Visualizing the classics : reading surimono and kyōka books as social and cultural history

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Chapter 2: *Surimono*: definition and categorization

2.1 Introduction to chapters two and three

Chapters two and three introduce the main research materials used in this thesis: *surimono* and *kyōka* books. These complex materials merit a dedicated description before setting off into the study of *kyōka* poetry networks and connections to classical literature. The respective treatment of *surimono* and *kyōka* books in these next two chapters differs slightly. *Surimono* have been the object of multiple studies, mainly exhibition catalogues, in which the scope of these artifacts have been outlined and suggestions have been made for categorization. I will present a summary of the combined knowledge regarding these prints - their development, position within Edo period printing, and material qualities - distilled from previous scholarship and complemented by the results of my own investigations. Furthermore, I discuss the suggested categorizations and to what extent these are applicable to my research objectives.

Kyōka books have not received the same kind of attention that *surimono* have. Very generally speaking, in Japanese scholarship, *kyōka* books serve as research material for the study of the literary genre of *kyōka*. Outside Japan, *kyōka* books have been given attention in art historic context, usually the more luxurious editions serving as examples of superior design and printing technique. I borrow from both traditions, outlining first of all the practices of composing *kyōka* and publishing these in book form. After an overview of the elements to be found in *kyōka* books, and an explanation of how these should be understood, I propose a categorization based on my own investigations, and catered to my research objectives. The respective categories are explained by introducing representative examples of *kyōka* books. These categories are not congruent with those in *surimono*, as the objectives for publication were different. The foremost matter that sets *kyōka* books apart from *surimono* is the fact that a considerable portion of the oeuvre of books was commercially marketed. Therefore, patterns of conception, publication initiative, production and distribution of *kyōka* books are different than those of *kyōka surimono*.

At the end of chapter four, a combined conclusion to both chapter three and four will be presented, concerning the respective suitability and significance of *surimono* and *kyōka* books as primary materials for the research questions addressed in this thesis.

2.1.1 *Surimono*: history and development

Without the well-developed technique of woodblock printing - gained through demand for books and prints from the commercial market - the possibilities for commissioning *kyōka* books and *surimono* would not have existed. *Surimono* were perhaps partly produced at the same publishers as commercial prints, but there are indications that dedicated '*surimono* studios' existed. The flexibility of the process of printing from woodblocks allowed for bespoke productions of great refinement, provided the costs of expensive materials and specialized skilled labor were borne by those who commissioned *surimono*.

2.1.2 History of print in Japan

The history of printing in Japan goes back to the eighth century, when the technique of

woodblock printing arrived from the Asian mainland.[66] From this time onwards, religious texts were produced and reproduced at temples. As literacy spread from the clergy to samurai and townspeople and eventually throughout society in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the demand for affordable books steadily increased.[67] Commercial publishing emerged as an important and profitable trade, and production techniques advanced as a logical result.

The technique of woodblock printing was gradually and greatly refined during in the Edo period. Despite efforts to adopt movable-type printing in the early seventeenth century, Japanese commercial printing is characterized by a 'return' to the technique of cutting one woodblock for every sheet.[68] The various plausible reasons for this have been discussed by Smith and Kornicki.[69] Of greater importance here, are the results of this 'return' to block printing. First, the use of woodblocks instead of movable type characters offered the possibility to transmit the shapes of actual brush handwriting, adding to its acceptance as an alternative to manuscripts. Second, not being bound by a layout grid means being able to closely combine text and illustration - a feature extensively put to use in popular fiction, and also in *surimono* and *kyōkabon*. Furthermore, the technical development incurred by centuries of woodblock printing resulted in the advancement of color printing, which was done by using a separate block for (nearly) each color that was used. At first, only some three or four colors were used. This meant four or five blocks had to be cut respectively, being the number of colors plus the black index block.[70] Books featuring multi-color illustrations emerge from roughly the 1760s and by the 1770s, editions of quite stunning quality were already being published.[71]

Publication numbers increase almost continuously, and the latter half of the Edo period witnesses a rich market.[72] Books on all kinds of subjects could be acquired at the numerous bookshops in the three largest cities of Edo, Osaka and Kyoto, and in the provinces through itinerant booksellers.[73] Commercial printing ranged from religious literature to explicit erotic books, with - among many other things - a

