# The Female Gaze: Women and Sexual Activeness in Tokugawa-period Shunga

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# Introduction

In his critique of contemporary Japanese society titled *Seji kenbunroku* 世事見聞録 ("Matters of the World: An Account of What I Have Seen and Heard", 1816), an elite samurai from the city of Edo (now Tokyo), Buyō Inshi 武陽隠士 (birth and death dates unknown), wrote the following: "Women are of shallow understanding and fickle, so they in particular are easily swayed by self-indulgence and cruelty."[1] Needless to say, Buyō's attitude towards women is clearly misogynistic by present-day standards. Similar attitudes towards women and their social position were, until fairly recently, considered emblematic by modern scholars of the time period in which Buyō lived, i.e., Tokugawa Japan (1603–1868). In fact, many historians regarded early modern Japan as the period in which Japanese women's social position reached an all-time low. They came to this conclusion by looking at *jokun* 女訓 ("women's training"), moral guides aimed at women, which assigned a subordinate status to women in Tokugawa Japan's political and family structure.[2] In other words, Tokugawa women "were demarcated under (…) patriarchy as secondary to men." They could no longer inherit property directly, the female lineage became politically insignificant, and only few occupations were available to women, such as mother, nun, sex worker, etc. Moreover, it was generally agreed upon by contemporary intellectuals that the regulation of women, who were thought of as irrational and unmanageable, "needed to be accomplished through programmes of moral rehabilitation and social management. Defining appropriate female behaviour as consistent with class and rank was made into a matter requiring due attention." This was essentially the role of *jokun*, which were grounded in Japanese adaptations of Neo-Confucian ethical principles. A good

[1] Teeuwen et al., *Lust, Commerce, and Corruption*, p. 218.

[2] Tocco, "Norms and Texts," p. 200.

example of such a *jokun* is the widely read *Onna daigaku takara-bako* 女大学宝箱 ("A Treasure Chest of Great Learning for Women", 1716), which makes clear that a woman's worth "resided in her chastity and mildness, self-effacement and self-control, and, most of all, her service and submission to patriarchal authority." The same moral text also considers reproduction to be a woman's sole purpose. If she did not produce offspring, she had to leave her husband's household.[3] Furthermore, another *jokun* titled *Onna imagawa oshie-bumi* 女今川教文 ("Imagawa for Women: Instructional Writing", 1768) states that it is a woman's duty to protect the household. Since it will affect the whole family if her conduct is improper, a woman's loose morals should not be forgiven.[4] This all more or less reflect the ideal image of womanhood that *jokun* in general present: kindhearted, hardworking, jealousy-suppressing, sacrificing herself for her family's sake, and pliantly obeying her parents, parents-in-law, and husband. This means that a woman was not supposed to have her own pastimes or desires. In other words, *jokun* contain a certain type of male fantasy.[5] It is clear, then, that the social position of Tokugawa women advocated by said moral texts is anything but liberating.

That all being said, however, academic discourse concerning womanhood and female sexuality in Tokugawa Japan has been undergoing a significant shift due to recent research. Part of this shift is due to scholars' re-evaluations of *jokun*, but it may also have to do with a gradually increasing amount of academic literature on another longtime neglected topic: *shunga* 春画 ("spring pictures"), woodblock prints explicitly covering erotic subjects ranging from sex workers engaging with their clients to married or unmarried couples making love. Part of the broader genre of ukiyo-e ("pictures of the floating world"), *shunga* have been ignored by both Japanese and western scholars due to a longstanding taboo in Japan on researching sexually explicit imagery. Consequently,

[3] Davis, *Utamaro*, pp. 169–73.

[4] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, p. 148.

[5] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, p. 86.

academic literature on *shunga* is still rather scarce, though it has been growing in recent decades. One of the subjects that has been touched upon is the depiction of womanhood in *shunga*. Scholars like Sumie Jones and Timon Screech have analyzed, among other topics, the depiction of male-female sexual dynamics in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *shunga*. In his book *Edo onna no shungabon: Tsuya to warai no fūfu shinan* ("Shunga Books for Edo-period Women: Charm and Humor for Couples"), C. Andrew Gerstle contrasts the Neo-Confucian *jokun*'s portrayal of womanhood and female sexuality with their portrayal in erotic books, or *shunpon* 春本, that parody these moral texts.

What has been conspicuously lacking, however, is a detailed study of *shunga*'s depiction of female sexuality in relation to one particularly dominant Tokugawa-era construction of womanhood. Resembling the so-called 'Madonna/whore'-binary, this dichotomy places Tokugawa women into either one of the following two categories of womanhood: *jionna* 地女 ("soil woman") or *yūjo* 遊女 ("woman of play"). *Jionna* are 'ordinary' women whose conduct and actions (sexual and otherwise) are in accordance with *jokun*'s moral guidelines, whereas *yūjo* work in the licensed sex trade and, thus, fall outside the category of normative womanhood to which *jionna* are assigned. This oppositional construction of womanhood differs quite from *shunga*'s portrayal of female sexuality, but this disjunction and its implications have received little attention so far.

In this thesis, then, I would like to argue how *shunga*'s depiction of *jionna*/ordinary women blurs the above-mentioned Tokugawa-era dichotomy of womanhood and how it relates to contemporary Japanese society's views on female sexuality. I define '*jionna*' here as women who are not *yūjo*, who are not intimately connected to the Imperial Court (noble women, princesses, etc.), and who do not serve as Buddhist nuns. In other words, I would classify women from warrior, peasant, or townspeople (*chōnin* 町人) backgrounds as *jionna*, irrespective of their age, marital status, or whether they have attained motherhood or not. Additionally, I define *yūjo* only as registered workers from *licensed* red-light districts, meaning that unregistered sex workers active in *unlicensed* pleasure quarters will not be classified as *yūjo* in this thesis. These definitions are more or

less in accordance with the Tokugawa era's cultural framework concerning womanhood and female sexuality, as will become evident later on.

My research question will, then, be as follows: "What new insights into Tokugawa society's perspectives on womanhood and female sexuality can we gain by focusing on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *shunga*'s depictions of *jionna*?" In order to answer this question, I will analyze various *shunga* produced by different artists from said time period. In doing so, I will demonstrate that my findings are applicable to various artists' images. Furthermore, I intend to analyze these images from a feminist and gender perspective. I intend to support my argument by utilizing feminist film theories of looking as the theoretical framework of this thesis, including Laura Mulvey's influential theory of the male gaze, and apply these theories to *shunga* in order to find out to what degree these theories are applicable to a different historical-cultural context (i.e., early modern Japan). By analyzing *shunga* from a feminist perspective in combination with art historical analyses on *shunga* by experts, I firmly believe that new perspectives and insights surrounding Tokugawa Japan in general and *shunga* in particular can be gained, however small these might be.[6]

Finally, I will occasionally use the term '(Neo-)Confucianism' in this thesis, as I have already done above, but I will not place any focus on said concept's complexities. I understand that there is no single version of 'Neo-Confucianism' that does not overlap with other equally complicated belief systems and/or teachings, but for the sake of avoiding complications and not exceeding the spatial limits of this thesis, I will not discuss this issue in detail.

[6] Fleskes, "Sexual Agency," pp. 2–3.

# Chapter one: Gender, Objectification, and the Gaze in Western Visual Media

As stated in the introduction, I will outline relevant feminist film theories in this chapter. In the past, these and related theories have mostly been applied to western visual media, film in particular. However, I believe we can gain new insights by applying such theories to premodern and modern non-western visual media, while simultaneously taking into account the latter's historical, sociocultural, and political contexts as well as other particulars that differentiate non-western visual media from both their premodern and modern western counterparts. Before explaining the film theories in question, however, I will briefly discuss the concept of 'sex(uality)/gender systems', which is useful for understanding the close interconnectedness between gender and sexuality, human societies, and power. Sex/gender-systems are defined by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub as "historically and culturally specific arrogations of the human body for ideological purposes. In sex/gender systems, physiology, anatomy, and body codes (clothing, cosmetics, behaviors, miens, affective and object choices) are taken over by institutions that use bodily difference to define and coerce gender identity." From a historical point of view, the conventional objective of this defining and coercing has been to establish social control by male elites. A concrete example of such a system is what Joshua S. Mostow refers to as the "late-twentieth-century, North American, white, liberal, bourgeois and heterocentric, pre-Foucauldian Creed of the trinity of sex, gender, and sexuality". This particular sex/gender-system is characterized by the belief in only two biological sexes (male and female) and two genders (masculine and feminine), although a third biological sex (intersex) might also be acknowledged. Sexuality is considered to be innate (i.e., not fluid), with only three sexualities existing: hetero-, homo-, and bisexuality. All sexual relationships should be monogamous and

preferably equitable, between individuals of around the same age and socioeconomic power.[7] It goes without saying that every past and present society had and has its own sex/gender-system and that all textual and/or visual media reflect and reinforce a particular sex/gender-system of the society which produces these media. This includes the medium of film, to which I would like to shift my focus now.

Drawing on Freudian psychoanalysis, including the theory of scopophilia or voyeuristic pleasure through looking, Laura Mulvey argues that classical Hollywood cinema constructs a dichotomous relationship between the two sexes. That is, Hollywood cinema depicts its male characters as 'active' agents on the one hand and its female counterparts as 'passive' erotic objects on the other. This eroticized depiction of women in cinema is, in turn, accompanied by a kind of voyeuristic pleasure, while cinema's structure simultaneously ensures that its audience, i.e., the spectator, identifies with the main male protagonist(s). It is this voyeurism in combination with complex identification processes that Mulvey refers to as the male gaze, since film clearly privileges a (heterosexual) male's perspective.[89] One could claim, then, that "the spectator's gaze is male in two senses, both in its direction at women as objects of erotic fascination and in its identification with the male protagonist."[10] In fact, there are three distinctive male gazes: the film-maker's, the film character's, and the spectator's gaze. Regarding the first one, it is important to recognize that the male gaze can still be present in films, even if the film-maker is a woman. The reason for this is that film-production is an institution dominated by men, which means that "whoever makes movies must

[7] Mostow, "The Grammar of Desire," pp. 50–1. The first quote is actually from Epstein's and Straub's book *Body Guards*, but I found it in Mostow's article.

[8] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure."

[9] Fleskes, "Active vs. Passive," p. 3.

[10] Devereaux, "Oppressive Texts," p. 343.

work nonetheless within a system owned and operated by men. At the level of the film-maker, then, men do not always do the looking, but they generally control who does. The male gaze is not always male, but *it is always male-dominated*." In other words, the film-maker's gaze is always male-gendered, regardless of the sex of those involved in film-production. Men's institutional control over the cinema leads to a portrayal of female film characters that corresponds with patriarchal values and highlights "the way film (…) contributes to the hegemony of men over women." Consequently, Hollywood cinema perpetuates the dependent status of women vis-à-vis men. Thus, cinema participates in and is responsible for the reinforcement of "a system of social organization which assigns power and privilege by gender." It may not come as a surprise, then, that feminism "equates the male gaze with patriarchy." Patriarchy is a social system in which the figure of the father holds the supreme position in society, while his wife and children are legally dependent upon him. Women depend on men when it comes to privilege, status, and even their own identity and the feminist movement assumes that women are oppressed by this system. Feminism further argues that women's oppression takes place on a material (economic, political, etc.) as well as on a symbolic level. Anglo-American art is an example of a participant in the latter type of oppression. While said art is widely believed to be accessible for and representative of every individual, rather than being seen as political or ideological, feminist theorists argue that the Anglo-American art canon is ideologically motivated in the sense that it inscribes a male-centered perspective, i.e., the male gaze. This means that art's production and consumption is intrinsically tied to power and control. In other words, feminist theory assumes that "the artistic canon is androcentric, and hence, politically repressive."[11] In short, the presence of a male gaze in western visual culture, including cinema and art, reflects the existence of an unequal gendered power dynamic outside visual culture, i.e., in the daily lives of individuals living in a western society.

[11] Devereaux, "Oppressive Texts," pp. 337–40. Emphasis in original.

