku,' *Ukiyo-e geijustu*, no. 28 (1971), p. 76.
[6] Muneshige Narazaki, 'Bijin ukiyo-e,' *Ukiyo-e geijutsu*, no. 28 (1971), pp. 51-52.

Murasaki Fujisawa, on the other hand, maintains that there were three main functions and associated reasons for the popularity of the beauty-print genre.[7] First, such prints served as a record of the most favoured courtesans and prostitutes; secondly, they represented books of fashion for that age, and thirdly, they functioned as advertisements. In her view, the first function was targeted at the male consumer, but the latter two functions had their primary appeal among women. Fujisawa points to the fact that artists placed great emphasis on clothing and on hairstyles as evidence of the likelihood that the artists had in mind women as consumers of these prints in addition to men. Similarly, she maintains that the depiction of a variety of women of different ages and occupations, along with a focus on the charm of their dress and their gesture, rather than on that of the individual's particular facial features, allowed the female consumer to envision herself in fabrics of new designs, and to model social behaviours in order to achieve delicacy and grace.

The most admired artists of the beauty-print genre are the pioneering Moronobu (d.1694), and the mid-Edo artists Kiyonga (1752-1815) and Utamaro (1753-1806). In the late Edo period of the nineteenth century, however, artists ventured beyond the floating world of entertainment and turned to the depiction of different types of women in their work, including noted women of history, working women, supernatural women, and travellers. It is likely that government mandated restrictions on the subject matter of prints was one motivation for this shift in thematic choice. Scholars have remarked on the fact that the sumptuary laws issued under the Tenpō reforms of 1841-1843, which prohibited the depiction of actors and courtesans, had an impact on the selection of the subject matter in ukiyo-e prints.[8] One such proscription forbidding the portrayal of kabuki actors, courtesans and geishas was issued in 1842, as part of general government restriction on display of lavish consumption and material likely to contain implicit political messages.[9] Additionally, six artists, including the three artists of the series under consideration here, Hiroshige, Kuniyoshi, and Kunisada, were summoned to the magistrate's office in 1843 and required to sign a statement that they would not illustrate the following:

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[7] Murasaki Fujisawa, 'Ukiyo-e no bijin: Media toshite no kinō,' *Ukiyo-e geijutsu*, no. 155 (2008), pp. 6-15.

[8] See Sarah Thompson, 'The World of Japanese Prints,' *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 82 (1986), p. 39, and also Jilly Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road: Traveling and Representation in Meiji Japan* (New York; London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), p. 164.

[9] Clark, *Kuniyoshi*, p. 20. Clark provides a translation of one such "instruction" on the part of a city magistrate from the sixth month of 1842. Clark notes that strict enforcement of the prohibition was observed into 1846, at which time there was some relaxation on verification of its observance.

> erotic books, likenesses of Kabuki actors, images of courtesans and female geisha, works on theatrical subjects, pictures in which dancing women and children took on the guise of adults and, finally, biographical illustrations of wise women and virtuous wives, along with images of other faithful women.[10]

Thompson maintains, however, that the impact of the Tenpō reforms on prints of beautiful women was quite limited, as the consumption of entertainment in the pleasure quarters had declined under a weakened economy, along with the demand for prints with a focus on such themes.[11] She observes a rise in late Edo in the depiction of female historical figures from earlier periods, and a decline in the portrayal of contemporary individuals from the floating world.

The fifty-five prints of the *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui* series began appearing shortly after the Tenpō reforms.[12] Many of the prints in the series depict the historical events that form the story lines of kabuki plays, and it is therefore likely that the choice of subject matter in this series was influenced by the need to observe the restrictions imposed by the Tenpō reforms. In other words, while the appeal of the kabuki stage and its themes is reinforced in such prints, censorship could be avoided by setting the scene offstage and avoiding the depiction of kabuki actors. At the same time, the depiction of anonymous women in scenes of everyday life may well have been motivated by the decline in demand for images of courtesans and prostitutes noted by Thompson.

The Tōkaidō ('Eastern Sea Road') and its Post Stations

The Tōkaidō ('Eastern Sea Road') had been a known thoroughfare since ancient times, used for the transport of revenues, but it was not until the beginning of the Edo Period, in 1601, that fifty-three post stations were designated by Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu and established as such.[13] New towns emerged to meet the needs of traffic passing through each station, and over time, these post station towns developed an aura of what Jilly Tranganou has described as "separateness and ephemerality," becoming zones of "the

[10] Clark, *Kuniyoshi,* p. 24. Clark interprets the restriction on the depiction of faithful women as being an objection to the portrayal of women in "contemporary fashions" (*imayō sugata*).
[11] Sarah E. Thompson, 'The Politics of Japanese Prints,' in *Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints*, by Sarah E. Thompson and H. D. Harootunian (New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1991), p. 79.
[12] This series includes a print for the starting point of the Tōkaidō Road at Nihonbashi in Edo [Figure 1], and the end point of the highway at the Sanjō Ōhashi in Kyoto [Figure 2], thereby making a total of fifty-five, rather than fifty-three, prints.
[13] Patricia J. Graham, 'The Political and Economic Importance of the Tōkaidō', in *Tōkaidō: Adventures on the Road in Old Japan*, ed. Stephen Addiss (Lawrence, Kansas: Spencer Museum of Art, 1980), p. 3.

extraordinary and the unpredictable."[14] Traganou characterises the towns as *sakariba*, sites filled with crowds and excitement, in which a culture of *asobi* ('play') arose in the context of commoner culture, apart from the official centres of power in the urban areas.[15]

