

From the Editor:**編集者のメッセージ**

The four essays at the heart of this *EMJ* issue all originated as part of presentations at our annual meeting, held in association with the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies.

The first two essays focus on the theme of maps and mapping. Peter Shapinsky's "Polyvocal Portolans" explores the ways in which Western and Japanese cartographic traditions developed in the truly multi-cultural atmosphere of the late sixteenth and early centuries. Marcia Yonemoto explores the ways in which modern scholars have understood the mapping traditions that emerged within Japan as the country restricted its interactions with the broader world and focused map-making on more domestic problems.

The second set of essays take an autobiographical focus. Gregory Smits explores the ways in which Okinawan scholar Sai On used his autobiography to convey specific arguments to his readers. Bettina Gramlich-Oka introduces mid-Tokugawa scholar Tadano Mukuzu's autobiographical reflections, arguing that despite common impressions, women did compose autobiographies. These two papers were part of a larger panel and we hope to be able to publish additional essays based on the companion presentations.

EMJ at the AAS 2007. This spring the Early Modern Japan Network will once again have a very innovative and exciting set of presentations at its annual meeting in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting (Boston). We will gather on Thursday afternoon, **March 22 from 2 to 5 p.m., Salon D. Please mark your calendars as this announcement will not appear in the AAS program.** The full description of the panel follows.

See you in Boston!

Philip Brown
Early Modern Japan Network

"Kibyōshi: Parody, Porn, Alterity, and Autobiography in Mid Edo-Period Comicbooks"

Historically derided as a kind of frivolous comicbook for "women and children" of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the *kibyōshi* was actually an urbane genre of pictorial comic fiction for adults, characterized by its mature wit, sophisticated visual-verbal play, radical allusivity to the entire thousand-year Japanese cultural imagination (if not also to the even longer Chinese one), and, perhaps most surprisingly, edgy sociopolitical satire. In spite of much rhetoric to the contrary, the readers of the *kibyōshi* were primarily educated townsmen. And although some notable merchants wrote in the genre, most authors were low-ranking samurai, a fact that suggests that the many politically irreverent works served as vehicles for nominal members of the ruling elite to criticize with relative impunity (albeit under pseudonyms) their superior--if not the very ideology of Tokugawa Japan itself.

Arguably the most widely read genre in its own day, the vast popularity of the *kibyōshi* is rivaled, perhaps, only by its subsequent scholarly neglect. Although interest in the genre has been growing over the past several decades even in the West, especially because of the recent "Edo boom," this panel draws together several scholars outside Japan whose works take a fresh look, albeit from different vantage points, at this genre that epitomizes one of the greatest peaks in Japanese cultural history.

As is evident from the abstracts below, each panelist explores a different dimension of the *kibyōshi*: its parodies de-centering symbolic (though viewed increasingly as reified) hierarchies, thereby serving as a crucial juncture between dominant and subordinate cultures (Hirano); its alleged relation to modern Japanese *manga* in terms of visual-verbal conventions, readership, and erotic representation (Kern); its power as a vehicle for presenting images of the foreign—especially the Western' Other and the resultant impact on the Japanese visual regime (Screech); and its potential, in the hands of one of the period's greatest *litte'rateurs*, as meaningful autobiography that can also be read against the grain of that author's more "serious" works (Walley).

In keeping with the visual-verbal mode of

the *kibyōshi*, each scholarly presentation takes the form not of a traditional talk, but of a documentary video.

ABSTRACTS

Katsuya HIRANO (Assistant Professor, Cornell University), "Power, Parody, *Kibyōshi*"

This presentation examines the political implications of parody enacted through the production and circulation of *kibyōshi* during the late eighteenth century in Tokugawa Japan. This particular moment marked an extensive, circular, and reciprocal influence between the cultures of subordinate and dominant classes. Popular culture prospered through its clever and creative appropriation of discourses and images produced in high culture (parody), and high culture found it necessary—both willingly and unwillingly so—to incorporate some literary, aesthetic, and intellectual elements from popular culture into its own form. This increasing reciprocity of influence between dominant and subordinate cultures inadvertently decentered symbolic hierarchies—the cultural configurations of power—constructed by the Tokugawa regime. I argue that it was the *kibyōshi* and its authors that played a central role in this extensive interaction of these two cultural spheres, and that this interaction had a destabilizing effect on cultural distinctions designed to maintain the social hierarchies of Tokugawa Japan.