But how does this all relate to the cinema's female audience members and their identification processes? Mulvey argues that classical Hollywood cinema imposes masculinity as the main point of view, which is accomplished by patterns of pleasure and identification inherent in cinema. This essentially means that even the audience's female members would identify with a film's male lead, although their identification process is different than their male counterparts'. That is, a complicated process of 'masculinization' is required for the female audience to identify with the film's male hero (or with a masculine female protagonist). Mulvey compares this cross-gender identification to female transvestitism, with the female spectator symbolically or metaphorically becoming the figure of the transvestite.[12] If the female spectator is indeed only able to identify with the male protagonist or the masculine-coded female protagonist through 'masculinization', then there would be no real female gaze present in cinema. This point is supported by Mary Ann Doane, who argues that female characters in (melo)drama films cannot be the subject of the gaze. Women who do appropriate an active gaze are often negatively framed and sometimes even punished by the narrative for this 'transgressive' act (by death, for instance). This is not limited to the genre of (melo)drama, as horror films also often punish their female characters for appropriating the gaze. This negation of the female gaze is, according to Doane herself, best reflected in a photograph titled *Un Regard Oblique* ("A Sidelong Glance", figure X). Taken in 1948 by French photographer Robert Doisneau, the photograph depicts a woman looking at what seems to be an image or a mirror, while the man beside her gazes at a small portrait depicting a nude woman. Although it seems to be the woman's gaze that is the focus point of the picture, Doane argues it is the man's gaze that is "the real site of scopophiliac power". In other words, the photograph centers the male and *not* the female gaze, hence the erasure of the woman's gaze by that of the man. Said photograph's erasure of the woman's gaze leads to the masculinization of the (female) spectator's position.[13] That is, the female

[12] Mulvey, "Afterthoughts."

[13] Doane, "Film and the Masquerade," pp. 82–5.

spectator "must once again assume the position of transvestite."[14] This supports Mulvey's theory of the female spectator's required cross-gender identification (i.e., transvestitism). In short, women in western visual media are unable to voyeuristically and/or actively gaze in the same manner as men. Mary Devereaux goes a step further by arguing that there exists a power imbalance between the female gaze on the one hand and the male gaze on the other, revealing that the gendered 'oppressor/oppressed'-dynamic inherent in Hollywood cinema is reliant upon more than whether one is being gazed at or not. In order to understand this, one needs to distinguish the following three actions from one another: objectification, dehumanization, and debasement. Out of the three, Devereaux only considers 'debasement', the devaluation of the worth of a gaze's human object through actions or judgments, to be *in of itself* oppressive. She argues that women are debased on- as well as off-screen, meaning that they are the only ones oppressed in terms of gender. That is, the secondary status assigned to cinema's female characters reflects women's status in real life. Although male film characters may also be debased sometimes, their debasement does not correspond with reality since men, unlike women, "do not lack power and status off-screen."[15] Thus, the patriarchal male gaze oppresses women because it contains more power than its female counterpart does.

That all being said, the above-mentioned and/or similar theories about the gaze have not been left uncriticized. For example, Devereaux has critiqued the then-current feminist discourse for generalizing both the male and female spectator. Although in the process of moving beyond the 'active male/passive female'-binary, feminist film theory is still not always intersectional. That is, it does not always take into consideration how factors such as class, race, and sexuality affect the spectator's viewing experience. Through illuminating the interconnections between such factors and

[14] Doane, "Film and the Masquerade," p. 87.

[15] Devereaux, "Oppressive Texts," pp. 341–2. Emphasis in original.

gender, i.e., intersectionality, “feminism serves to fine-tune our understanding of art and its effects upon us.”[16]

In summary, there are multiple types of male gazes present in Hollywood cinema. The female gaze, on the other hand, is negated and lacks the ‘active’ power that its male equivalent has. In other words, Hollywood cinema reflects a sex/gender-system that reinforces the dichotomous notion of ‘active’ (heterosexual) masculinity and ‘passive’ (heterosexual) femininity. All of this signifies a patriarchal culture in which men generally are the privileged gender and have social, economic, and/or political power over women.

This concludes the discussion of the theoretical framework of my thesis, i.e., feminist theories concerning the gaze in modern western visual media. In the next chapter, I will discuss the male and female gaze in the context of Tokugawa-period *shunga*.

[16] Devereaux, “Oppressive Texts,” p. 344.

# Chapter two: Tokugawa Japan, *Shunga*, and the Male Gaze(s)

As outlined in the preceding chapter, every society's sex/gender-system is basically defined and controlled by male elites and Tokugawa Japan was no exception. The rulers of said period, the Tokugawa shogunate, utilized Neo-Confucianism to legitimize their more than two and a half centuries-long rule. For the shogunate, the appeal of Neo-Confucianism lay in its hierarchical framework of rigid status distinctions, including those based on sex/gender.[17] Through the propagation of laws and *jokun*, the Tokugawa shogunate "was instrumental in naming the category 'woman' and defining norms of womanhood." This womanhood was, in turn, "defined as the mutually constitutive Other of manhood."[18] The dominant model of womanhood in Tokugawa society was what William R. Lindsey refers to as 'fertility values'.[19] Promoted and disseminated by *jokun*,[20] this set of values is part of a dichotomous construction of female sexuality and forms the counterpart of the so-called 'pleasure values'. The ideal woman, according to the fertility model, "was obedient to her husband and in-laws and used her energy and skills to work toward the economic advancement of the household and her sexuality to produce an heir." Thus, fertility values are associated with the figure of the housewife (i.e., the ordinary woman/*jionna*). On the other hand, the pleasure model's ideal woman "was sophisticated and spirited, an expert at pretending to love many men while loving none, and offered her sexuality for the economic advancement of the bordello holding her contract." Hence, the figure of the *yūjo* represents pleasure values. In other

[17] Stalker, *Japan*, pp. 154–5.

[18] Ko et al., "Introduction," p. 2.

[19] Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure*, p. 27.

[20] Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure*, p. 10.

words, fertility values stress the importance of reproductive sex, whereas pleasure values advocate for non-reproductive/recreational sex. Although these two models of female sexuality were not the only ones circulating in Tokugawa Japan, they did constitute "a dichotomy of difference that profoundly shaped Tokugawa society and culture." Moreover, Tokugawa society both affirmed and produced said values "through its labor needs, the growth of a national book market, and the rise of economic class distinctions among commoners." This, in turn, contributed to the licensed pleasure quarters' establishment as a distinct social space by segregating said quarters from the rest of the city. For example, the famous red-light district of Edo, the Yoshiwara 吉原, was walled off on all sides.[21] This policy of restricting non-reproductive sex to the licensed red-light districts "gave a degree of institutional definition to sexual purpose, as seen from the male perspective, as an 'either/or' proposition between play within the walls and activity more bound up with emotional and household duty beyond the walls."[22] In other words, the assignment of women to either the domestic sphere or to the pleasure quarters "further served to satisfy the Neo-Confucian social order."[23]

The fertility/pleasure-model undoubtedly reflected societal concern and anxiety about women's sexuality. Incidentally, Timon Screech argues that the Tokugawa era "was one of many to regard female sexuality as more rapacious and more dangerous than that of the male". Screech provides the stories of poet and novelist Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–93) as evidence, for these are filled with women who bring ruin to men due to the former's excessive sexual demands.[24] This anxiety is also clearly reflected in *jokun* and by intellectuals. The aforementioned *Onna daigaku*

[21] Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure*, pp. 1–5.

[22] Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure*, p. 8.

[23] Davis, *Utamaro*, p. 208.

[24] Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*, p. 136.

*takara-bako*, for example, conveys the belief that women's sexual desire in of itself is 'evil' and that a woman with too much desire would not be able to conceive children. Incidentally, the same text considers a wife displaying 'lewdness' to be a valid reason for her husband to divorce her.[25] Buyō Inshi, the earlier-mentioned critic of Tokugawa society, laments the impossibility for a *yūjo* to become a *jionna* again once she has entered the prostitution business, which he saw as "a profession that makes a woman take countless men as her partners and thereby crushes the natural chastity that ties a woman's body to one man for life. (…) Once she has become a prostitute by going through this transformation, a woman will not bear children, she will not perform manual labor, and she will not do weaving or sewing, laundry, or cooking. In short, she is no good for any kind of normal work in this world. Instead, she becomes a wastrel for her entire life."[26] Due to the proliferation of *yūjo*, among other things, Buyō concludes that "the Way of women has become greatly disordered."[27] I would argue that this anxiety "pointed to the official fear that the self-expression of female sensuality would invoke the reality that must be kept inarticulate—a reality that women's sexuality was irreducible to the reproductive function. Once unleashed, female erotic energies would enthrall and corrupt all men, regardless of high and low, disrupt the unity of family, and disturb the peace of the polity; they would throw moral codes that specified the matrices of distinction—status, gender, and occupation—into disarray." This is why, for the shogunate, "the strategies of containing female desire and sexuality played a crucial role in constructing and maintaining the order of Tokugawa society". This anxiety about female sexuality was projected onto popular entertainment, for it was thought that this culture of play and pleasure would incite 'lascivious' desires in women. Exposing women to such 'lewdness' would (supposedly) lead to degeneration of social mores, especially regarding marital and familial values, and this was "judged to be detrimental to social order."[28] An

[25] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, p. 112.

[26] Teeuwen et al., *Lust*, pp. 202–3.

[27] Teeuwen et al., *Lust*, p. 234.

[28] Hirano, *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 176–7.

example of a popular medium supposedly spreading this 'lasciviousness' was, of course, *shunga*. Immensely popular during the Tokugawa period, *shunga* are explicitly erotic woodblock prints that depict one individual or multiple people from various social backgrounds, often opposite-sex couples, engaged in sexual acts. *Shunga* form a subset of ukiyo-e, which are prints portraying the 'floating world' of the theater and pleasure quarters as well as everyone associated with this erotic, sexual world. This floating world was, in Screech's words, "the natural enemy" of the regular urban world, hence the segregation of the two opposing 'realms'. Not surprisingly, then, Tokugawa-era critics were convinced of an intrinsic connection existing between *shunga*'s consumption on the one hand and society's 'unmannerliness' on the other. Critics reasoned that society's decaying was due to the permeation of the floating world's sexual culture into mundane society, for "sex meandered into so many walks of life". That is to say, ukiyo-e, including *shunga*, "brought brothel norms into the streets."[29] Buyō similarly blamed *shunga* and other forms of popular entertainment, i.e., puppet shows, kabuki, shamisen songs and *gesaku* 戯作 (popular light novels), for working together to spread 'lewdness' and tainting people's sense of decency in the process.[30] I presume that these fears were not lessened by the fact that "[v]irtually every Edo period artist painted *shunga*. As such, virtually every printer and every bookshop dealt with these works and, moreover, the works themselves were created with virtually every type of audience in mind."[31] Additionally, eroticism and Tokugawa-period advertising went hand in hand. That is, through the cooperation between these pervasive advertising practices and popular media, such as novels, the theater, and ukiyo-e, eroticism was disseminated in Tokugawa society. In other words, sexuality was intrinsically connected to Tokugawa Japan's market economy and, thus, did not manifest in explicitly erotic images only.[32]

[29] Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*, p. 51.

[30] Teeuwen et al., *Lust*, p. 22.

[31] Ketelaar, "Erotic Emotionality," p. 187.

[32] Pollack, "Marketing Desire."

From the critics' and shogunate's perspective, then, their fears and anxiety seem somewhat understandable.

It is clear, then, that there is a male gaze inherent in the fertility/value-model, i.e., Tokugawa Japan's official sex/gender-system. This gaze is further reflected in the widespread anxiety about the floating world's and popular entertainment's perceived potential to corrupt the moral character of people and of women in particular. That said, this does not mean that there is no male gaze present in Tokugawa popular culture. Printed works like those of Saikaku, according to Nancy K. Stalker, "seem tinged with the misogyny of their time." Saikaku's novel *Kōshoku gonin onna* 好色五人女 ("Five Women Who Loved Love", 1685), for example, "furthers the sense of gender inequity and sexual double standards for women and men." The novel in question portrays its five main characters, all of whom are merchant women, as 'strong' and 'decisive', which contrasts sharply with Tokugawa popular culture's general depiction of female merchants "as stoic and boring, faithful to their husbands, and devoted to the success of the family's enterprise." However, four of the five women meet unpleasant fates, such as suicide or execution for 'crimes' like adultery, for chasing men they desire.[33] In other words, *Kōshoku gonin onna*'s narratives punish the female main characters for their 'transgressive' sexuality. Similarly, Harold Bolitho argues that the fear of women and their sexual capacities is apparent in various Tokugawa-period textual and/or visual media, including *shunga*. This universal male anxiety surrounding the figure of 'the insatiable woman' may have reached its peak in Tokugawa Japan.[34] Furthermore, Ueno Chizuko argues that *shunga* "was produced, circulated, and marketed as consumption goods, by men, for men, and among men" and that in "this male-dominated market, female sexuality is constructed through the male gaze." Whenever *shunga* show sexual intimacy between women, for example, a dildo is often depicted. The dildo's frequent involvement imposes an androcentric point of view on female-female sex "as an

[33] Stalker, *Japan*, p. 181.