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[66] Kornicki (2001) plots out the development of printed books in Japan in chapter four, pp. 112-168. The history of the Japanese book until the nineteenth century was extensively researched by Peter Kornicki. For the general remarks in the introduction to this section (3.1), I rely heavily on chapter four of Kornicki's standard work.
[67] Rubinger (2007), pp. 80-85.
[68] Febvre and Martin (1997), pp. 45-50, explain the situation in Europe, where woodblock printing emerged at the end of the fourteenth century, well before the "quite different technique" of printing from a metal movable type was adopted. Woodblocks were used for printing images, but were less useful for printing Western texts: "It is not surprising that the need for this kind of simple visual resource was felt long before the need for printed literary, theological and scientific texts, interest in which was restricted to a small group of clerics and scholars. Even if the reproduction of such texts had been as easy as that of block prints - and this was not the case - it would still have been natural and logical for the block print to precede the printed book. But in fact the technique of the wood-cut did not in any sense inspire printing, which was the result of a quite different technique." (p.46).
[69] Kornicki (2001); Smith (1994).
[70] Occasionally, when colored patches were far apart, one block could be used to print multiple colors. This saves costs, yet hinders the flexibility of the printing process.
[71] See for instance *Seirō bijin awase sugata kagami* 青楼美人合姿鏡 ('Mirror of the forms of fair women of the green houses') of 1776, illustrated by Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章 and Kitao Shigemasa 北尾重政, published by Tsutaya Jūzaburō and Yamazaki Kinbē 山崎金兵衛. As presented in Keyes (2006), pp. 94-99. (Translation of title by Keyes.)
[72] Kornicki (2001), p. 140.
[73] Rubinger (2007), p. 84.

variety of poetry books in between. Publishers' guilds were established, and trading agreements were made in order to make it more difficult for pirate editions to be printed and sold in other towns. These are all proof of the highly organized, flourishing book economy in the second half of the Edo period.

Kornicki notes that the practice of copying texts by hand remained common in Japan, despite the increasing volume of printed works. Manuscripts circulated among members of the cultural elite, and were often valued over printed works. Old writings by master calligraphers or influential scholars of earlier times were not always made available through printing, and copying a manuscript - or copying a copy of that - was the way to gain possession of these texts.[74]

Private publishing through a commercial system

Nonetheless, because of the relative ease with which text or illustrations could be transferred to a woodblock, and subsequently cut and printed, a more or less separate printing economy existed outside the commercial market. This not only applies to publications that could not be condoned by the censor, but also to publications that were simply not intended for commercial distribution, such as poetry anthologies issued by and for members of small-scale poetry groups. It is only the latter category I am concerned with here.

According to Nakano, books were privately published throughout the Edo period. The common term in Japanese is *shikaban* 私家版 'individual publications'. Nakano suggests that for most private publication projects, a system of subscription, called *nyūgin* 入銀, was used.[75] This meant that the responsibility for the production costs rested with the author or editor, instead of the publisher. After commercial publishing became the norm well into the Edo period, books published outside the influence of bookshops also started to show a certain degree of organization. The title pages or colophons[76] of these private publications often include the word *zōhan* 蔵版 ('keeper of the blocks'), either printed from the index block or stamped in red ink after printing.[77] Private publications range widely and include religious books, educational works, and privately selected poetry anthologies. Since this research concerns the social and cultural background of amateur poetry groups, it should not come as a surprise that many of the *kyōka* books treated are private publications.

Although the paragraph above focuses on book publishing, the division between commercially and privately published works is also applicable to woodblock prints. Popular prints depicting for instance actors, *yakushae* 役者絵, beauties, *bijinga* 美人画, or landscapes, *fūkeiga* 風景画, were mostly commercially published. In much the same way that commercially published books are recognized as such by the information regarding the publisher, *hanmoto* 版元, in their colophons, most commercially published prints

[74] Kornicki (2006).
[75] Nakano (1995), pp. 199-201.
[76] Colophons including the publisher's true name were made obligatory in 1722. See Forrer (1985), p. 73.
[77] According to Nakano (1995), pp. 196-199, the explicit mention of the fact that a book was printed as zōhan first surfaces in the Kyōho 享保 period (1716 - 1735).

can be recognized by the presence of a publisher's seal, obligatory from 1720. From 1791 or 1792 onwards, a censor seal, known as '*kiwame'in*' 極印, was incorporated in prints that passed government censorship.[78] Publisher's seals and censor seals can be very useful to determine the date and place of publication of such prints. Censor seals are never present on *surimono*; since they circulated outside the commercial market, the designs were not submitted for censorship.[79]