Prints series providing an illustration for each of the fifty-three post stations became quite popular, and were realised in numerous iterations. The first Tōkaidō print series was likely that of Utamaro (1753-1806), *Bijin ichidai gojūsan tsugi* (1795, *The Lives of Beautiful Women along with the Fifty-three stations*), consisting of depictions of beautiful women with small insets of the station landscapes at the top of the print.[16] Hokusai (1760-1849) also produced several series on the Tōkaidō theme between 1802-1810. These series devoted greater attention to the figures than to the landscapes.[17] The first series to treat the landscapes of the stations in a realistic rather than imagined fashion was that of Hiroshige's *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsugi* (*The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*), issued by the publisher Hōeido in 1833-1834.[18] In 1832, Hiroshige had journeyed the highway as part of a fireman's brigade escorting horses to be presented to the emperor in Kyoto as a gift from the shogun (military ruler) in Edo,[19] and it is thought that the series was inspired by this journey and the sketches he made along the way. Hiroshige eventually produced some thirteen different landscape series under the Tōkaidō theme. Other artists of greater and lesser renown created their own Tōkaidō series. 'Beauties of the Tōkaidō' remained a perennial favourite; other themes that emerged include actors of the fifty-three stations, and pornographic series depicting sexual liaisons in bedrooms along the Tōkaidō.

The *Tōkaidō gujūsan tsui*

As mentioned above, the *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui* was a team production created by three of the foremost Japanese woodblock print artists of the nineteenth century, Hiroshige, Kuniyoshi and Kunisada.[20] This series has not previously

[14] Jilly Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road: Traveling and Representation in Edo and Meiji Japan* (New York; London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), p. 146.
[15] Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road*, p. 148.
[16] Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road*, pp. 164-165.
[17] Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road*, pp. 165-166.
[18] Ichitarō Kondō, ed., English adaptation by Charles S. Terry, *The Fifty-three Stages of the Tokaido, by Hiroshige* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1960), p. 10.
[19] Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road*, p. 168.
[20] There are two different prints for at least five of the stations (stations 11 'Hakone,' 14 'Hara,' 29 'Mitsuke,' 45 'Ishiyakushi,' 54 'Ōtsu'), and for this reason the count of prints created by each artist for the series may vary. The set under focus is a complete set of one print for each station (fifty-five in total) owned by the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art at the

been the focus of close scholarly inquiry.[21] Although the series was created by three different artists, each print observes the same format. The left-hand portion of the upper third of each print is devoted to textual explanation, commentary, or poems that relate in some fashion to the scene depicted in the lower two-thirds of the print. The top right-hand corner contains the title of the series, *Tōkaidō/ gojūsan tsui*, framed in black. What makes this series of interest from the perspective of the juxtaposition of text and image is the fact that, in many cases, there is no direct link between the cartouche text and the print image, and the relationship between the two is often not a transparent one of description and illustration. Rather, the text establishes a context for the interpretation of the image, or makes a commentary on the image that is playful, and in each case the viewer has to engage visual, oral, and cultural knowledge in order to arrive at an interpretation of the print itself. Each of the prints under focus here depict women who are not simply beauties to be admired, but rather active agents whose will and performance cannot be understood without access to the information written in the cartouche.

The first and final prints of the series bookend the journey in a parallel fashion. In each, a woman and her companion or attendant are crossing the main bridge that serves as gateway to the highway. The distinctive landscapes of the cities are featured in the background, Mt. Fuji to the west in the case of the city of Edo, seat of the Tokugawa shogunate government, and the Higashiyama area to the east in the case of Kyō, the imperial capital of the country. The poems in each of the cartouches are *kyōka* (狂歌 'mad poems'), comic verse of lines of 5-7-5-7-7 morae. Each involves wordplay.

University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A. (Museum purchase, gift of friends of the museum, 2005.25.7). Eighteen of the prints are drawn by Hiroshige, twenty-nine by Kuniyoshi, and nine by Kunisada.

[21] There are likely a number of reasons. The fact that the series was created by three different artists meant that those interested in a particular artist would not care to examine the entire series (Jason Steuber, discussion at Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A., 10/10/2011). The series is rather late in the history of Japanese the woodblock print genre, and much previous inquiry has been devoted to earlier masters of the art (Laura Allen, discussion at Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A, 10/10/2011).

Figure 1: 'Nihonbashi,' Artist: Kuniyoshi, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.1 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Ibaya Senzaburō).

The cartouche text reads:[22]

手遊びも ふり出す槍の にほんばしなまこえりさえ 見ゆる魚
市　　梅屋

[22] My transcriptions of the cartouche texts rely on those provided at 'Ichiyusai, Kuniyoshi o chūshin to shita ukiyo-e, hanga no saito' ('Ichiyusai, Website featuring primarily the ukiyo-e and hanga of Kuniyoshi'), at http://homepage2.nifty.com/ICHIYUSAI/index.htm. Accessed 1/21/2012. "Ichiyusai" cites '*Hiroshige, Kuniyoshi, Sandai Toyokuni no gyōsaki Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui kanshō no tebiki*' ('Handbook for Appreciation of Hiroshige, Kuniyoshi and Sandai Toyokuni's Competition Composition *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui'*), no author, no date, as reference for the transcriptions provided on the site, at http://homepage2.nifty.com/ICHIYUSAI/53tsui/1to11/1to11.htm. Accessed 1/21/2012.