[34] Bolitho, "Response to the Panel," pp. 70–1.

occasional substitute for heterosexual intercourse." That is, through the dildo's usage, a woman's female partner functions essentially as a male substitute. Thus, romantic love and/or sexual intimacy between women "does not exist in the Edo erotica." Ueno further notes that, due to the absence of male genitalia, female masturbation in *shunga* "invites the participation of male viewers. You might call it the ultimate possession of women through pleasure, or through the phallus. It is the man who controls women's pleasure." In other words, the male gaze possesses both the masturbating woman and the female same-sex couple in *shunga*. Ueno concludes, therefore, that "the history of Edo erotica is a history of male sexual fantasies about female sexuality."[35]

A concrete example of a male gaze in *shunga* is the picture book *Wakashu-asobi kyara no makura* 若衆遊伽羅枕 ("Aloeswood Incense Pillow of Youngman-Play", 1675), attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu 菱川師宣 (1618–94). I believe this gaze is visible in *Wakashu-asobi kyara no makura*'s notions of sexual 'activeness' and 'passiveness'. To understand this, one must know that "Edo society was alert to the power differentials of the two roles [of penetrator and penetrated]."[36] The penetrator equals the 'active' sexual role, whereas the penetrated sex partner fulfills the 'passive' role. Women could only take up the penetrated partner-role, while the penetrator-role could only be performed by biological males.[37] Mostow implies that the book's viewer/reader is supposed to identify with the 'active' male penetrator and not with the 'passive' penetrated figure. Incidentally, *Wakashu-asobi* seems to be aimed at adult men.[38] Thus, I would argue that sexual 'activeness' is coded here as masculine and 'passiveness' as feminine. My argument is supported by *Wakashu-asobi*'s visual depiction of married older women. When these women are shown to be

[35] Ueno, "Lusty Pregnant Women," pp. 110–1.

[36] Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*, p. 126.

[37] Mostow, "Wakashu as a Third Gender," p. 38.

[38] Mostow, "The Grammar of Desire," p. 67.

sexually active, the book in question degradingly depicts them as being "disfigured by their (inappropriate) pleasure." *Wakashu-asobi*''s portrayal of married older women is, therefore, "typically misogynistic, in a general patriarchal way".[39] A concrete example of *Wakashu-asobi*'s misogynistic portrayal of women can be found in figure XX. It is evident, then, that *Wakashu-asobi* denies a female gaze. The 'active masculinity/passive femininity'-dichotomy that exists in *Wakashu-asobi*, and perhaps even *shunga* in general, is equivalent to Hollywood cinema's 'active/passive'-binary, as the former is accompanied by a similar masculine identification process. In other words, both binaries reinforce the male gaze and negate a female one. Commenting on Tokugawa-era ukiyo-e, Julie Nelson Davis similarly asserts that "a separately constructed female voice, and female gaze, did not and could not exist, for it did not and could not command the terms of power. (…) Rather, women learned to look at the world – and at themselves – according to the terms set by the male gaze and all that it implied." Ukiyo-e's consumers' biological sex is irrelevant, then, "for the image is constructed for and by the male gaze." While it is true that "men were also objectified through the operations of power in the Tokugawa regime, they remained (…) more powerful than the woman of their equivalent status. Furthermore, they held on to the right to speak as they continued to own the gaze; their limitations were derived from political and social distinctions, not from their biological sex."[40] Davis' explicit denial of a female gaze's presence in ukiyo-e and, by extension, *shunga*, resembles Devereaux's argument that the cinematic gaze is inherently male-gendered, even when it is not male-sexed.

In conclusion, Tokugawa Japan's official sex/gender-system, i.e., the fertility/pleasure-model, contains a patriarchal male gaze. This system categorizes womanhood and female sexuality into two dichotomous types: the *jionna* whose reproductive sexuality is in service of the household and the *yūjo* whose recreational sexuality serves the brothel culture of pleasure and play. The shogunate's

[39] Mostow, "The Grammar of Desire," p. 65.

[40] Davis, *Utamaro*, p. 194.

fear of said culture corrupting women's morality does not mean, however, that popular media did not contain a male gaze. *Shunga*'s aforementioned 'active masculinity/passive femininity'-binary demonstrates its presence. In fact, *shunga* contain at least two male gazes: the artist's gaze and the reader's/viewer's. The former's presence speaks for itself, since most contemporary artists were men. In other words, the Tokugawa woodblock print industry was a male-dominated institution. Hence, *shunga*'s gaze is inherently male, even if the artist was female. This means, in turn, that the spectator's gaze would also be male. In other words, *shunga*'s gazes are predominantly male-sexed and -gendered, reflecting a male perspective in the process.

This concludes the outlining of the fertility/pleasure-model and part one of the discussion about *shunga*'s gazes. I will continue this discussion in the next chapter by arguing that *shunga* do, in fact, contain a female gaze and how said gaze reinforces *shunga*'s politically subversive potential.

# Chapter three: *Shunga*'s Subversiveness and the Female Gaze(s)

In the previous chapter, I made the case that *shunga* contain multiple male gazes. While I still stand by this, this does not mean that the male gaze was all-powerful. Even Davis, who argued that the female gaze did not exist in Tokugawa-period ukiyo-e, has come to acknowledge "that the [male] gaze was also manipulated, resisted, permeated, and occluded by a wide range of viewers of both sexes."[41] Does this mean, then, that a female gaze may exist in *shunga* after all? In order to answer this question, let us first consider Hayakawa Monta's analysis of *shunga*'s consumer base. Hayakawa argues that *shunga*'s audience consisted of individuals belonging to every segment of society: commoners (i.e., peasants and townspeople), daimyo's, intellectuals, the young and the elderly, men and *women*.[42] To support his claim that women also read/viewed *shunga*, Hayakawa cites fictional material, ranging from plays to poetry, as well as non-fictional accounts as evidence. An example of the former is *shunga* depicting women who are looking at erotic images themselves. Regarding the latter, Hayakawa references the famous author Mori Ōgai 森鴎外 (1862–1922), who at age six once caught two samurai women in the act of enjoying *shunga* together. He further provides as evidence the recollections of American businessman and journalist Francis Hall (1822–1902) of his stay in Japan from 1859 to 1866. Hall recalls two married Japanese couples exposing him to *shunga*, noting that neither couple felt ashamed for showing said erotic imagery. The first couple's wife even praised the erotic works known as '*shunpon*' as "beautiful books". Hall was perplexed that those he viewed as proper wives were able to openly enjoy *shunga* together with men, without experiencing any embarrassment. Although men likely still formed the largest audience,[43] it seems that Tokugawa

[41] Davis, *Partners in Print*, p. 18.

[42] Hayakawa, "Audiences," p. 17.

[43] Hayakawa, "Audiences," pp. 24–6.

women openly consumed *shunga* as well. Although Hayakawa never clarifies whether women were the *intended* audience or not, this would make sense when one considers the reach of Tokugawa Japan's print industry. Through *kashihon'ya* 貸本屋, itinerant book-lending libraries run by merchants that did not seem to have been subjected to the shogunate's censorship, one could lend *shunga* prints as well as various books, including *shunpon*. When an order for a book or print had been placed on the household's name, women would usually be the first ones to receive them from *kashihon'ya*. This network of book lending was well-developed and spread in particular through the cities, but could be found in rural areas as well. Hayakawa estimates that *shunpon*, such as those that were lent through *kashihon'ya* or one's personal friends, widely circulated through the Japanese archipelago, from castle towns all the way to the more remote areas. In other words, *kashihon'ya* "were an important means for the circulation of erotic books".[44] In fact, the widest audience of *shunpon* was reached through *kashihon'ya*.[45] Considering all of this, it would make sense for *shunga* to be aimed at women too. Needless to say, *shunga* being consumed by and possibly targeted at women does not *in of itself* indicate a female gaze. Whether or not a visual medium contains such a gaze depends on that particular medium's contents. Let us take a closer look at *shunga*, then, in order to see if there is indeed a female gaze present in said medium.

Let us first consider the (frequently) *jokun*-parodying *shunpon* of Tsukioka Settei 月岡雪鼎 (1726–86). According to C. Andrew Gerstle, Settei's erotic works (and similar works) criticize the Confucian-influenced *jokun* for teaching women to be submissive and subordinate workers, a notion of womanhood that is rooted in patriarchy.[46] Particularly opposing Confucian discourse's attitude towards women, the basic message of *shunpon*-parodies like Settei's is that women are not just

[44] Hayakawa, "Audiences," p. 19.

[45] Tinios, "Japanese Illustrated Erotic Books," p. 86.

[46] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, pp. 97–8.

going to be obedient creatures who suppress themselves. Instead, women are actively partaking in their own sexual desires, leading to spousal and family happiness in the process.[47] In other words, *shunpon*-parodies acknowledge the importance of women's sexual activeness. Works like *Onna dairaku takara-beki* 女大楽宝開 ("Great Pleasures for Women and their Treasure Boxes", ca. 1755), Settei's parody of *Onna daigaku takara-bako*, argue that men should know techniques for pleasuring their wives as well as take for granted that women demand orgasms from men.[48] The erotic book *Onna enshi kyōkun kagami* 女艶姿茎群鑑 ("Women's Alluring Figures: A Group of Penises", 1777), attributed to the school of Settei, offers teachings for cultivating women's awareness and expertise regarding marriage's sexual dimension(s).[49] One particular poem of Settei's *Onna shimegawa oeshi-bumi* 女令川趣文 ("Love Letters and Erect Precepts for Women", ca. 1768), a parody of the earlier-mentioned *Onna imagawa oshie-bumi*, even expresses a woman's disappointment in her partner's sexual performance. In fact, it is her sexual dissatisfaction that might evoke the reader's identification and sympathy.[50] All of this confirms, to me at least, Gerstle's claim that Settei tried to include women's perspectives and feelings in his erotica as much as possible.[51] In other words, there seems to be a female gaze in Settei's *shunga*. To be more concrete, they contain the female spectator's gaze, i.e., the third type of gaze. This is even more likely considering that Settei's *shunpon* targeted men and women equally, perhaps the latter even more.[52] One must be cautious, however, in labelling said *shunpon* as 'feminist'.[53] *Onna dairaku takara-beki*, for example, does not go against

[47] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, pp. 222–3.

[48] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, p. 14.

[49] Moretti, "Intertextual Divertissement," p. 211.

[50] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, p. 168.

[51] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, p. 88.

[52] Gerstle, "Analyzing the Outrageous," p. 171.

[53] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, p. 222.

the general contemporary expectation that women should support the household and its business. Neither does it claim that women should be independent and sexually liberated. What *Onna dairaku* does argue, is that sex is a natural part of women's lives as well as that women should be sexually active and not just be subservient creatures. While it is true that said book's image of womanhood has sprung from the male gaze, just as that of *Onna daigaku* has, *Onna dairaku* is remarkably different from its source material. Not surprisingly, then, Settei's *shunpon*-parodies are seen as extremely important historical sources for discussions about Tokugawa Japan's notion(s) of ideal womanhood and its general attitude(s) towards women's sexuality.[54]

Furthermore, I believe that a female gaze may also be present in the erotic works of artists like Suzuki Harunobu 鈴木春信 (1725 (?)–70) and Kitagawa Utamaro 喜多川歌麿 (1753–1806). Focusing on Edo popular culture, Sumie Jones argues that ukiyo-e and *shunga* erase gender difference. Woodblock print-artists accomplish this in two distinct ways, as exemplified by the works of Harunobu and Utamaro. The first method of erasing gender difference, evident in the former's images, is the male and female partner's transformation "into nearly identical twins, both ephemerally thin, delicate and youthful." This is done to such an extent that it is often hard to conclude whether Harunobu's prints feature an opposite-sex or same-sex couple, even more so since Harunobu does not depict genitals in his works. The second method, illustrated by Utamaro's images, is physicality. Utamaro portrays his male and female characters with curves, creating the effect of volume and weight. That is, he "pays fascinated attention to the sensual volume of the body, male or female." In his images, Utamaro portrays "the ideal union of man and woman". In doing so, he "discards any signs of gender conflict." Incidentally, the male and female partner occupy an equal amount of space in *shunga*. Jones further notes that it is difficult to determine who says what, in case a print includes a dialogue between sexual partners, due to a lack of gendered expressions in the

[54] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, pp. 132–3.

dialogue. What *shunga* show us, then, "is only a reflection of an idealized union of man and woman, who understand each other perfectly and are equal in every way, at least momentarily." Jones concludes "that the Edoesque agenda and shunga techniques help avoid patterns of aggression and victimization (active male look, passive female object), which are so often claimed in the discussion of sexuality."[55] Screech adds that, exactly because "Edo love-making was [not] egalitarian" in either the domestic sphere or the pleasure quarters, *shunga* portray intercourse as consensual and, in turn, convey the escapist belief that there was no power imbalance in the act of love-making. In other words, Tokugawa erotica "wishes to propose an egalitarianism of thought and sex-drive."[56] If what both scholars claim is true, then there is no 'active masculinity/passive femininity'-binary in *shunga*. This further means that *shunga* complicate and challenge said binary and, by extension, the male gaze. After all, the erasure of gender differences and the accompanying equalization of women vis-à-vis men is a significant departure from western cinema's strict enforcement of the gender binary in which the male gaze is firmly anchored. With *shunga* lacking a similar kind of enforcement, it is quite plausible for their female audience to identify with *shunga*'s sexually active female 'protagonist(s)'. In challenging the male gaze, then, *shunga* allow room for a female gaze.