Many of *surimono* designers worked entirely outside the commercial circuit of *ukiyoe*. Only a handful of commercial prints designed by Shunman is known to exist.[80] Gakutei designed almost exclusively *surimono* and *kyōka* book illustrations; I know of only two commercially published prints of his hand.[81] One was published by Izumiya Ichibē 泉屋市兵衛 (n.d.) at the end of the 1810s, present in the collection of the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels, Belgium.[82] The other dates to 1838; a copy of this print is present in the collection of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, The Netherlands.[83] Other examples of artists who designed fewer commercial works than *surimono* and (non-commercial) *kyōka* book illustrations include Ryūryūkyo Shinsai, Totoya Hokkei, Hōtei Gosei 抱亭五清 (before Gosei known as Hokuga 北鵞, c.1769-1835)[84], and Teisai Hokuba 蹄斎北馬 (1771-1844). Examples of artists who worked mainly on commercial prints, but also regularly received commissions for *surimono* include Utagawa Kunisada 歌川国貞 (1786-1865, known for his commercial actor prints and actor *surimono*), Keisai Eisen 渓斎英泉 (1791-1848, known for his commercial prints of over-the-top Yoshiwara beauties, who also appear in his *surimono*). It is quite likely that *surimono* designed by artists active in the commercial trade were also produced at the same facilities as where commercial prints were made,

[78] These seals were in use between c. 1791 and 1842. After that, seals changed, yet information with regard to inspection, publisher and date stayed (see for instance Kornicki (2001), chapter eight, and Davis (2007), p. 282-285.

[79] One series of prints by Totoya Hokkei deserves attention here: Kokin kyôka sen 古今狂歌撰, A Selection of *Kyōka*, Old and New. This was a series of commercially published prints, featuring poems by famous *kyōka* masters active in the previous 40 odd years. Hizo Ukiyoe Taikan 11 (1987) features three of these prints (nos. 106-108) from the collection of the Museo d'Arte Orientale Edoardo Chiossone, in Genoa, Italy, and mentions two others in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum. This series was published sometime during the Bunsei era by Nakamuraya Katsugorō, who may also have selected the poetry. This is one of the few examples of commercially published *kyōka* prints reminiscent of *surimono*, and the only example of a series. It should be noted that a series of landscapes including *kyōka* poems, designed by Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川広重 in the late 1830s, does exist. This series takes the 53 stations of the Tōkaidō 東海道, one of Hiroshige's specialties, as a theme. The series, issued around the end of the Tenpō era (1830-1844), was known as 佐野喜版東海道五十三次 ('The 53 stations of the Tōkaidō, in the Sano-Ki edition'), after its publisher Sanoya Kihē 佐野屋喜兵衛 (n.d.), but it is now commonly referred to as *Kyōkairi tōkaidō* 狂歌入り東海道 ('*Tōkaidō with* kyōka *inscribed on them*'). See Shiraishi (Ed.) (1988), p. 137.

[80] Carpenter (2004), p. 78, counts "a mere thirty or forty prints".

[81] Gakutei, it must be noted, did illustrate a number of commercially published non-*kyōka* books, but he designed far more illustrations for (private) *kyōka* publications.

[82] Inventory no. 1486 (coll. Michotte, published in Kozyreff (Ed. 1989), no. 748). The print – surmised to be part of a triptych – depicts Yang Guifei, imperial consort to emperor Xuanzong, who reigned over the Tang dynasty from 712-756, reading a volume of the military chronicles of Xuanzong.

[83] Inventory no. RV-3980-4.This is a landscape depicting the high-arching stone bridge at Tenpōzan 天保山, Osaka, crossing the river Aji 安治川. Publisher unknown.

[84] Tanaka (1986) researched Gosei's life and offers an overview of his life and work (p. 56).

although there is no data available to substantiate this.

Printing techniques offering possibilities for flexible production of *surimono*

The technique of woodblock printing was in fact very suitable for small-scale productions such as *surimono* commissions. No large production line was needed to take a design and make it into a finished print. Surely, creating prints with many colors required an investment in a comparatively large number of printing blocks and pigments, yet this did not require a large number of craftsmen - or women. Therefore, the technique as such was quite similar to that used for deluxe commercial prints, but production would not necessarily have to be carried out at a commercial publishing house. Some space to work, a skilled engraver and a skilled printer were basically all that was needed to take the design and calligraphy and rework that into a *surimono*.