Transliteration
Teasobi mo furidasu yari no Nihonbashi namako-eri sae miyuru uoichi Umenoya
[The spear on the toy leads the way at Nihonbashi
One even finds sea cucumber-shaped collars in the fish market
Umenoya]

In figure 1, 'Nihonbashi,' the companion holds a toy footman called a *keyari*, the spear-holder at the front of a samurai procession.[23] Here, the toy spear leads the way at the beginning of the journey that commences at Nihonbashi, a well-known bridge in Edo, and this is expressed compactly in the cartouche text in the form of a noun-modifying expression, *furidasu yari no Nihonbashi* 'spear-leading Nihonbashi.' The woman's stylish collar, called a *namako-eri* or 'sea-cumber collar,' echoes a type of sea delicacy to be found in the fish market there, the *namako* or 'sea-cucumber.' Both of these phrases contain words that form associations (*engo*) beyond their literal sense, in that Nihonbashi leads to the Tōkaidō Road, as the spear leads the way in the procession, and in the famed fish market, even the patterns of the clothing are evocative of the delicacies of the sea.

The poet here is Umenoya, *kyōka* poet and *kyōgen* farce dramatist who was both long-term friend and patron to Kuniyoshi.[24] Yuriko Iwakiri coins the term *kōansha* (工案者), 'producer,' in the modern sense, to characterise the important role played by Umenoya in the late Edo ukiyo-e publishing world.[25] His feedstuffs business provided him with financial resources to support publication of prints. At the same time, he was an avid participant in *kyōka* circles, and worked in tandem with Kuniyoshi to create prints with texts and images replete with sophisticated interplay and popular appeal. Iwakiri views Umenoya as the inspiration behind these collaborations, using the ready wit that he cultivated through his years of training in comic verse, with its complex web of wordplay, intertextuality, and reference to the current scene, to propose the theme and tone for Kuniyoshi to develop in his designs.

[23] I am indebted to Chikaomi Takahashi for interpretation of the images in the poem.
[24] Umenoya Kakuji, kyōka poet (1801-1865), and feedstuffs merchant also known as Morota (Enshūya) Sakichi (Clark, *Kuniyoshi*, pp. 29-30).
[25] Yuriko Iwakiri, 'Umenoya to Kuniyoshi II,' *Ukiyo-e geijutsu,* no. 106 (1992), p. 9. For further analysis of Umenoya's background and his relationship with Kuniyoshi, see also Yuriko Iwakiri, 'Umenoya to Kuniyoshi I,' *Ukiyo-e geijutsu*, no. 105 (1992), pp. 3-13.

Figure 2: 'Kyō,' Artist: Hiroshige, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.55 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Ibaya Kyūbei).

The cartouche text reads:

綾にしき織れるみやこは
たてぬきにゆきかふ人もしけき大橋　梅喜

Transliteration

Ayanishiki oreru miyako wa
tatenuki ni yukikau hito mo shigeki Ōhashi　　Umeyoshi

[In the capital where they weave twill damask and brocade
the warp and weft of people coming and going is thick along the Ōhashi bridge
Umeyoshi]

In addition, the text in the body of the print explains the scene as follows:

> The Sanjō Ōhashi Bridge is the gateway to the capital from the east, and flows endlessly with passersby high and low. The prosperity of the imperial capital can be viewed from this bridge. In every direction there is one scenic view after another of natural beauty and historic spots near and far.

The poem at journey's end creates an engaging metaphor juxtaposing the warp and weft of people coming and going with that of the twill damask woven silks for which the capital was famous (*Ayanishiki oreru miyako wa tatenuki ni yukikau hito*). Each of the dolls held by the companion or attendant is symbolic of that city's culture, the samurai footman of the seat of the shogun in Edo, versus the court attendant doll for the imperial capital of Kyō.[26] The patterns on each of the women's kimono's are also reflective of each city's cultural taste, abstract and muted for Edo, floral, elaborate and more colourful in Kyō. In this fashion, the words of the poems create a playful dialogue with various details of the figures in each print. At the same time, each print serves as the beginning and ending of a larger text, that of the journey down the Tōkaidō and all that lies in between.

The prints with cartouche texts consisting of poems can perhaps be regarded as the legacy of the *surimono* tradition.[27] *Surimono* were woodblock prints that were privately commissioned and privately published from the late eighteenth century through the early 1840s.[28] They were often a joint production on the part of *kyōka* 'mad poem' poets, and an artist who designed an image for one or more poems to be included in the print. Carpenter observes that while one can take pleasure in the images of *surimono* without an understanding of the literary conventions of the texts that accompany them, it is not possible to fully comprehend the rationale behind the print's design without a nuanced understanding of the poem and its word play.[29] He also notes that the images on the print can affect one's reading of the poem on the

[26] For a spirited comparison of the cultures of these two cities, see H. D. Harootunian, 'Cultural Politics in Tokugawa Japan,' in *Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorships and Japanese Prints*, by H. D. Harootunian and Sarah E. Thompson (New York: The Asia Society Galleries), pp. 21-22.

[27] Nine of the prints in this series (Nos 1, 2, 6, 13, 24, 25, 31, 35, 55) contain cartouche texts that consist of *kyōka* verses only. Three prints (Nos 18, 32, 40) contain cartouche texts that include famous *tanka* poems by well-known poets, and two (Nos 20, 54) contain *haiku* by Basho.

[28] Joan B. Mirviss, 'A Hidden Legacy: The Surimono Collection of Frank Lloyd Wright,' in *The Frank Lloyd Wright Collection of Surimono*, ed. Joan B. Mirviss with John T. Carpenter; and an introduction by Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (New York; Phoenix: Weatherhill; Phoenix Art Museum), p. 14.

[29] John T. Carpenter, 'Ways of Reading Surimono: Poetry-Prints to Celebrate the New Year,' in *The Frank Lloyd Wright Collection of Surimono*, p. 37.

print. While the humorous verses in this Tōkaidō series are not as sophisticated as those found in *surimono*, the text and print image in this series work in tandem to create a humorous and lively effect.