Now that it has been established that *shunga* and the female gaze can indeed go hand in hand, I would like to discuss how the female gaze fits into *shunga*'s subversive history. I believe the relationship between said gaze and *shunga*'s subversiveness can be explained by recognizing that *shunga*, while neither directly attacking the shogunate nor calling for political violence, convey anti-Confucian sentiments as well as "show a lively discourse of commentary and criticism of the Tokugawa polity."[57] Jennifer Preston supports this last point, by arguing that Tokugawa erotica's portrayal of married couple's sexual love and affection could express anti-shogunate and anti-

[55] Jones, "Interminable Reflections," pp. 91–2.

[56] Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*, pp. 127–8.

[57] Gerstle, "Analyzing the Outrageous," pp. 189–90.

Confucian sentiments. The erotic works of Nishikawa Sukenobu 西川祐信 (1670–1751), for example, essentially portrayed sexual love as oppositional to Confucian constraint, which mirrored contemporary concerns that held Confucian social norms responsible for the decline of affective conjugal relationships. Other creators' works also conveyed such politically-charged sentiments in a similar manner.[58] I believe this includes Settei's erotica, for it likely contains anti-establishment and/or anti-Confucian sentiments.[59] Gerstle implies that this is at least partially due to Settei's *shunga* promoting sexual activeness among women, which is the antithesis to Confucian doctrine's ideal image of womanhood. Although Gerstle does not mention it explicitly, the latter's image of the ideal woman is, of course, the housewife/*jionna*. In other words, Settei's *shunpon*-parodies blur the aforementioned oppositional notions of femininity: the fertility model's housewife/*jionna* and the pleasure model's courtesan/*yūjo*. This blurring of the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary is what allows space for a female gaze. Based on Preston's above-mentioned analysis, I would argue that (at least some of) Sukenobu's works also allow a female gaze by depicting women as sexually active in the same or a similar manner as Settei's *shunga*. Even though no scholar that I am aware of has argued that Harunobu's and Utamaro's erotic works are overtly or covertly anti-establishment, I would argue that their *shunga*'s depictions of sexually active female characters convey an implicitly anti-Confucian discourse. It is the female gaze, then, that makes these artists' *shunga* anti-Confucian and, in turn, anti-shogunate. In other words, *shunga*'s subversive power partially resides in the female gaze. This subversive potential is illustrated by the shogunate's fear of female sexuality's supposed potential to cause social disorder, a fear that led the authorities to perceive the sexually-charged popular culture as a potentially destabilizing force and, therefore, a moral threat. Unsurprisingly, this fear had political consequences. The shogunate punished many popular artists and authors for their politically satirical works, which usually featured the theater and brothel districts or other sex-related topics, as

[58] Preston, "Allegories of Love."

[59] Gerstle, *Edo onna no shungabon*, p. 17.

part of its more or less consistent censorship policy.[60] The shogunate conducted three such major censorship programs throughout its rule: the Kyōhō 享保 (1716–45), Kansei 寛政 (1787/9–93), and Tenpō Reforms (*Tenpō no kaikaku* 享保の改革, 1841–43). Each reform led to a reduction in *shunga*'s production, with publication periodically re-surging until the final drop in production occurred following the Tenpō Reforms. Since it was the shogunate's involvement that directly impacted *shunga*-publication during the second and third reforms, the publication history of *shunga* and *shunpon* "reveal[s] a certain correlation with periods of political repression."[61] The attempt to impede their production unveils the subversive power that the Tokugawa regime projected onto *shunga*. Not only that, the shogunate's repressive measures unintentionally reinforced this power. *Shunga* were forced to circulate underground because of said measures, ironically birthing an environment that provided much more freedom to artists, authors, and publishers as they now had to publish their works anonymously. Thus, *shunga* acquired "a sense of itself as a distinct genre or discourse—at least after the Kyōhō Reforms and their censorship edicts."[62] This newly-obtained freedom and underground status, then, strengthened *shunga*'s subversiveness. I would argue that the extent of this subversiveness is well-illustrated by Screech's claim that floating world-imagery "allows you to question the authority of the world. It was through pictures that the contestations of the floating world and its norms infiltrated back into the city. (…) And so through pictures of the floating world, society was unpicked and torn apart." One could even go so far as to say that the floating world is "no longer an escape from the real world to the world of fun. It *is* the real world, whereas the world you think is real is not real."[63] Amaury A. Garcia Rodriguez similarly asserts that "the enormous popularity and commercial success of *shunga*, ukiyo-e, and popular literature fuelled

[60] Jones, "Sex, Art, and Edo Culture," pp. 8–9.

[61] Smith, "Edo 'Shunga'," p. 29.

[62] Gerstle, "Analyzing the Outrageous," p. 172.

[63] Screech, "Ukiyo-e Artists," pp. 124–5. Emphasis in original.

the flourishing merchant economy of the townsman class, and contributed to a very public display of bakufu [i.e., the shogunate] economic decline."[64] Thus, one could make the case that *shunga*, together with other forms of popular culture, undermined the official social order. The Tokugawa rulers purposefully allocated the culture of pleasure and play to specific districts at the margins of Edo society, rather than eradicating it entirely, for "[s]uch lenience granted the state the ability and plasticity to maintain a stable social order by providing a safety valve. This was a strategy of containment, in short, rather than suppression." By the early eighteenth century, however, it already became clear that this "strategy of containment had failed, as numerous cultural activities emerged, with networks that extended beyond the spatial confines established by the Tokugawa state."[65] If this is all true, then *shunga*'s possession of a subversive social, political, and/or economic power is more than evident. This very subversiveness, as mentioned above, can be found in the female gaze.

In short, I have demonstrated that *shunga* depict women as sexually active. In this way, *shunga* provide a notion of female sexuality that was the mirror image of the Confucian-influenced fertility model's ideal image of womanhood that was endorsed by the state. In doing so, *shunga* subvert the 'active masculinity/passive femininity'-dichotomy that has plagued classical Hollywood cinema for so long, making it easier for female readers/viewers to identify with *shunga*'s female characters in the process. This identification process might be further reinforced by the fact that *shunga*, while still objectifying their female characters, do not (always) debase them. Since women's official position in Tokugawa society was far from enviable and women were likely debased in real-life as a result, it is plausible that *shunga*'s active and non-debased female characters would have appealed to a female audience. In other words, *shunga* reinforce a female gaze, which poses a challenge to the patriarchal male gaze. As a consequence, the former contributes to *shunga*'s socially, politically, and/or economically subversive power. All of this proves, in my opinion, that "no

[64] García Rodríguez, "Nishikawa Sukenobu," p. 146.

[65] Hirano, *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 210.

social or cultural history of Tokugawa Japan would in fact be complete without the incorporation of period-appropriate *shunga*."[66] However, this is not to say that Tokugawa erotic imagery is always *intentionally* subversive. I am less concerned with the intentions of the artist, than with what his works actually depicted and how these depictions relate to the sociopolitical context in which the works were produced. That is why I believe that erotic works can be subversive, irrespective of their producers' objectives.

This concludes chapter three. In the next and final chapter, I will analyze how *shunga*'s subversive female gaze is rooted in the intersection of gender and social status, as demonstrated by *shunga*'s blurring of the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary.

[66] Ketelaar, "Erotic Emotionality," p. 188.

# Chapter four: The *Jionna*/*yūjo*-binary and the Female Gaze

As we have seen in the previous chapter, *shunga* that portray sexually active women in a neutral/positive manner oppose, intentionally or not, the Tokugawa shogunate's ideal image of womanhood. Said portrayal would explain, at least partially, the intensity of the state's anxiety regarding female sexuality. However, this implies that the shogunate's concern was only sex/gender-related, which obscures the role of social status. I would argue, then, that in order to truly understand the potential subversiveness of *shunga*'s depiction of women, we need to consider the ways in which sex/gender and social status intersect. It is no secret that Tokugawa Japan was a highly stratified society, at least in theory, with the social hierarchy from the highest to the lowest position being as follows: warriors, peasants, artisans, and merchants (the latter two being part of the collective 'townspeople'). When I use the term 'social status', however, I do not merely refer to one's socioeconomic class, but also to other factors that contributed to one's social status in Tokugawa society, such as age and occupation. The aforementioned *Wakashu-asobi*, for example, clearly differentiates between women based on their social status. It depicts two types of women: *onna* 女 (literally "woman", but this word is synonymous with 'wife' in the context of *Wakashu-asobi*) and *jōrō* 上臈 ("lady", referring to maids, concubines, and high-class *yūjo*). *Jōrō* were able to sexually associate with male youths without stigmatization, whereas *onna* could only do so when an adult man directs and controls the sexual act.[67][68] In other words, *jōrō* were allowed more sexual freedom compared to *onna*, signifying the difference between the former's social status and the latter's. This intersection of gender and status had real-life consequences, as the following incident shows. At age

[67] Mostow, "The Grammar of Desire," pp. 60–1.

[68] Fleskes, "Active vs. Passive," pp. 9–10.

twenty-two, Inoue Tsūjo 井上通女 (1660–1738) was travelling to Edo when she and her entourage were stopped at a border checkpoint in a town west of Kyoto. The checkpoint's inspectors prevented Tsūjo from continuing her journey, because "her travel documents described her as a 'woman' (*onna*) rather than what she appeared to them to be: an unmarried 'girl' (*shōjo*, or *ko-onna*), wearing the long kimono sleeves that marked her relatively young age and marital status." Tsūjo and her company were only allowed to pass the checkpoint once she acquired replacement documents that referred to her as a *shōjo*/*ko-onna* 小女.[69] Another such real-life consequence was the censorship of Nishikawa Sukenobu's erotic and non-erotic books. These books depict women of various social classes, which suggests that these women are all equal to each other. Since the status system formed the groundwork of the Tokugawa social order and the shogunate's legitimacy was based on said order, it would not be difficult to imagine that "any attempt to make different spheres of social life appear to be equal and homogenous was considered a transgression of the official social code and an affront to the laws which had been issued that same year." Thus, the Tokugawa rulers appear to have viewed Sukenobu's works as offences, even more so when they were explicitly sexual.[70] Incidentally, the aforementioned Kansei Reforms forbade the depiction of urban women in ukiyo-e. Afterwards, *yūjo* were the only type of women that ukiyo-e were allowed to show.[71] In other words, the shogunate tried to prevent ukiyo-e's eroticization of samurai and commoner women through said reforms. This eroticization must have been quite the norm then, as most of *shunga*'s male and female characters are commoners.[72] Hayakawa goes even so far as to claim that ninety percent of the men and women depicted in *shunga* are commoners, with depictions of *yūjo* amounting to less than

[69] Yonemoto, *The Problem of Women*, pp. 1–2.

[70] García Rodríguez, "Nishikawa Sukenobu," p. 145.

[71] Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*, p. 239.

[72] Buckland, *Shunga*, p. 9.

five percent.[73] This would make sense, as Screech considers the birth of 'true' ukiyo-e to be when "the commoners took over and arrogated the right to represent themselves."[74] The Kansei Reforms' prohibition could be interpreted, then, as an attempt to impede ukiyo-e's and *shunga*'s blurring of the boundaries between *yūjo* on the one hand and *jionna*, i.e., ordinary women, on the other. This indicates that the *jionna* and *yūjo* represented two distinct social statuses, with the former representing female samurai and commoners and the latter officially belonging to the *hinin* 非人 ("non-people"), outcasts who were even outranked by merchants in the aforementioned social hierarchy.[75] Therefore, *shunga*'s obscuring of the distinction between *jionna* and *yūjo* is subversive along both gender and status lines. One could argue, then, that *shunga* challenge the Tokugawa social order, to an extent, by blurring the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary. To demonstrate how exactly *shunga* subvert said binary, let us examine some of these erotic images in detail.

