INTRODUCTION

The *kibyōshi* of Koikawa Harumachi span the breadth of the unbridled first years of this form of writing. His 1775 work, *Kinkin sensei eiga no yume* ("Mr. Glitter 'n' Gold's Dreams of Splendor"), marks the emergence of the *kibyōshi* as a species distinct from earlier types of popular fiction, while his last creation, *Ōmugaeshi bumbu no futamichi* ("Parroting the Precepts of the Twofold Path of Learning and Martial Arts," 1789), came at a time when stiffening government controls under the Kansei Reforms brought an end to decades of increasingly lively and colorful writing. In many ways, Harumachi's career is representative of early *gesaku* writers—his death signals the close of their era.

Koikawa Harumachi is the *gesaku* pen name of the samurai artist, poet and author, Kurahashi Juhei (1744-1789). Born the second son of Kuwajima Katsuyoshi, a samurai in the household of a chief retainer of the *daimyō* of Kii (now Wakayama), Harumachi was adopted at the age of eighteen by his father's elder brother, Kurahashi Katsumasa, a retainer of one of the lesser Matsudaira families, the *daimyō* of Kojima in Suruga (now Shizuoka). He went into service at nineteen and rose through many positions, holding at his death the post of senior counselor to his lord. He had studied *ukiyo-e* painting under Toriyama Sekien, who was also the teacher of Kitagawa Utamaro, and it is believed that he began to use his training as an artist to supplement his meager stipend about the year 1770.[1]

[1] Biographical details were drawn from James Araki, "The Dream Pillow in Edo Fiction, 1772-81" in *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 25 (1970), pp. 17-77; Hamada Giichirō, "Kibyōshi" in *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Shogakkan, 1971), pp 19-37; Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, ed. *Nihon bungaku shi: Kinsei* (Shibundō, 1973), pp. 792-793; Mizuno Minoru, "*Kusazōshi to sono dokusha*" in *Kōza nihon bungaku: Kinsei II* (Sanseidō, 1969), pp. 95-103; Mizutani Yumihiko, *Kusazōshi to yomihon no kenkyū* (Okugawa shobō, 1935), pp. 95-103; and Leon Zolbrod, "*Kusazōshi*: Chapbooks of Japan" in *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* series III, vol. 10 (1968), pp. 1-31.

As a number of scholars point out,[2] his pseudonym is derived from the location of his lord's Edo mansion, Koishikawa Kasuga-chō. A syllable dropped from Koishikawa yields *Koikawa* (literally, "love river") and removing a graph from Kasuga-chō results in a compound that can be read *Harumachi* (literally, "spring town" but connoting "erotic town"). There is also the resonance of the name of Katsukawa Shunshō (1726-1792), the *ukiyo-e* artist whose prints, particularly of actors, were winning popularity for their realistic characterization and intense coloring—qualities which Harumachi no doubt sought to achieve in his own art.[3]

In addition to creation of *kibyōshi*, Harumachi also wrote poetry in the *kyōka* ("mad verse") genre under the name, Saka-no-ue Furachi ("Drunken Rascal"), and created work in the vein of the *sharebon*. All in all, he was an active and important member of the Edo samurai literati who flourished during the 1770's and 80's. Many of these were writers of *gesaku* ("playful writings")

[2] Araki, op. cit., p. 37; Hamada, op. cit., p. 22; Zolbrod, op. cit., p 122.

[3] Hamada, op. cit., p. 22.

in the sense of the term as it was originated by Hiraga Gennai in 1770. In Gennai's estimation, writing for entertainment was playful, or frivolous, in that it was not truly in accord with the solemnity proper to samurai pursuits. The term designated the posture of a dilettante, a dabbler in matters not truly within one's own domain. *Gesaku*, however, dealt with an area very much the province of the Edo samurai; it was they who made up the majority of those who frequented the brothels and teahouses of the licensed quarters, especially in the early years of Edo, and it was here that many of the early *gesaku* works were set.[4]

The premier example of *gesaku* set in the licensed quarter are *sharebon*, satires of the fashion-conscious habitués of the licensed quarters. The first appeared as early as 1728 in the form of a description of Edo's Yoshiwara district written in classical Chinese prose.[5] The form grew increasingly colloquial and fictional. So much so, in fact, that during the peak of the *sharebon* in the

[4] Donald Keene, *World Within Walls* (London; Secker & Warburg, 1976), pp. 396-402; *Nihon koten bungakushi no kisō chishiki* (Yuhikaku, 1975), pp. 393-396.
[5] *Nihon koten bungaku shi no kisō chishiki*, op. cit., pp. 397.

1770's and 80's it served as a guide to the ever-changing fads and fashions of the licensed quarters, largely by ridiculing the extremes of fashion. In its use of irony and ridicule it is closely connected with—and a great influence on—the other major example of *gesaku*, the *kibyōshi*.