Women at Work

The print in figure 3, 'Kanagawa,' illustrates what is called 'Urashima's tomb,' and the cartouche text tells the folk legend of the fisherman Urashima, who journeyed to the Dragon Palace at the bottom of the sea, and was given a box by the Princess of the Dragon Palace, with instructions that it not be opened.[30]

Figure 3: 'Kanagawa,' Artist: Kunisada, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.4 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Enshūya Matabei)

[30] The legend of Urashima is an ancient one, first appearing in the *Man'yōshū* (IX: 1740-41), where he is called "Urashima of Mizunoue." The story developed into one of Japan's favorite folktales, *Urashima Tarō*, and can be found in most anthologies.

The cartouche text reads:

> The tumulus of Urashima at the Kanagawa Post Station
> During the reign of the Emperor Yūryaku, there was a man named Urashimako in Tango province. One day he set out alone in a small boat, and as he was fishing, a divine turtle appeared. Urashimako rode on the turtle's back to the Dragon Palace. After some days, he wished to return home, and announced this to the Divine Maiden of the Dragon Palace. The Divine Maiden said that she was loathe to part, but that did not hinder him. When the time came to bid farewell, Urashimako was delighted to receive a jewelled box as a keepsake, and he then returned to his home. It is said that several hundreds of years had passed, and he met his seven-year old grandson.

The complete tale is not told in the cartouche, perhaps due to limitations of space. In the final portion of the tale as it is known, Urashima opened the box and immediately aged into an old man. The main image of the print, however, shows a fisherwoman looking at a large shrimp, with the tomb mound in the background. At first glance, there is nothing to relate the fisherwoman and the shrimp to the legend. Word association, however, leads one to read this print as a *mitate,* or parody – the word for 'shrimp' in Japanese, *ebi*, is written as 'old man of the sea' 海老. Perhaps the shrimp the fisherwoman is holding reminds her of the aged Urashima, as the shrimp in Japan is a symbol of longevity due to its long antennae, resembling a beard, and its bent back. Most likely, the woman is in fact the Princess of the Dragon Palace, named Otohime, come back once more to see her Urashima, but alas, he has now become an aged creature of the sea. In the print, the woman's kimono, obi, towel and comb all bear turtle motifs. In some versions of the legend, the turtle caught by Urashima at the beginning of the tale actually changes into Otohime, Princess of the Dragon Palace.[31] The turtle images on her clothing strongly suggest that she herself is Otohime. The shrimp just might be Urashima, but alas, he has no underwater kingdom to which they can depart, and there is only the grassy mound of his earthen tomb. In either case, the print can be read as a *mitate*, or 'parody,' a print genre Thompson defines as "an amusing juxtaposition of two unlike ideas."[32] Clark's definition of *mitate*, "a type of image that establishes playful, often tenuous connections

[31] One such version can be found in *Nihon shoki* ('Chronicles of Japan,' 720). See *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, translated from the original Chinese and Japanese by W. G. Aston (Rutland, Vermont; Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972), Vol. 1, p. 368.

[32] Thompson, 'The World of Japanese Prints,' p. 22. Thompson also notes that "contemporary genre scenes and landscapes also were often presented as illustrations of ancient poems or other specific themes, thus falling into the *mitate* category."

between two apparently unrelated subjects,"[33] is suggestive of the invitation to the viewer to assign the interpretation that serves to establish the connection.

In these prints of unnamed women at work, the clever or amusing interplay of word, image, and story seems to be the purpose of the design. In this respect, these depictions differ somewhat from other portrayals of working women by the same artists, or their contemporaries. Clark observes, for example, that Kuniyoshi's goal in depicting women collecting brine along the seashore for salt-making was "to present working women in alluring poses expressive of exertion and exhibiting a slight dishabille."[34] Carpenter, in explaining the appeal of the figure of the *oharame*, women who made a livelihood transporting firewood from the outskirts of Kyoto into the city, suggests that motivation in portraying rural female workers lay in the attraction to their robust, unrefined beauty:

> The theme of Oharame was popular with ukiyo-e artists, even though courtesans, geisha, and tea house attendants were their favorite subjects. No doubt customers were attracted by the suggestive image of women from the countryside who represented a kind of natural, rugged beauty – quite unlike the highly contrived beauty of courtesans and geisha in the licensed districts, who wore heavy make-up, elaborate ornaments, and fine garments.[35]

Traganou, on the other hand, in reference to two prints from an unlabeled Tōkaidō series by Hokusai that depict women making sheets of seaweed, and women at work cultivating silkworms, notes that "we should not fail to note a perception of human action that gradually moves away from the conventional poses of courtesans that we find in earlier *ukiyo-e*."[36] Thus, Traganou hints at the possibility that the portrayal of women in such work scenes was a departure from the conventional gaze of desire, rather than a rural instantiation of it.

The print for the post station at Yui, in figure 4, depicts a woman repairing a fishing net. In the cartouche text, Kuniyoshi explicitly mentions his desire to portray a local woman of the lower class at work. The cartouche text reads:

> At a tea shop at Nishi-Kurasawa, on the eastern foothills of Mt. Satta, we had turbo and abalone. The scenery looking out over Mt. Fuji was like taking Miho-no-Matsubara in your hands in a picture-map

[33] Clark, *Kuniyoshi*, p. 172.
[34] Clark, *Kuniyoshi*, p. 162.
[35] Carpenter, *Reading Surimono*, p. 392.
[36] Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road*, pp. 167-168. The prints, illustrating the stations of Shinagawa and Kusatsu, later appeared in an album titled *Tōkaidō gojūsan eki kyōga* ('Comic drawings of the fifty-three stations of the Tōkaidō', c. 1801 – 1804). See also figure 12, 'Shinagawa,' in Traganou.

game. I thought to portray a lower-class young woman of this area drawing up things at high tide, and gathering abalone.