In the appendix below, I have listed images from various artists that depict ordinary men and women engaged in any kind of sexual activity, ranging from unmarried adolescents to spouses and from young to old(er) people. All of these images show ordinary women/*jionna* as sexually active in one way or another. Figure 1 is just such an example. Titled *Sensu seiran* 扇子晴嵐 ("Folding Fan, Clearing Skies") and part of Suzuki Harunobu's erotic series *Fūryū zashiki hakkei* 風流座敷八景 ("Eight Modern Views of Interiors", 1768–70), figure 1 shows a fan-peddling youth and a wet nurse who is babysitting a young child in the inner garden of a townsman's house. The wet nurse has at some point become sexually excited and grabs the youth's penis as a result.[76] In other words, it is not the male figure but the woman who is inciting the sexual act here. Since the wet nurse is a *jionna* and

[73] Hayakawa, *Ten Questions*, p. 15.

[74] Screech, "Ukiyo-e Artists," p. 122.

[75] Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure*, p. 155. In practice, however, the *yūjo*'s status was more ambiguous.

[76] Hayakawa, *Suzuki Harunobu*, pp. 91–2.

not a *yūjo*, her sexual activeness is 'transgressive'. After all, a *jionna*'s sexuality is supposed to serve reproduction, whereas it is doubtful that the wet nurse's 'seduction' of the youth is to ensure progeny. In other words, the wet nurse does not utilize her sexuality in accordance with the fertility values, blurring the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary in the process. *Shunga*'s blurring of said binary can be a bit more complicated in other cases, as figures 4 and 5 illustrate. Known as *Nurioke no bosetsu* 塗桶の暮雪 ("Lacquer Stand in Evening Snow") and also part of *Fūryū zashiki hakkei*, figure 4 depicts a female cotton-spreader about to have sex with a man, presumably a shop clerk, in the cotton-spreading room. In Edo, the work of cotton-spreading was performed by women, who conventionally also did sex work.[77] This supports the notion that "the boundary between 'ordinary' labor and prostitution was permeable [in Tokugawa times]."[78] Cotton-spreaders were not *yūjo* from licensed red-light districts, however, but unregistered prostitutes. In other words, they were officially *jionna*, presumably towns- or peasant women. Thus, cotton-spreaders cannot be comfortably categorized as either *jionna* or *yūjo*. By explicitly showing a sexually occupied cotton-spreader, the image in question blurs the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary. Harunobu might have depicted a similar scene in figure 5, an image that is part of his series *Fūryū enshoku Mane'emon* 風流艶色真似ゑもん ("Elegant Erotic Mane'emon", 1770). In this image, a man and a woman are having intercourse in a hot spring lodging, having just come out of the bath. Hayakawa argues that they are either a married couple or a *yuna* 湯女 (a prostitute employed at a hot spring lodging) with her client.[79] If the woman is indeed a *yuna*, then she would be an unregistered prostitute, just like the cotton-spreader of figure 4. Just as in the preceding image, then, the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary is subverted by a woman who is technically a *jionna*, but also does sex work. If the man and woman of figure 5 turn out to be a married couple

[77] Hayakawa, *Suzuki Harunobu*, p. 102.

[78] Stanley, *Selling Women*, p. 81.

[79] Hayakawa, *Suzuki Harunobu*, p. 37.

instead, then the image would still blur said binary. After all, a wife having sex not (just) for procreation's sake indicates an image of womanhood that is neither advocated by the fertility model nor its pleasure counterpart. In other words, she would neither be a *jionna* or a *yūjo*. Whether or not she is a wife, the woman from figure 9 most definitely is. The fourth image from the series *Kōshoku zue jūnikō* 好色図会十二候 ("Twelve Months of Love", ca. 1788), made by Katsukawa Shunchō 勝川春潮 (birth and death dates unknown), figure 9 depicts a husband taking his wife from behind. The youngsters have a satisfied expression on their faces and the wife exclaims: "Ah, I feel myself drifting off into pleasure. More, more, deep at the top… That's it. I'm coming again. Ah, oh, ah!"[80] The wife, whose cotton-striped clothes indicate that she is a commoner (i.e., a *jionna*), is clearly experiencing a moment of sexual ecstasy. The image's blurring of the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary speaks for itself.

The above-mentioned images' female characters look relatively young, but *shunga* also feature older sexually active women. A good example of this is figure 10, the eleventh image from Shunchō's *Kōshoku zue jūnikō*. It shows a widow having sex with a youth in a theater's teahouse, during the break of a kabuki play. Due to the latter's relatively modest clothes, Hayakawa believes the youth to be an employee of the widow. The conversation between the two reveals the intensity of the widow's lust for her young employee, as illustrated by the following line: "Your piece is fuller and longer than my late husband's, making you even more delicious. Ah! Push higher up and deeper. Push hard enough to break the ceiling beams. Ah, ah, um…"[81] Just like the wife from figure 9, the widow is clearly enjoying the sexual rendezvous. It is notable that the widow, an older woman who I assume has children (her shaved eyebrows signify that she is a mother) and who falls in the category of *onna* as a result, does not seem to be portrayed negatively in said image. This is a sharp contrast with *Wakashu-asobi*'s rather unflattering depiction of sexually active *onna*. In other words, *shunga*

[80] Hayakawa, *Ten Questions*, p. 18.

[81] Hayakawa, *Ten Questions*, p. 33.

do not always portray *onna* negatively. A similarly neutral/positive portrayal of an *onna* can be found in figures 11, 12, and 25. The former two images are both from Kitagawa Utamaro's series *Uta-makura* 歌まくら ("Poems of the Pillow", 1788), whereas the latter is an image from the picture book *Manpuku wagōjin* 萬福和合神 ("The Gods of All Happiness and Intercourse", 1821), made by the famous artist Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849). Figure 11 depicts an older woman with shaved eyebrows and an adult man having sex in a bedroom at nighttime, while tightly embracing each other.[82] There is a crest depicted on the *onna*'s kimono, which might be an indication of a merchant background. It is unclear to me whether the couple is married or not, though this is quite likely since the *onna* and her lover are of similar age and *onna* are by definition wives. Regardless of the couple's marital status, the *onna* and her lover are both shown with a content expression on their faces and neither of the two seems to be depicted in a degrading manner. It can be said with certainty that figure 25, Hokusai's image, does depict an *onna* and her husband making love, with the *onna* grabbing the leg of a lacquer table as she is being filled with rapture. It was this very couple that "became the 'model of conjugal love in their village'."[83] Just as figures 18 and 19, this image does not depict the *onna* as disfigured either, despite her marital status and shaved eyebrows. Returning to one of Utamaro's images, figure 12 depicts a poor, middle-aged couple having sex. The rather plump-looking wife puts the quilt over her husband, as she worries that he might be cold. This act, according to Hayakawa, is evidence of "her warm heart and love for him."[84] To me, then, this image emphasizes the unity of carnal lust and spousal affection, resulting in an overall wholesome scene. I would argue that *shunga* images like these demonstrate James Ketelaar's notion that "even some of the most 'explicit' forms of 'erotic art' on the Japanese archipelago are not so much dedicated to sex per se as

[82] Buckland, *Shunga*, p. 10.

[83] Buckland, *Shunga*, p. 140.

[84] Hayakawa, *Ten Questions*, p. 21.

they are exemplars of the gentle human emotions associated with affection and a mutual at-ease-ness that is at once common and everyday, as well as noteworthy and celebratory."[85] That is*, shunga* are not just about sex or procreation.[86] It is clear, then, that figures 10 to 12 and 25 subvert the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary by their neutral/positive depiction of sexually proactive *onna*.

Interestingly, there are erotic images that even depict illicit affairs. This is noteworthy, because a man sleeping with another man's wife was a capital offense in Tokugawa Japan.[87] Such an affair is depicted in figure 14, the seventh image from Utamaro's series *Negai no itoguchi* 願ひの糸ぐち ("Threads Leading to Desire", 1799). Figure 14 depicts two lovers dressed in light yukata, with the woman's breasts fully exposed. The couple is having sex, while the man is simultaneously sucking his lover's right breast. Based on the woman's facial expression, she seems to be enjoying it. The dialogue makes it abundantly clear that both lovers are cheating on their spouses with each other, with the woman even expressing her disdain for her husband.[88] Despite adultery being officially illegal, said image does not seem to portray the couple in a negative light. A similar scene is depicted in figure 18, image five from volume one of Utamaro's picture book *Ehon warai jōgo* 絵本笑上戸 ("Picture Book: The Laughing Drinker", ca. 1803). Figure 18 shows a couple being sexually intimate beside a mosquito net. The woman's eyes are closed in pleasure, as she states: "I'm a born nymphomaniac. I'm an attractive woman and have taken on all kinds of cock, but I've never yet been on the receiving end of a whanger like yours." Her lover's response reveals she has a husband.[89] Aside from praising her lover's manhood, the woman's declaration makes it clear that she is sexually

[85] Ketelaar, "Erotic Emotionality," p. 196.

[86] Ketelaar, "Erotic Emotionality," pp. 188–9.

[87] Mostow, "Wakashu as a Third Gender," p. 22.

[88] Hayakawa, *Ten Questions*, p. 33.

[89] Buckland, *Shunga*, p. 126.

promiscuous, even though she is married. Just like figure 14, this image does not seem to condemn either of the two lovers for their 'crime'. In addition to the women from figures 14 and 18 being sexually active *jionna*, the fact that they are having illicit affairs further reinforces these images' subversiveness.

While *shunga* do not (necessarily) represent reality, one could argue that they do show parallels with contemporary society. For example, Amy Stanley argues that "female promiscuity was not heavily stigmatized." This means that "the idea that one woman might have multiple partners, or that she might have intercourse outside of wedlock, was not inherently problematic." For urban and peasant women, Stanley elaborates, it was not uncommon "to have more than one sexual partner over the course of a lifetime." Moreover, cohabitation before marriage, divorce, widow remarriage were all part of life for commoners. While it is true that Tokugawa sexual mores were neither static time-wise nor consistent per class, "chastity never became a universal standard of sexual morality by which all women were judged and prostitutes were found wanting."[90] In other words, *shunga*'s depiction of sexually active and promiscuous women reflected the lived realities of commoner women more accurately than the official social order did, of which *jokun* were a part. This further means that, in practice, Tokugawa women did not always neatly fall into the category of either *jionna* or *yūjo*. Stanley's analysis of sex work in Tokugawa-era Nagasaki attests to this. According to Stanley, it was possible for a woman to fulfill the roles of both *yūjo* and daughter simultaneously and "when the two roles conflicted, a woman's identity as a prostitute could never quite subsume her identity as a daughter. While *yūjo* were technically members of brothel keepers' households, they were defined by their service to their natal families."[91] This illustrates that "the category of 'prostitute' [i.e., *yūjo*] could be enlarged to accommodate multiple relationships and identities." Another such identity was

[90] Stanley, *Selling Women*, pp. 4–5.

[91] Stanley, *Selling Women*, p. 76.

that of mother. Some *yūjo* from Nagasaki had children with foreign men and raised them in the city's foreign enclosures, designated areas where foreigners were allowed to stay during the Tokugawa period. Due to certain specific social customs, *yūjo* sometimes needed wet nurses to breast-feed their babies. Since Japanese women, with the exception of *yūjo*, were forbidden to enter the foreign enclosures, wet nurses had to change their status to that of *yūjo* in order to gain access to these spaces. These wet nurses had children of their own and so "their service as *yūjo* overlapped with motherhood and possibly marriage." Furthermore, even "[s]hogunal officials did not assume that a woman's status as a *yūjo* superseded other categories of identity based on her familial relationships." In other words, *yūjo* could also "be responsible daughters, wives, mothers, or wet nurses, and sometimes they were not even expected to work as prostitutes."[92] Thus, *yūjo* were not always that far removed from ordinary society and *jionna* were closer to the world of sex than is indicated by official (i.e., state-endorsed) rhetoric. The real-life blurriness between these two social statuses is captured rather well by *shunga* artists.