The heritage of the *kibyōshi* is the Edo picture book, the *kusazōshi*. The *kusazōshi* was born in the latter part of the seventeenth century as *akahon* ("red books"), named for the crimson shade of their covers. The prototypes for these appeared as early as the 1660's, but as a fully recognized form they date from about the year 1720. Their drawings are crude and their text simple—indeed, hardly more than is necessary to explain the illustration. Author and artist were one and the same. The foremost examples are the work of the artists Nishimura Shigenaga (1696-1756), Okamura Masanobu (1685-1764), Kondō Kiyoharu (Fl. ca. 1720), and the Torii school members, Kiyonobu (1664-1729) and Kiyomasu II (fl. ca. 1720-1760).

Akahon were either drawn from traditional tales and legends or contained listings of people or things—the *zukushi* form. While most

scholars consider them appropriate reading for women or children, the case is also made that they were well-suited to a popular audience as yet semi-literate.[6] During their later years they showed signs of elaboration in both text and illustration, demonstrating their vitality, and perhaps also, audience demand for more sophisticated material.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, *akahon* gave way to *kurohon* ("black books") and *aohon* ("green books"). The *kurohon* appear to have been first; the earliest is dated 1744. Both *kurohon* and *aohon* followed the trend of the later *akahon* toward elaboration, and as many of the *akahon* had, used the theater as the source for their material. *Kurohon* are characterized as the primary medium for illustrations of dramatic theatrical scenes, and the *aohon* as more concerned with dialogue, but the distinction is a fine one.[7] What is certain is their reliance on the theater, its spectacular themes of war and romance, and its world of actors. *Aohon* are credited with a greater

[6] Kōike Tōgorō, "Akahon kurohon aohon ni tsuite" in *Daitōkyū Kinen Bunko bunka kōza shiirizu*, no. 7 (Daitōkyū Kinen Bunko, 1961), pp. 12-15

[7] Mizuno, op. cit., p. 93.

degree of sophistication which, along with the practice of putting black covers on reprints, may have led to the eventual disappearance of the *kurohon*. By this time the *aohon* were green in name only. The lime-colored dyes originally used were fragile and faded quickly to yellow. Publishers soon changed to a yellow dye but the name remained, so that the *aohon* which dominated the popular market in the 1770's were, in fact, yellow.

As in *akahon*, in both *kurohon* and *aohon* primary importance still fell on the illustrations, although the name of the author does appear in some cases. The author's role is greater in *kurohon* and *aohon* than in *akahon*, however, for there was much more text, crowding the blank areas around the characters. Particularly striking is the increase in narration. Many of the same artists who had produced *akahon* also worked in the newer forms, but it was the Torii school artists, particularly Kiyomitsu (1735-85), Kiyoshige (fl. ca. 1760), and Kiyotsune (fl. ca. 1750-60), and their formalized style which was ascendant. Of the many *kurohon* and *aohon* extant, more than two hundred can be ascribed to two men, Torii Kiyotsune and Tomikawa Fusanobu (fl. ca. 1760-1775).

The work of Kiyotsune and Fusanobu is the immediate precursor of Harumachi's *kibyōshi*, but there are three elements which distinguish Harumachi's work.[8] The first is irony and wit, qualities shared with the *sharebon*. Before venturing into creation of *kibyōshi*, Harumachi had tried his hand at *sharebon* and had illustrated a highly successful one, *Tōsei fūzoku tsū* ("Fashions of Today's Worldy Young Men," 1773), written by a fellow samurai *gesaku* writer, Hōseidō Kisanji (1735-1813). Essentially a satiric guide to the devotees of fashion found in the city's pleasure spots, *Tōsei fūzoku tsū* presented various models of stylish men at their leisure, with the type of playful dialogue and narration typical of *sharebon*. In his first *kibyōshi, Kinkin sensei eiga no yume*, Harumachi succeeded in transferring the ambiance of the *sharebon* to a *kusazōshi* by his attention to every detail of dress and manners, and his play with current turns of phrase and popular songs.

The second distinguishing element of Harumachi's work is the addition of a preface in Chinese prose style, also a characteristic of

[8] Hamada, op. cit., p. 22.

sharebon. Such admixture of classical and popular culture was typical of literary creativity in the mid-eighteenth century.[9] It is perhaps no more clearly exemplified than in the *kyōka* poetry which grew in popularity during the 1770's and swept Edo society during the following decade. The *kyōka* mingling of classical forms with highly contemporary subjects was at its best in the hands of educated intellectual samurai such as Harumachi. The direction of *kyōka* toward parody, not only of classical poetry but the government as well, became brazen in Harumachi's last *kibyōshi*, a tendency that brought significant change to both forms under a less tolerant administration.

The third characteristic element of Harumachi's *kibyōshi* is his art. The earlier *kurohon* and *aohon* were dominated by the actor-print style of the Torii school, particularly that of Kiyotsune, and the similar quality of Tomikawa Fusanobu. Their long-standard portrayal was seriously challenged, and ultimately succeeded by the innovations of Suzuki Harunobu (1725-70), and then later, Katsukawa Shunshō and Ippitsusai

[9] *Nihon koten bungaku shi no kisō chishiki*, op. cit., pp. 369-370.