Figure 4: 'Yui,' Artist: Kuniyoshi, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.17 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Ebiya Rinnosuke).

While the plump, white arms of the woman are lovely, and the viewer feels the blue of the sea in her indigo robe, the sensation of the smell of the brine seems to waft forth from the picture. The woman's robe is patterned with a variety of shellfish, perhaps crabs, turbo and abalone. Her arms are patterned much like a bivalve, a simulacrum symbolising her inseparability from the sea and its creatures. Even her view of the spectacular Mt. Fuji, a view that others journey from afar to savour, is obstructed by her fishing net. Similarly, while the net's conical shape parallels that of Mt. Fuji, the net appears in the foreground, and thus towers above Fuji and dominates the scene. The gaze of

the artist comingles desire, in depiction of a substantial portion of the woman's bare arms, and her face gazing out toward the viewer, as opposed to focusing on her task, along with respect for her healthy strength, and humour in her inseparability from the sea.[37]

There are two other prints in this series that depict women at work, station No. 20, 'Fuchū,' by Hiroshige, which shows two women picking tea, and station No. 4, 'Narumi,' by Kunisada, which illustrates a woman sewing fabrics in the famed tie-dye market of Arimatsu. The relation of cartouche text to image in these instances is rather straightforward, and without humorous nuance.

Women in Transit

The unnamed female traveller in figure 5, 'Futakawa,' appears in the cartouche, rather than in the body of the print. The text of the cartouche in this print is quite playful. In the first place, it is written in colloquial Japanese, representing a conversation that parallels the informal style of banter found in the novel the young woman is reading, (*Tōkaidōchū*) *Hizakurige* (1802-1822, *Footing it along the Tōkaidō Road*), a humorous story of the journey undertaken by two ne'er-do-well jokesters from Edo, Yaji and Kita, authored by Jippensha Ikku (1765-1831). Writing the word *musume* 'young woman' just above the cartouche text, and separating this word from the text with a bent line, frames the woman's words as if they were lines from a novel or a play. This is suggestive of the woman's thoughts as she writes a letter to a friend at home, or implies that she is actually speaking to someone nearby. The forms of the woman's speech are highly colloquial and informal. In this respect, the text shares features common to the oral nature of Edo period *kusazōshi* (illustrated novelettes and short stories) literature, with texts targeted to being read aloud.[38] Like the *kusazōshi*, the prints in this series also show a "close interaction between image and text."[39] At the same time, the forms seen in the woman's speech appear to align with forms found in other representation of female speech found in late Edo texts.[40] The whole effect is to situate the viewer in the

[37] See also Clark, *Kuniyoshi*, p. 151, for a discussion of this print.
[38] Hirohito Miyamoto, 'The Formation of an Impure Genre: On the Origins of *Manga*,' *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, vol. 14 (2002), pp. 39-41.
[39] Haruo Shirane, ed., *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 672.
[40] The woman's speech lacks features that are characteristic of stereotypically feminine speech in modern Standard Japanese. Rather, she uses forms that Inoue has identified as those that are used by both men and women in informal colloquial styles of this period, such as *da yo* ('plain form copula + assertive sentence-final particle'). See Miyako Inoue, 'Gender, Language, and Modernity: Toward an Effective History of "Japanese Women's

position of close friend – it is after all the viewer who can see the antics of Yaji and Kita, and not the eventual recipient of the letter.

Figure 5: 'Futakawa,' Artist: Hiroshige, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.34 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Ibaya Kyūbei).

The cartouche text reads:

娘
ひざくり毛はいくどみてもおかしい袮え いまよんでいるところはふた川だがね これより前の着物をみてゆうれいだとおどろひてころげるところがおかしかったよ なあなあそこをよん

Language,"' in *Japanese Language, Gender, and Ideology*, eds Shigeko Okamoto and Janet S. Shibamoto Smith (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 64-65.

できかせろとか そんならまあ下のえをごらんな あのとおり
だよ
Transliteration
Musume:
Hizakurige wa ikudo mitemo okashii nee. Ima yonde iru tokoro wa Futakawa da ga ne. Kore yori mae no kimono o mite yūrei da to odoroite korogeru tokoro ga okashikatta yo. Naa, naa soko o yonde kikasero to ka sonnara maa shita no e o goranna. Ano toori da yo.
[Young woman:
It is always fun to read *Hizakurige*. I am now reading the part on Futagawa, but the previous part in which they were frightened by a kimono that looked like a ghost and fell over was very funny. You are now asking me to read that part for you, but you can actually figure out what happened in the story if you look at the painting below. That shows it exactly!]

The scene depicted, that in which Yaji and Kita go out onto the veranda to relieve themselves and are frightened by what they think is a ghost, in fact takes place at an inn in Hamamatsu, station No. 30. Thus, station No. 34, Futakawa, is actually not depicted at all in the print devoted to its portrayal, save for the woman speaking in the cartouche, who can be assumed to be a traveller stopping there.

The print in figure 6, 'Kanaya,' also depicts an anonymous woman along with thoughts ascribed to her as she composes a letter to those at home. Here, the young woman sports a *Shimada-mage* hairstyle (a back-looped pile fastened with a comb) that was a hairstyle popular among unmarried Japanese woman of the time. This style is said to have originated with women entertainers at the post station of Shimada, station No. 24, immediately preceding this one on the highway. The print shows the woman's palanquin roped to the carrying board, and all of her belongings tied to the top of the palanquin.