Taking all this into account, it is clear that *shunga* generally do not frame their female characters negatively for their sexual activeness, demonstrating Jones' point that *shunga* do not reinforce the 'active masculinity/passive femininity'-dichotomy. Although Jones made this claim in the context of Edo-produced *shunga*, I believe her argument can also be applied to *shunga* created by artists from the Kamigata 上方 (Kyoto–Osaka) area, such as Tsukioka Settei's erotic works. In other words, *shunga*'s 'narrative' does not punish sexually proactive women, a sharp contrast with Hollywood cinema's portrayal of women. After all, the latter punishes women for assuming an active gaze when they do not act 'appropriately' (i.e., passively), which only reveals how heavily ingrained societal conceptions of 'femininity = passive' and 'masculinity = active' are. By not punishing women for their sexual activeness, *shunga* reinforce a female gaze. To be more correct, they reinforce two

[92] Stanley, *Selling Women*, pp. 96–7.

separate but intrinsically connected female gazes: the visual medium's character's and the audience's gaze, i.e., the second and third type of gaze respectively. Let us first discuss the second type, namely the gaze of *shunga*'s female characters. Chris Uhlenbeck argues that voyeurism is a frequent occurrence in *shunga*, "with both male and female voyeurs often masturbating or involved in sex with one or more partners."[93] An early example of *shunga* depicting a female voyeur can be found in figure 27. Titled *Yoru no otodo* 夜の大殿 ("Nighttime in the Mansion") and part of Sukenobu's erotic book *Iro hiinagata* 色ひいな形 ("Patterns of Sensual Pleasure", 1711), figure 27 shows a maid peeping at her sexually intimate master and mistress through a gap in the sliding doors. While stimulating herself with a dildo, the maid exclaims: "Oh, I'm jealous. I want that to happen to me."[94][95] It is quite clear from the image and dialogue that the maid becomes sexually aroused by watching others engaged in intercourse. Another good example of an erotic image depicting a female voyeur is *Tokei no banshō* 時計の晩鐘 ("Evening Chime of the Clock"), part of Harunobu's *Fūryū zashiki hakkei* (figure 2). This image depicts a young, wealthy, married merchant couple making love, while a maid is peeping at her master and mistress behind a sliding door. With her left hand, the maid is trying to reach her private parts. Hayakawa asserts that it is the maid who is the image's main subject, rather than the married couple. The reasoning behind his claim is the poem inscribed in the image:

> *The sound of the clock continuously marking the time*
>
> *hearing the sound and becoming extremely lonely*
>
> *at dusk*

[93] Uhlenbeck, "Erotic Fantasies of Japan," p. 20.

[94] Buckland, *Shunga*, p. 78.

[95] Fleskes, "Sexual Agency," p. 7.

Referring to the maid's feelings, this poem reflects "the loneliness of a woman who has no lover."[9697] This would mean that the viewer, irrespective of their sex/gender and social status, was supposed to identify with the young maid. I believe the audience was also supposed to identify with the female voyeur in figure 28, an image titled "Lovers behind a Screen", attributed to Isoda Koryūsai 礒田湖龍斎 (1735–90) and made in the period of 1772–3. Figure 28, too, features a maid as the voyeur. She was carrying a cup of tea, as she stumbled upon her employers having sex. She watches the copulating couple behind a transparent folding screen, which excites her. As a result, she reaches her right hand between her legs.[98] Just as in the preceding image, figure 28 centers the sexual gaze of a woman. The female voyeur and her gaze also take center stage in some of Settei's erotic images, such as in figures 29 and 30, which are both part of the erotic book *Bidō nichiya johōki* 艶道日夜女宝記 ("A Treasure Book for Women on the Way of Love: Day and Night*",* ca. 1764). Titled *Kashō* 花仕 ("Among the Flowers"), figure 29 consists of three panels. The first panel depicts an opposite-sex couple making love among flowers (hence the title). On the next one, we see two individuals peeping at said couple through what seems to me a banner. The third and final panel reveals the peeping toms to be a man and a woman making love while simultaneously watching the copulating couple. The peeping man is impressed with how big the other man's penis is, while the peeping woman seems almost terrified of its size based on the dialogue.[99] Despite her vocal disapproval of the other man's penis size, the woman keeps on peeping as she engages in sex. This suggests that the young-looking woman does enjoy her 'view' to some extent. Based on her and her sex partner's clothes, I assume she is a commoner and, thus, a *jionna*. Titled *Naishō hoheki* 内仕付補開 ("In Secret, and

[96] Hayakawa, *Suzuki Harunobu*, pp. 94–5.

[97] Fleskes, "Sexual Agency," pp. 6–7.

[98] Buckland, *Shunga*, p. 95.

[99] Hayakawa and Gerstle, *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei V*, pp. 51–3.

Helping out a Virgin"), figure 30 depicts a woman, possibly a maid, peeping at a love-making couple through a gap in the sliding door. The woman is clearly aroused by what she sees, as she exclaims: "Wish that were me! Someone come!"[100] It is clear that her voyeurism is what triggers her sexual desire. As one might expect of Settei, he does not depict the two female voyeurs in question in a negative manner. It is clear, then, that none of the discussed images punish the peeping women, all of them *jionna*, for their active voyeurism or portray their gazes as negative. In fact, all of the five images even center their gazes. Overall, this is quite the departure from Hollywood cinema's negation of the female gaze.

In conclusion, *shunga*'s subversiveness is grounded in the intersection of gender and 'class' (i.e., social status). After all, the neutral/positive depiction of *jionna* as sexually active is what contributes to *shunga*'s subversiveness. The depiction of a sexually active *yūjo* would not make *shunga* subversive, or at least not to the same extent. I would argue, then, that *shunga*'s female gaze is 'class'-specific, perhaps even more so considering that most women in *shunga* are commoners and, by extension, *jionna*. The voyeuristic *jionna* demonstrate this 'class'-specificness. The occasional centering of the female voyeur's gaze might lead to *shunga*'s audience as a whole, including women, to identify with a *jionna*. In this regard, both the female voyeur's and the audience's gaze, i.e., the second and third type of gaze, are 'class'-specific female gazes. It is this 'class'-specificness that further reinforces *shunga*'s subversiveness. This intersection of gender and social status in *shunga* proves Devereaux's point that one must consider factors other than gender when analyzing the gaze. Devereaux is referring to the western cinema's gaze in particular, but her critique can be applied to the gaze in other types of (western and non-western) visual media as well, as evidently demonstrated by *shunga*.

[100] Hayakawa and Gerstle, *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei V*, p. 53.

# Conclusion

In this thesis, I have demonstrated that *shunga*'s neutral/positive depiction of sexually active *jionna* complicates and challenges the male gaze. It does so by offering an image of womanhood that neither the fertility model nor its pleasure counterpart advocated for, i.e., by blurring the *jionna*/*yūjo*-binary. After all, both the fertility and pleasure models' ideal images of womanhood are the products of male fantasies. Since the fertility model was propagated by the Tokugawa shogunate through *jokun* and the like, *shunga*'s ideal image of womanhood and female sexuality opposes that of the state. In this way, *shunga* symbolically challenge and subvert the Tokugawa social order, at least to some extent. By challenging the state's male gaze, *shunga* create room for their audience to identify with a *jionna*, regardless of the spectator's sex/gender and social status. In other words, *shunga* allow space for a 'class'-specific female gaze. The fact that peeping *jionna*, i.e., female voyeurs, occasionally appear in *shunga* and that Tokugawa women openly consumed erotic imagery further point to the presence of a second and third type of female gaze. These 'class'-specific female gazes are what contributes to *shunga*'s subversiveness. While *shunga*'s depiction of female sexuality remains the product of male fantasies and does not negate every type of male gaze as a result, this depiction is still more multi-faceted than the shogunate's version of womanhood. Consequently, the former reflects Tokugawa women's lived experiences more accurately than the latter does. Therefore, *shunga*'s depiction of womanhood not necessarily being feminist does not make it any less subversive.

On a final note, research on Tokugawa-era female sexuality in relation to *shunga* is still in its infancy and this study has been an attempt to further the discussion around said topic. Due to the limited available space, however, there are a few issues left undiscussed in detail. For example, I could not focus in detail on the differences between *shunga* works produced by Edo artists and by those from the Kamigata area. As there is already detailed academic literature on Edo erotica and the literature on Kamigata-made *shunga* is growing, I would like to highlight the regional differences'

impact on *shunga* in more detail in future research. In addition, the figure of the female voyeur needs to be analyzed in more detail. Perhaps these issues can be taken up in more depth in future research.

# Appendix


**Figure X:** Image found on the following website:

https://grobgallery.com/exhibitions/20/works/image156/.

**Figure XX:** Two images from *Wakashu-asobi kyara no makura*. An adult man (left image) discovers his lover, a male youth, making love to a seamstress (right image). Because of "her shaved eyebrows and faced screwed up with pleasure", Mostow argues that the depiction of the older woman, i.e., the *onna*, "is far from flattering".[101] Screenshot taken by me from page 56 of "The Gender of *Wakashu* and the Grammar of Desire".

[101] Mostow, "The Grammar of Desire," pp. 55–6.

**Figure 1:** Image found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zashiki_Hakkei.

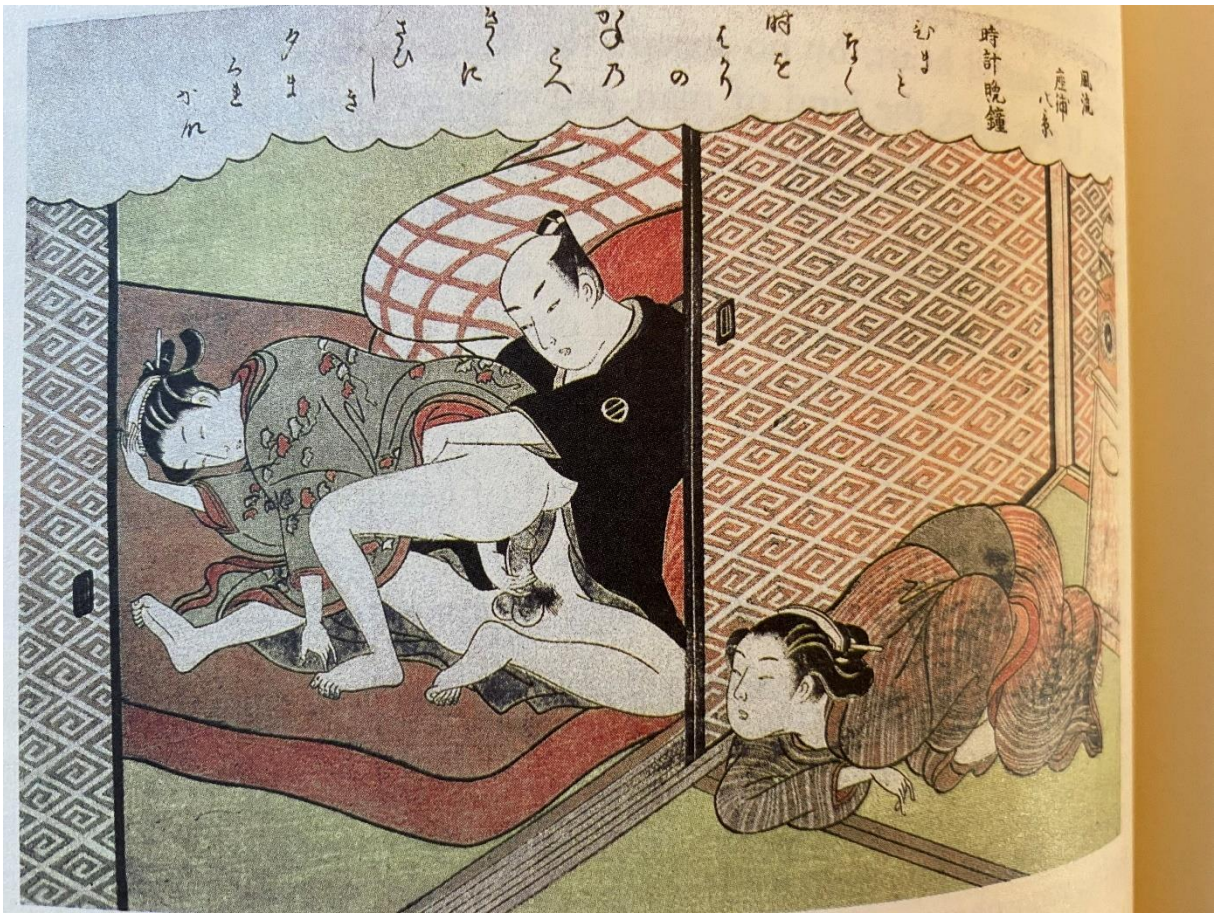

**Figure 2:** Photo taken by me from page 94 of *The Shunga of Suzuki Harunobu: Mitate-e and Sexuality in Edo*.

**Figure 3:** *Andon no sekishō* 行燈の夕照 (“Evening Glow of the Lamp”), part of *Fūryū zashiki hakkei*. Suzuki Harunobu, 1768–1770. https://onlineonly.christies.com/s/artist-woodblock-japanese-prints-18th-20th-century/evening-glow-lamp-11/29501.