Bunchō (fl. ca. 1760-80). Harunobu's polychrome *nishiki-e* was revolutionary in its effect, as were the softened, realistic characterizations of Shunshō and Bunchō. Harumachi's illustrations clearly show the influence of this new style—his characters have a delicacy drawn with lightness and motion that contrasts sharply with the static, heavy work of the Torii school.

The success of *Kinkin sensei eiga no yume* in 1775 paved the way for similar works. The style of Torii Kiyotsune and Tomikawa Fusanobu was eclipsed by that of Harumachi and Kisanji whose art and wit set the standard for the early years of the *kibyōshi*. There was no question that the *kibyōshi* had become adult fare. The year 1781 saw the introduction of a new type of *kibyōshi*, the *kibyōshi hyōbanki* ("critical reviews"), much akin to the earlier *yakusha hyōbanki* ("actors' reviews"), and the following years brought new names to the fore. Heading the list is that of Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), whose presence marks the entrance of writers from the merchant townsman strata of society. After 1781, Harumachi's work lost its liveliness as he grew increasingly involved with official duties. Following two years of inactivity from 1785 to 1786, he produced only four titles in

his last three years of life. His final work is *Ōmugaeshi bumbu no futamichi*, a caustic satire on the Confucian reform administration of Matsudaira Sadanobu who was appointed senior counselor to the eleventh Tokugawa shogun, Ienari, in 1787.

The regulations and proscriptions of the new senior counselor were greeted with derision by the literary community. Their contempt was expressed in a spate of satirical work during 1788 and 1789. The government's reaction was swift: Hōseidō Kisanji, who was in reality Hirasawa Heikaku, a retainer of the influential Satake *daimyō* of Kubota in Dewa (now Akita), was ordered to cease writing; Ishibe Zenkō, a commoner, was banished from Edo and his illustrator, Kitao Masanobu (the *ukiyo-e* pseudonym of Santō Kyōden), was fined; but the heaviest hand fell on Koikawa Harumachi. Summoned before Sadanobu in April 1789, he pleaded illness and did not appear. He died three months later.

The circumstances surrounding Harumachi's death have led many, at the time and later, to conclude that he committed suicide. Donald Keene even states this as unequivocal

fact.[10] Another scholar's suggestion is that he earned death not so much for his satire of Sadanobu, but for his satire of the dissipate behavior of the youthful shogun Ienari in the form of a purely erotic *kibyōshi*, *Isei sensei yume makura* ("Mr. Wet Dozer's Dream Pillow").[11] Whatever the truth, the world of writers, artists, and publishers took the message that no further disparagement of the government would be tolerated. The strictures extended to the colorful writing typical of both *kibyōshi* and *sharebon*, with the result that after 1791, writers turned to other, less risky adventures.

Ironically, Harumachi reached the pinnacle of his popularity with *Ōmugaeshi bumbu no futamichi*. Takizawa Bakin records that unbound copies still wet with ink were quickly snatched up at bookshops and hawkers sold copies in the streets.[12] The title plays upon two other works: one, an equally popular satire by Hōseidō Kisanji published the year before, *Bumbu nidō mangoku-dōshi* ("The Twofold Path of Learning and Martial Arts: Separating the Wheat from the Chaff"); and the other, *Ōmu no kotoba* ("Words of a Parrot"), a treatise by none other than the senior counselor himself, Matsudaira Sadanobu.

[10] Keene, op. cit., p. 521.

[11] Araki, op. cit., p. 71. Pages 70-77 of this article introduce and translate the work.

[12] Zolbrod, op. cit., p. 136.

The objects of Harumachi's parody are equally identifiable. Set in the Engi era (901-923) during the reign of the Emperor Saga, the son of Sugawara no Michizane is appointed senior counselor to reform the government after his father's enemy, Fujiwara no Tokihira, and his henchmen have been removed. A collection of legendary heroes, Minamoto Yoshitsune, Oguri Hangan, and Minamoto Tametomo, are summoned out of history (both past and eras to come) to promote the martial arts while the scholar Ōe no Masafusa is called upon to teach the classics using the counselor's own writings as a text. The emperor is unquestionably Shogun Tokugawa Ienari, if not from the text then from the artwork, and the counselor, of course, is Sadanobu. The deposed minister Tokihira is a stand-in for Sadanobu's predecessor as senior counselor, Tanuma Okitsugu (1719-88), while the Confucian scholar called in from the countryside is Shibano Ritsuzan (1737-1807). Completing the

cast of characters is the text, *Kyūkanchō no kotoba* ("Words of a Mynah"), representing Sadanobu's *Ōmu no kotoba*.

The style of the text is as simple as its parody. Were it not that *kibyōshi* were uncomplicated, one might suspect that this was deliberately done to make the barbs as clear as possible. The writing is enlivened by historical allusions, plays upon names and expressions, and bawdy twists on popular songs. Unfortunately most of this is lost in translation. Judging by the reaction it received in 1789, it must have been appreciated by a wide audience and is impressive, if for no other reason, as the culmination of a stream of popular political satire, as well as for the reaction it brought.

This translation was prepared from the Shogakukan series, *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo, 1971), volume 46, *Kibyōshi, Senryū, Kyōka,* with annotation by Hamada Giichirō.