Figure 6: 'Kanaya,' Artist: Hiroshige, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.25 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Ebiya Rinnosuke).

The cartouche text reads:

大井川 無事に越しと 嶋田髷　文のかなやに 告るふる郷　梅屋

Transliteration

Ōi-gawa buji ni koeshi to shimada mage fumi no kanaya ni tsuguru furusato Umenoya

[I've crossed the Ōi river

She writes the news to those at home, coiffed in Shimada style

Umenoya]

This *kyoka* 'mad poem' describes the hardship of crossing the Ōi River that runs between Shimada and Kanaya post towns. The poet interestingly used

these location names in his poem in a word play on Shimada for the hairstyle (*Shimada-mage*), which echoes the place name, Shimada, and *Kana ya* for the syllabic writing *kana* she is assumed to be using in her letter home, which puns on the place name Kanaya. The text implies that as she is a woman, she would of course be writing in the syllabary only, not using Chinese characters that were prescriptively reserved for writing by men.

The print in figure 7, 'Kanbara,' depicts a female author in the act of writing. As was the case with the print in figure 5, 'Futakawa,' in which there was no representation of a theme related to that particular station in the print, there is nothing shown in the body of the print that relates directly to the legend of the six pine trees burial marker associated with the station.

Figure 7: 'Kanbara,' Artist: Kuniyoshi, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.16 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Enshūya Matabei).

The cartouche text narrates the story of the ill-fated love between Jōruri-hime, the lovely daughter of a local lord who is talented at music and dance, and the dashing Yoshitsune, on his flight to the north. Their paths crossed at station No. 39, however, in Okazaki, further along the route to the southwest. Legend has it that, following their evening together, Jōruri-hime stole away from her home to follow Yoshitsune to the north, and died along the way. The cartouche text narrates one version of her death and burial site at Yahagi, which lies near Station 16. What is shown in the body of the print, however, is the purported author of Jōruri-hime's story, Ono no Otsū, engaged in the act of writing down Jōruri-hime's story, and setting it to music. Behind her, a *shamisen* (three-stringed, plucked musical instrument) leans against the wall. The tale of Jōruri-hime is the eponymous source of the recitative genre of *jōruri*, which often forms the basis of *bunraku* puppet plays. Scholars are of divided opinion on the author of this tale.[41] In any case, the print is notable in its focus on a female author engaged in the act of writing.

Two of the prints contain an image that quite conspicuously displays an item with writing on it, specifically, a travel diary (旅日記 *tabi-nikki*). The site depicted in the print in figure 8, 'Arai', is a *meisho*, a place famed for its unusual or exquisite scenery, and commemorated repeatedly in the high culture of art and poetry since ancient times. The cartouche text presents one such poetic appreciation, with a poem by Prince Muneyoshi (1311–c.1385), an imperial prince who was exiled and travelled widely. There was a genre of travel guidebook devoted to the description of such famed viewing sites, called the *meisho zue* "illustrated famed spots," containing maps and illustrations.[42] Some *meisho zue* covered specific routes, and the Tōkaidō was no exception – Constantine Vaporis cites the *Tōkaidō meisho zue* of 1797 as the most popular of the guidebooks in this genre.[43] The cartouche text could well be a guidebook's description for this site.

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[41] The oldest collection of legends concerning Yoshitsune's youth and life apart from his military service is the *Gikeiki* ('The Story of Yoshitsune,' fifteenth century, anonymous). The story of the romance between Yoshitsune and Jōruri-hime appears in a later legend, the *Jūnidan zōshi*, a sixteenth-century narrative that was later set to music and recited with shamisen accompaniment. While some sources attribute the authorship of the *Jūnidan zōshi* to Ono no Otsū, others say that such attribution is a mistake, mention no authorship, or state that it seems to have derived from oral tradition. See Helen Craig McCullough, *Yoshitsune: A Fifteenth-Century Japanese Chronicle* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 47-50, for a summary of each of the twelve sections of the tale.

[42] Constantine Nomikos Vaporis, *Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1994), p. 234.

[43] Vaporis, *Breaking Barriers*, p. 234.

Figure 8: 'Arai,' Artist: Kunisada, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.32 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Kojimaya Jūbei).

The cartouche text reads:

> The poetry anthology *Rikashū* (*Plum Flowers*) says:
> When Prince Muneyoshi stayed at the Ii castle of Tōtōmi in the spring of 1339 (fourth year of the Engen period), he was deeply moved by the beautiful twilight scenery as he looked out over the misty Hamana bridge, with the waves washing against the pine-studded shore, and wrote the following poem:
> Although it is dusk
> The piney shores of the bay of Shirasuka
> Are perfectly shrouded in mist.

The print depicts a woman standing in contemplation of the famed site, holding her travel diary with an ink brush in her mouth. What might her thoughts be?