**Figure 4:** Image found here: https://ukiyo-e.org/image/mfa/sc219683.

**Figure 5:** Image found here: https://www.scholten-japanese-art.com/shunga_11.php.

**Figure 6:** Image nine from *Fūryū enshoku Mane'emon*. Suzuki Harunobu, 1770.

https://www.scholten-japanese-art.com/shunga_11.php.

**Figure 7:** Image eleven from *Fūryū enshoku Mane'emon*.

http://www.omnia.ie/index.php?navigation_function=2&navigation_item=097b83b2476cfd47e6777abf356e51e4&repid=2.

**Figure 8:** Image one from volume three of the picture book *Imayō tsuma kagami* 今様妻鑑 ("Contemporary Mirror of Wives"). Suzuki Harunobu, ca. 1771. https://www.dh-jac.net/db12/shunga/FMPro?-db=webshunga.fmj&-format=kansai01%5fpage.html&-lay=layout2&number=02*&-max=2147483647&-recid=7&-find=.

**Figure 9:** Image found here: http://www.japanmasterprints.com/printsCat08/0862b.html.


**Figure 10:** Image found here: https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/16867/lot/54/.

**Figure 11:** Image found here:

https://shungagallery.com/%e9%b3%a5%e6%a9%8b%e6%96%8e-%e6%a0%84%e9%87%8c/.

**Figure 12:** Image found here:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Utamaro_(1788)_Utamakura_print_No._11_(BM,_cropped).jpg.

**Figure 13:** Image from *Uta-makura*. Kitagawa Utamaro, 1788.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Utamaro_(1788)_Utamakura_print_No._06_(BM).jpg.

**Figure 14:** Image found here:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Geheime_affaire_van_een_getrouwde_man_en_een_getrouwde_vrouw_Negai_no_itoguchi_(serietitel),_RP-P-2006-271.jpg.

**Figure 15:** Image from the picture book *Ehon toko no ume* 艶本床の梅 (“Glossy Book: Plum of the Bedchamber”). Kitagawa Utamaro, 1800. Photo taken by me from page 125 of *Shunga: Erotic Art in Japan*.

**Figure 16:** Image five from the series *Ehon komachi biki* 絵本小町引 (“Picture Book: Pulling Komachi”). Kitagawa Utamaro, 1802. http://chobie926.blog.fc2.com/blog-entry-115.html?sp.

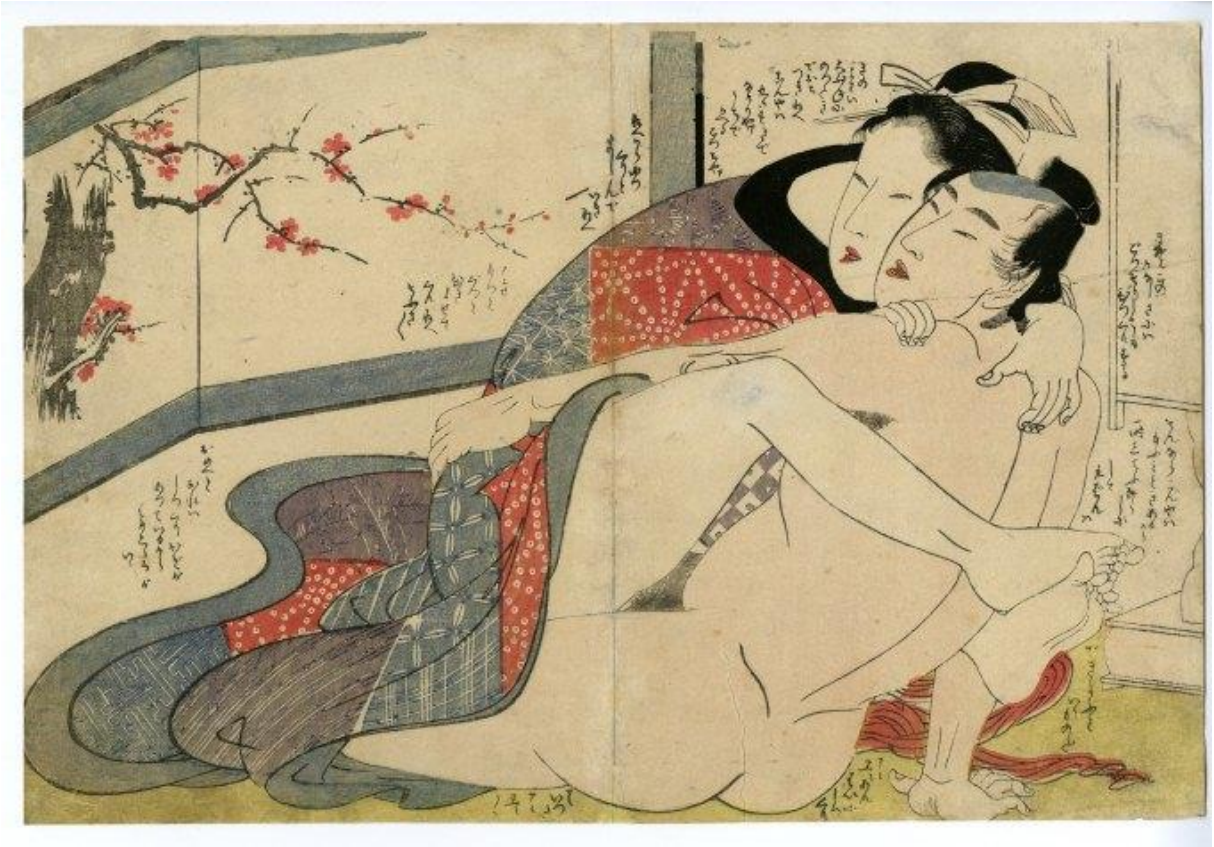

**Figure 17:** Image eight from *Ehon komachi biki*. https://edo-g.com/blog/2015/12/hinin.html/ehon_komatchi_biki_l.

**Figure 18:** Image found here: https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/312.2009.1.a-ff/.

**Figure 19:** Image eight from volume one of *Ehon warai jōgo*. Kitagawa Utamaro, ca. 1803.

https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/312.2009.1.a-ff/.

**Figure 20:** Image four from volume three of *Ehon warai jōgo*.

https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/312.2009.3.a-z/.

**Figure 21:** Image three from the picture book *Ehon tsui no hinagata* 絵本つひの雛形 (“Picture Book: Patterns of Couplings”). Katsushika Hokusai, 1812 or 1817. http://www.japaneseprints-london.com/8786/katsushika-hokusai-1760-1849-shunga-24/.

**Figure 22:** Image eleven from *Ehon tsui no hinagata*.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hokusai,_Untitled_(Plate_No._4)_From_the_series_Picture_Book()_Patterns_of_Couples_(Ehon_tsui_no_hinagata),_c._1812.jpg.

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**Figure 23:** Image nine from *Fukujusō* 富久寿礎字 (“Adonis Plant”). Katsushika Hokusai, ca. 1815.

Photo taken by me from page 82 of *Shunga: Ten Questions and Answers*.

**Figure 24:** Image eight from volume three of the picture book *Tamakatsura* 多満佳津良 (“A Beautiful Moon”). Katsushika Hokusai, 1821. https://xn--9krv8knpe.jp/article/401067491.html.

**Figure 25:** Image found here: https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/24680/lot/281/.

**Figure 26:** Image from the picture book *Enmusubi izumo no sugi* 縁結出雲杉 (“The Cedar of the Matchmaking God of Izumo”). Katsushika Hokusai, ca. 1823.

https://collections.mfa.org/objects/494732.

**Figure 27A:** Photo taken by me from page 78 of *Shunga: Erotic Art in Japan*.

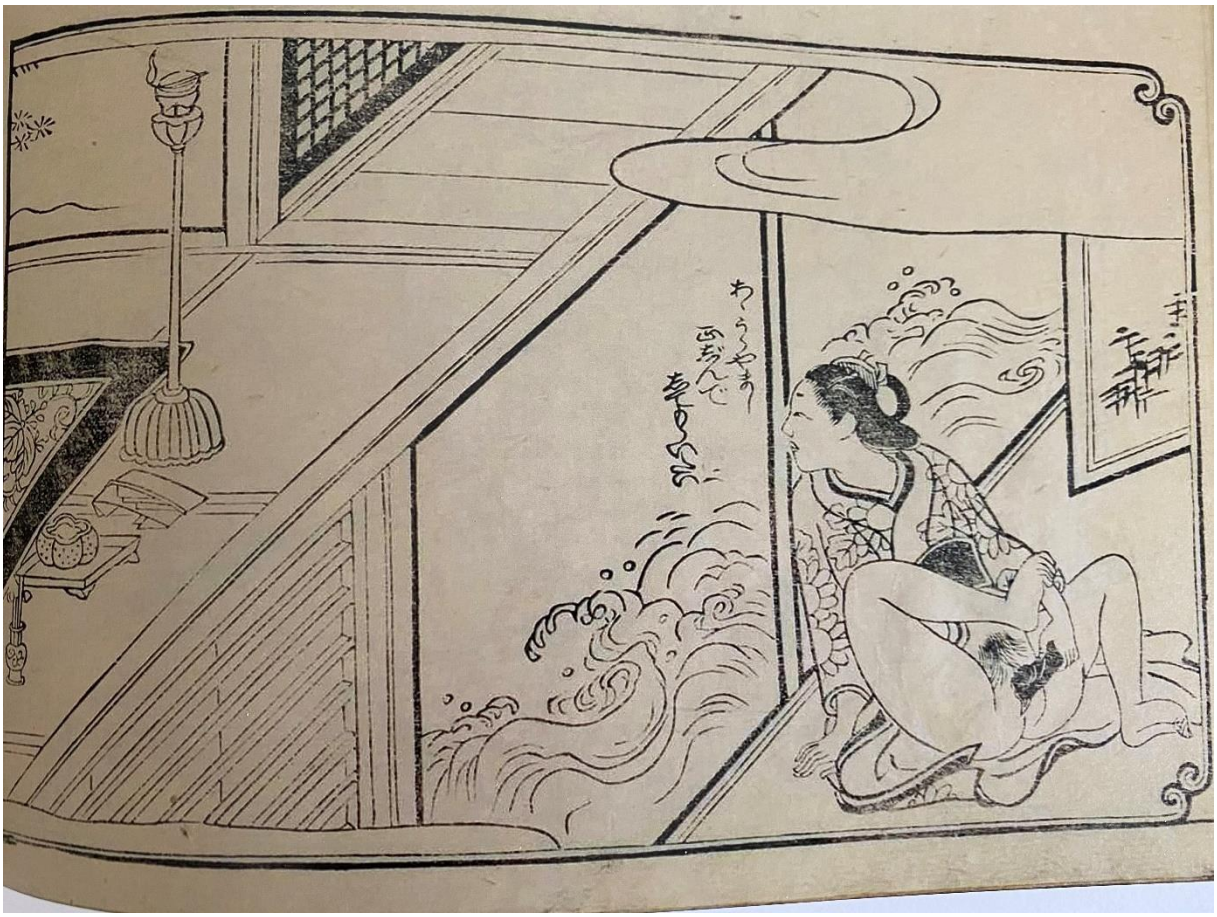


**Figure 27B:** Photo taken by me from page 79 of *Shunga: Erotic Art in Japan*.

**Figure 28:** I do not recall on which website I found this image, but I do know it is also depicted on page 95 from *Shunga: Erotic Art in Japan*.

**Figure 29A:** Screenshot taken by me from page 50 of *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei V: Tsukioka Settei 2 Bidō nichiya johōki*.