Adam KERN (Associate Professor, Harvard University), "'Manga Culture' and the *Kibyōshi*"

A growing number of cultural critics in and out of Japan have begun to hail the *kibyōshi* as the progenitor of the modern Japanese comicbook (*manga*). Although the century separating the heyday of the former and the advent of the latter calls such characterizations into question, this presentation explores the relationship between the two genres by examining a number of apparent similarities often cited by the proponents of what can be termed "*manga* culture theory," such as the putative use in both genres of panelization, speech balloons, speed lines, and pornography. I argue

that most of these similarities turn out to be superficial—hardly evidence of some direct historical link between the *kibyōshi* and the modern *manga*. Paradoxically, however, after debunking the notion that artist Katsushika Hokusai coined the term *manga*, I raise the possibility that in some regards the *kibyōshi* may actually have been the "original" *manga*.

Timon SCREECH (Professor, SOAS, University of London), "The Lens in the Art of the *Kibyōshi*"

Kibyōshi have recently been the subject of much study, and it has become increasingly apparent how wide was the range of material celebrated in them. *Kibyōshi* can now be seen as an integral part of Floating World culture. One repeated theme is the encounter of Japan—or of Japanese people—with the foreign. Despite the relative seclusion of the Japanese state, *kibyōshi* reveal that an intense debate about overseas matters was underway. Of course, given the genre, this debate often takes the form of ridicule or satire. Often too, the foreign is given less as an authentic other voice, and is more an echo of the self.

This presentation will consider several *kibyōshi* in which specifically European matters are invoked (as opposed to other *kibyōshi* addressing Ezo, China or the Ryukyus). As will be shown, mention of European inventions, such as hot-air balloons or static-electricity generators, and European sciences, such as surgery and botany, can be found scattered across many works. I shall concentrate in my presentation on one matter: discussion of lensed devices.

Lenses could be ground in Japan from the late 18th century, but most were imported. In either case, they carried with them a foreign colouration. But the lens was also supposed to be something for lucid and objective vision. Telescopes and microscopes, as well as lensed peepboxes with hidden pictures, offered a metaphor for close, precision inspection of one's surroundings, and in the Floating World those surroundings were social.

Glynne WALLEY (Ph.D. candidate, Harvard University), "'So this guy from Edo walks into a teahouse in Kyoto' Or, *Kibyōshi* as Autobiography: Bakin's 1802 Journey to the Capital and A

Rib-Tickling Journey to the West"

In 1802 journeyman author and *kibyōshi* specialist Takizawa (Kyokutei) Bakin traveled the Tokaido- to Kyoto and Osaka on one of his rare trips outside of Edo. His experiences on the road furnished the material for two autobiographical writings: *Kiryō manroku*, a diary-style travelogue that circulated as a manuscript, and *Saritsu udan*, a cross between a travelogue and an antiquarian miscellany published in 1804. In addition, Bakin included references to his trip in some of his *kibyōshi* he published in 1803. Of these, *A Rib-Tickling Journey to the West* (Heso ga wakasu sayu monogatari) is the most extensively concerned with his journey, presenting itself as a collection of funny stories about things he heard or saw on his travels, done up in the style of *A Companion to Remember Saikaku By* (*Saikaku nagori no tomo*, 1699) while spoofing the title of the great Chinese classic *Journey to the West* (Ch. Xi You Ji, J. *Sayū-ki*, ca. 1590s).

This presentation will focus on *A Rib-Tickling Journey to the West* as an attempt on Bakin's part to fashion an explicitly autobiographical *kibyōshi*. I will compare his treatment of his travels here to those found in his prose travelogues, addressing the effects on these disparate works of audience expectations and generic conventions. I will also examine Bakin's evolving authorial persona as evident in this *kibyōshi*, and what the trip to the West meant for him and his writing. Finally, I will situate this work in the context of Bakin's other late *kibyōshi*, as part of his interest in *kibyōshi* organized around principles other than narrative.