Vaporis notes that Japan's first travel boom occurred during the de facto rule of the tenth Tokugawa Shogun, Tokugawa Ienari (1787-1841), a time he characterises as one of "political stability and economic prosperity",[44] although there were famines and peasant uprising during this figure era, as well. The travel diary had been a literary genre since Heian (794-1185) times, and in the Edo period, commoners also took it up. Vaporis remarks on this same print as particularly significant due to the fact that, while many women as well as men travelled during this period, few women commemorated their journey in a travel diary.[45] Traganou, on the other hand, states that while women *did not* travel frequently, travel diaries by women are not uncommon.[46] In Traganou's account, travel undertaken by women usually occurred in the context of misfortune, such as a death at the point of departure. Women were not supposed to mingle with strangers, and their diaries tend to reflect observations on the landscape, rather than accounts of interactions along the way.[47] Traganou cites work by Itasaka Yōko to explain that "women, who commonly lacked the education and experience of male travellers, were less prone to being critical of what they saw during their journey, and especially of localities such as *meisho*." It is tempting, therefore, to read this print as a form of light sarcasm, perhaps – the novice female traveller eager to take in the famed spots and record her presence. On the other hand, Laura Nenzi characterises the travel diaries written by women in a somewhat different light, as having a notable literary bent:

> for the female authors of travel journals, refinement was the name of the game; in penning their travelogues they generally employed expressions, references, and rhetorical techniques of great subtlety, along with a great number of quotations from poetic anthologies and landmark works of the Heian period.[48]

With this in mind, it is possible to read the cartouche text as recollection summoned in anticipation of recording the poem penned by imperial prince Muneyoshi Shinnō (1311-c.1385) while in exile. It is not a particularly well-

[44] Constantine N. Vaporis, 'Caveat Viator: Advice to Travelers in the Edo Period,' *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 44 (1989), p. 462.
[45] Vaporis, *Breaking Barriers*, p. 235.
[46] Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road*, p. 95.
[47] Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road*, p. 95, provides the following description based on the research of Itasaka Yōko: "Most female diaries are characterised by meticulous descriptions of landscapes, natural phenomena and idyllic scenes, which are hardly the points of attention in typical male diaries."
[48] Laura Nenzi, *Excursions in Identity: Travel and the Intersection of Place, Gender, and Status in Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), p. 94.

known poem. The fact that the juxtaposition of text and image invites such dual readings is indicative of the playful mode of the artist's conception.

In the second print that pointedly shows a *tabi-niki*, 'Ishibe,' in figure 9, the diary appears in the cartouche. This is a clue to the identity of the woman depicted in the body of the print, as it indicates that she is a traveller.

Figure 9: 'Ishibe,' Artist: Kuniyoshi, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.52 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Iseya Ichibei).

The cartouche text consists of a *kyōka* poem:

いせもどり ならぶ枕の 二見潟　かたき石部で とらる合宿
梅屋

Transliteration

Ise-modori narabu makura no Futami-gata kataki Ishibe de toraru aiyado　Umenoya

> [Returning from twin pillows at Futami Lagoon in Ise
> She finds a room together in rocky Ishibe
> Umenoya]

The plovers, water birds, echo the travel path alluded to in the poem, a pilgrimage to Ise Shrine, which is near the sea, and close to the famous landmark of Futami Lagoon, a sacred spot as well as a spot famed for its beauty in Ise, where twin rocks in the ocean have been enshrined as the Meoto Iwa, or 'wedded rocks.' The place name 'Ishibe,' in association with the phrase *aiyado* 'adjoining rooms,' serve as clues to the viewer that the young woman in the print is Ohan, the shop girl and tragic heroine of the bunraku play *Katsuragawa renri no shigarami* ('Barrier to True Love on the Katsura River'), written by Suga Sensuke (1728-1779) and first staged in 1776.[49] Ohan is a fourteen-year-old shop girl in a store next to a traditional obi shop in Kyoto, the Obiya. The man who becomes her lover, Chōemon, has been adopted by the master of the Obiya as his heir. Ohan has gone on a pilgrimage to Ise with her fellow shop members, and on their return to Kyoto they stop at an inn in Ishibe. Chōemon happens to be staying at this very same inn on his return from a business trip to Hamamatsu. Ohan is being pursued by a bothersome apprentice from her shop, and to escape him, flees to a neighbouring room. The room happens to be that of Chōemon. Though Chōemon is a married man in his forties, they fall in love. Upon their return to Kyoto, Ohan learns she is pregnant, and Chōemon is accused of theft. Their troubles mount, and they resolve to commit double suicide by leaping into the Katsura River. The print image depicts Ohan brushing her teeth with salt-made toothpaste, possibly reflecting on her new-found, but ultimately, ill-fated passion. The print thus succeeds in depicting this tragic heroine of the popular bunraku play without explicit mention of her identity. Furthermore, she is shown as the person herself, and not as an actor playing the role on stage, thereby circumventing the proscription on the portrayal of actors.

The print in figure 10, 'Totsuka', is similarly suggestive of the characters from a famous theatrical play, those of Okaru and her lover and spouse Kanbei, one of the famed forty-seven rōnin.

[49] My interpretation of this print relies on analysis by Chikaomi Takahashi. A summary of the plot maybe found at *Obiya, Katsuragawa renri no sigarami*, at: http://www.kabuki21.com/obiya.php. Accessed 08/15/2011.

Figure 10: 'Totsuka,' Artist: Hiroshige, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.6 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Ibaya Senzaburō).

The cartouche text consists of a *kyōka* poem:

かまくらを出る鰹につれだちて　やぼないなかになく郭公

重の屋光雄

Transliteration

Kamakura o ideru katsuo ni tsuredachite yabo na inaka ni naku kakkō　Shigenoya Mitsuo

[Leaving Kamakura with bonitoes

Cuckoos singing in the deserted countryside

Shigenoya Mitsuo]

The woman in the print is suggestive of Okaru, wife of Hayano Kanbei, retainer to Enya Hangan Takasada, as depicted in the bunraku puppet play

Kanadehon Chūshingura (*The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*).[50] In the play, Enya Hangan Takasada strikes out at Kō no Moronao, retainer to Shogun Ashikaga Takauji in Kamakura. Kanbei had been dallying with Okaru during the incident, and was not present to assist Enya Hangan Takasada. Out of shame, Okaru and Kanbei decide to flee to Okaru's hometown of Yamazaki, and ask for a pardon. First bonitoes were considered a special delicacy, and Kamakura was one of the main locations shipping bonitoes to different regions of Japan. With the words "leaving Kamakura," the print suggests the scene in which Okaru and Kanbei have fled Kamakura and are passing through the Totsuka area on the way to her remote hometown in the countryside. As with the previously discussed print in figure 9, 'Ishibe,' it is by means of a light-hearted *kyōka* poem that a famous heroine of the theatre is implied. In this case, as well, the portrayal is of the woman herself, and not that of the actor onstage.