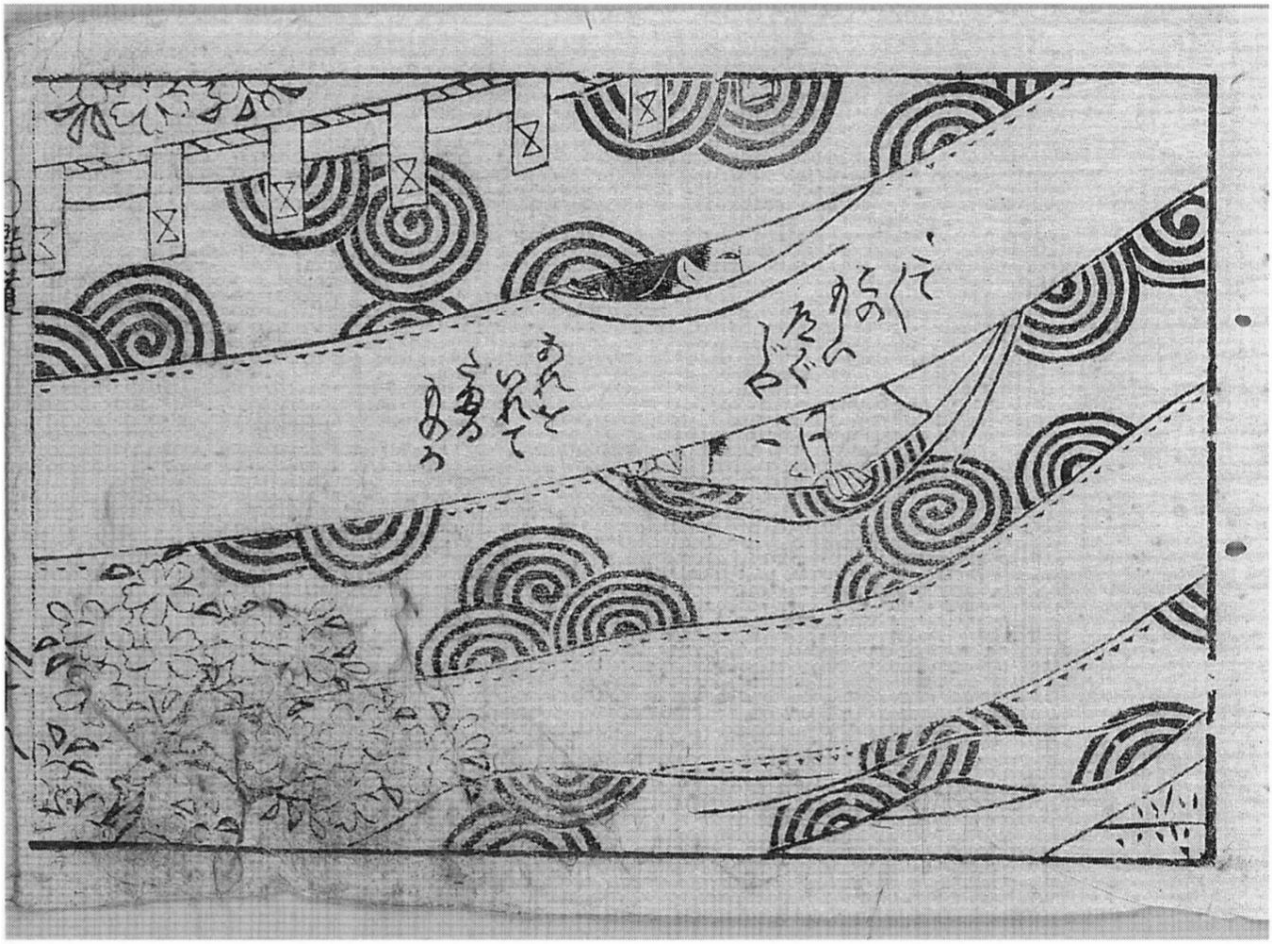


**Figure 29B:** Screenshot taken by me from page 51 of *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei V: Tsukioka Settei 2 Bidō nichiya johōki*.

**Figure 29C:** Screenshot taken by me from page 52 of *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei V: Tsukioka Settei 2 Bidō nichiya johōki*.

**Figure 30A:** Screenshot taken by me from page 53 of *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei V: Tsukioka Settei 2 Bidō nichiya johōki*.

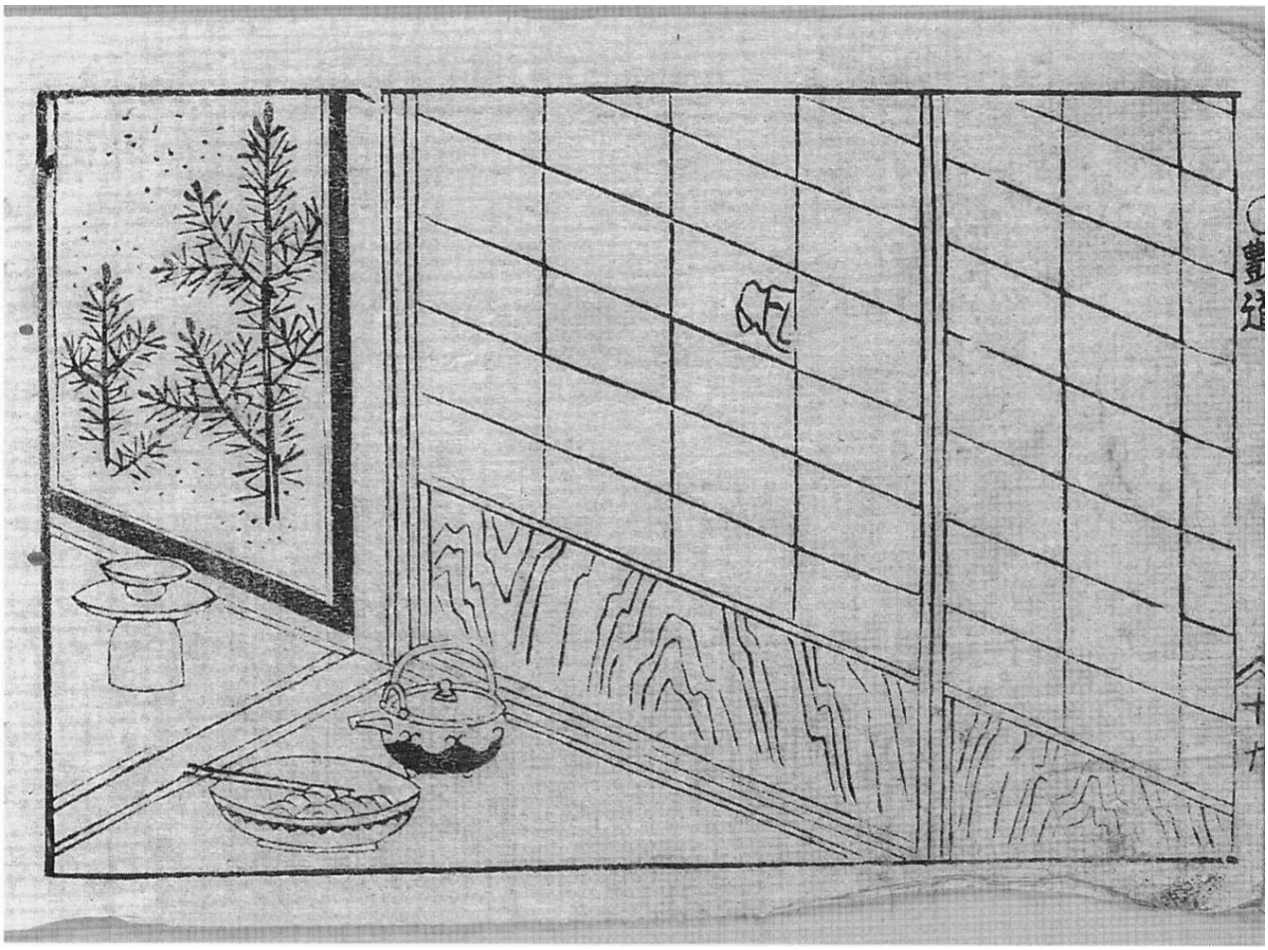
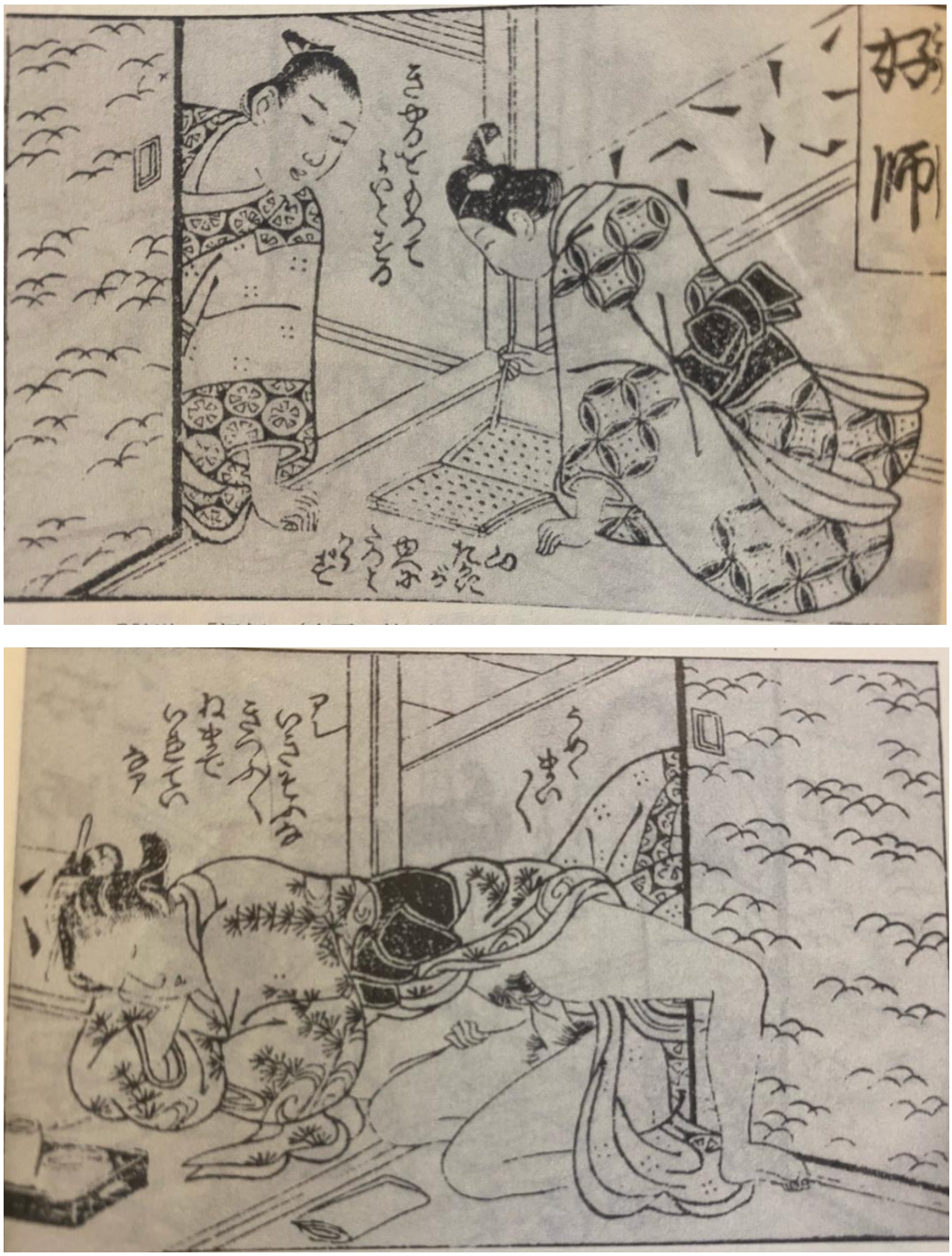


**Figure 30B:** Screenshot taken by me from page 54 of *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei V: Tsukioka Settei 2 Bidō nichiya johōki*.

**Figure 30C:** Screenshot taken by me from page 55 of *Kinsei enpon shiryō shūsei V: Tsukioka Settei 2 Bidō nichiya johōki*.



**Figures 31A+B:** *Kōshi* 好師 (“Amorous Artist”), part of *Bidō nichiya johōki*. Tsukioka Settei, ca. 1764. Screenshots taken by me from pages 203 and 204 of *Edo onna no shungabon: Tsuya to warai no fūfu shinan*.


**Figure 31C:** Screenshot taken by me from page 205 of *Edo onna no shungabon: Tsuya to warai no fūfu shinan*.

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# ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAMME, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

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***ESSAY/WRITTEN WORK EVALUATION FORM***

(to be completed by student)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Course Name:** | MA Thesis Asian Studies (120 EC) |
| **Student Name:**<br><br>**Student Number:** | Thomas Fleskes<br><br>1544349 |
| **Topic:** | Womanhood and female sexuality in Tokugawa-period *shunga* |
| **Date:** | 01 –07–2021 |

(to be completed by staff)

| **Criteria:** | *Excellent* | *Good* | *Average* | *Pass* | *Fail* | *N/A* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Use of primary/secondary sources | | | | | | |
| Critical analysis of sources | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Originality/quality of argument | | | | | | |
| Structure of argument | | | | | | |
| Accuracy of content | | | | | | |
| Synthesis of argument/sources | | | | | | |
| Use of conventions | | | | | | |
| Focus on question | | | | | | |
| Writing style | | | | | | |

| **General Comments/Suggestions for Improvements:** |
|---|
| |

| **Penalties incurred** (eg. late submission, over length etc.)**:** |
|---|
| |

| **Assessor:** | **Overall Mark:** |
|---|---|
| | |

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July 1, 2021