The print in figure 11, 'Yokkaichi,' depicts a woman gazing in contemplation of a famed mirage associated with this site. The cartouche text explains the local legend of the mirage in a rather straightforward way. What is noteworthy from the perspective of the depiction of women is the fact that the woman is portrayed as she is interacting with the scene. In other words, she is not simply juxtaposed at the base of a noted landscape, there for the viewer's appreciative gaze of desire. Rather, her casual posture and awestruck expression invite the viewer to appreciate the mirage. Her form looming so large in the body of the frame has the effect of enhancing the tiny and ephemeral nature of the mirage.

[50] See Izumo Takeda, *Chūshigura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers), A Puppet Play by Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shōraku and Namiki Senryū,* translated by Donald Keene (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1971), for a translation of this play.

Figure 11: 'Yokkaichi,' Artist: Kunisada, Collection of Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, 2005.25.7.44 (Colour woodblock, *ōban*, 36 x 25 cm, published by Kojimaya Jūbei).

The cartouche text reads:

The Fata Morgana Mirage at Nago Bay

During the spring and summer, a mirage appears in this bay. People say that it looks like an imperial pilgrimage to the Grand Shrines of Ise, or the Atsuta Shrine of Owari province. The banners and awnings of the imperial journey are in view to the front and rear, and the outlines of the procession of various daimyō, along with the forms of watch-tower palaces, are clearly visible. At times, one sees fishermen. In an instant, the forms fade from view. Investigation of the sight reveals it to be a phenomenon whereby saltwater vapor collides with warm air, and travels upwards. It must be something similar to the shimmering of hot air.

Conclusion

As mentioned at the outset, ukiyo-e prints featuring women have been classified under the genre of *bijin-ga* ('pictures of beautiful women'). This study has focused on eleven prints that feature women in the *Tōkaidō gojūsan tsui* (1844-1841, 'Fifty-three Pairings along the Tōkaidō Road') prints series that would, on the surface, appear to exemplify this genre. The print images in this series, however, are accompanied by text in cartouches at the top of each print that provide a clue to the identity of the woman, or to her role in the scene. The interplay of text and the image has been shown to create an emotional moment of recognition, or of humorous problem solving, that shift the focus of the viewer away from the pure physical beauty of the woman to her role in the scene.

In some instances, the traditional nomenclature of *bijin-ga* is included in the titles assigned to such prints. A case in point is the online title of 'Bijin Catching Crayfish' for the print in figure 3, 'Kanagawa,' depicting the fisherwoman and Urashima's tomb provided by the Japan Print Gallery, London.[51] The title given by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for this same print is 'The Tomb of Urashima,' following the header on the cartouche text, and its classification is ukiyo-e, *bijin-ga*.[52] The interpretation provided above, however, in which the woman wearing robes with turtle motifs can be regarded as Otohime, Princess of the Dragon Palace, maintains that she is not simply a beautiful woman juxtaposed atop a famous site, but rather serves to challenge the viewer to solve the puzzle of her presence, and her activity. The salient mood of the print is playful humour.

The fact that women are portrayed in the act of writing new genres of literature [Figure 7], speaking to a friend [Figure 5], recording their travel in a diary [Figure 8], and writing a letter home [Figure 6], also serves to focus on the agency of women, as opposed to situating women in merely a passive role as the object of an appreciative gaze grounded in the aesthetics of physical beauty or of fashion. At the same time, with the exception of 'Kanbara' [Figure 7], these activities derive from the contemporary scene, rather than a historical one, and the women are anonymous. The viewer is primarily drawn to the activity of the woman, rather than to her presence per se. In the context of these communicative acts of speaking and writing, the juxtaposition of image and

[51] Japan Print Gallery, London, at: http://www.japaneseprints.net/viewitem.cfm?ID=685. Accessed 10/15/2011.

[52] Boston Museum of Fine Arts, at: http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/kanagawa-station-the-tomb-of-urashima-kanagawa-no-eki-urashima-zuka-from-the-series-fifty-three-pairings-for-the-t-kaid-road-t-kaid-goj-san-tsui-215017. Accessed 10/15/2011.

kyōka (‘mad poems’) or narrative texts provides a playful contextualisation, along with a light form of social sarcasm.

In the scenes for ‘Ishibe’ [Figure 9] and ‘Totsuka’ [Figure 10], depicting women on the run, the *kyōka* (‘mad poems’) provide the barest of hints to enable the viewer to identify the women as the tragic heroines of famous theatrical plays, but the references are not so exact as to overtly defy the bans on the portrayal of theatrical subjects. Hiroshige and Kuniyoshi, the artists in this case, and their poet collaborators, have ingeniously selected two heroines who indeed travelled the Tōkaidō Road. The mad poems hint at where they have been, and where they are headed, cleverly blending them into the sea of individuals travelling along this highway. These two heroines are, at the same time, agents acting on the basis of their self-will. In this sense, they resemble the other women depicted the prints in this series.