Some *surimono* feature seals that indicate the involvement of private persons in the production of those prints. *Surimono* designed and/or produced by Kubo Shunman 窪俊満 (1757-1820) often feature the seal *shō sei* 尚製, combining the first character of his pen name Shōsadō 尚左堂 ("Studio of Honouring the Left"[85]) and the character *'sei'* 製, meaning 'manufactured'.[86] Another example of a poet and *surimono* producer, though not a designer himself, is Shūchōdō Monoyana 秋長堂物梁 (act. c. 1762-c.1838). His studio name, or *dōgō* 堂号, literally means 'Studio of the long autumn', and is said to refer to the large amount of work he had to do preparing all the *surimono* commissions for the upcoming New Year.[87] We have no exact data on *surimono* production studios, but it has been suggested that there was relatively much overlap between the various crafts within the production process, such as in the case of Tani Seikō 谷清好 (act. 1819-31), a block-cutter and printer working on many *surimono* from Osaka, which is found on *surimono* designed by various artists active in Osaka.[88]

2.1.3 *Surimono*'s place within the world of Japanese prints

Surimono in relation to _ukiyoe_

There are undeniable links between *surimono* and Japanese woodblock prints in general. There are also significant differences. I suggest comparisons on the basis of technique, style, themes treated and modes of dissemination. The outcome of this is that although *surimono* have always been treated as a subgenre of Japanese prints in general, several features set them apart from the bulk of prints produced over the years.

The matter of technique is quite easily dismissed: *surimono* are produced using the same techniques

[85] Translation of Shunman's pen name by Carpenter in (2004), p. 88. The name is said to allude to Shunman's left-handedness.
[86] According to Tanaka (1993 [3]), p. 4, Shunman is supposed to have divided different production tasks among skilled craftsmen he knew, resulting in high-quality *surimono* production.
[87] For an example of a *surimono* produced by Shūchōdō's studio, see for instance Forrer (2013), no. 25.
[88] See Keyes (2004), pp. 125-127, or Carpenter (2005), pp. 170-174. Examples of this seal can be found in Mirviss and Carpenter (1995), on no. 211, and McKee (2006), on nos. 49 and 61.

of woodblock printing used in Japanese prints in general. Surely, *surimono* are often printed on very fine paper, featuring the high-end techniques of blind-printing (*gauffrage*) and use of metallic pigments. Deluxe materials and techniques were, however, also used in other print genres. The more luxurious actor prints of the 1790s often feature a so-called 'mica' background - in fact ground mother-of-pearl, *kira* 雲母 - that gives much luster to the print. Erotic prints, *shunga* 春画 or *makurae* 枕絵, often feature metallic pigments such as brass or tin (commonly called *kingin* 金銀 - 'gold and silver' - in Japanese). Blind-printing, *karazuri* 空摺 (lit. 'empty printing'), is applied in various genres, even if the designs were printed on rather thin paper. The techniques as such used for *surimono* are no different from those in Japanese woodblock prints in general, yet *surimono* stand out for incorporating several of the more luxurious techniques simultaneously in one print.[89]

In terms of style, it is obvious that most of the *surimono* artists working in Edo had some kind of background in, or relation to one of the lineages distinguishable within the greater *ukiyoe* tradition.[90] The term *ukiyoe* has become nearly synonymous with Japanese prints, yet it specifies a style of drawing and painting, rather than a medium. The word *ukiyoe* is literally translated as 'images of the floating world', traditionally spelled *ukiyo-e* to point out to non-Japanese readers which part of the word signifies 'image'. The other part of the word, *ukiyo* - perhaps hardly requiring further explanation these days - derives from a Buddhist term that designated a transient world. One example of how this word was used in Edo vocabulary can be found in the novel *Ukiyo Monogatari* 浮世物語. This novel was written sometime after 1661 by Asai Ryōi 浅井了意 (d. 1691) and takes the '*ukiyo*' *demi-monde* as subject.[91] There, *ukiyo* is described as "the delightful uncertainties of life in a joyous age when people lived for the moment, merrily bobbing up and down on the tides of uncertainty like a gourd on the waves".[92] The illustrations depicting this world of leisurely townspeople in a bold, naturalistic style came to be known as *ukiyoe*. The heavy outlines of this style of drawing were well-suited to the medium of woodblock print, and *ukiyoe* became the predominant style in popular prints and books. With the exception of a small number of *surimono* in which European styles of drawing and painting were forcefully incorporated, most designs lean heavily on the style defined in commercial *ukiyoe* prints.

The origins of *surimono*

The origin of *surimono*, it is often said, is to be found in a fashion for having calendars printed for private distribution. Until 1872, Japan used the lunar calendar, *taiinreki* 太陰暦, which divided a year into twelve long and short months, *daishō* 大小, of 30 and 29 days respectively. By this method of calculation,

[89] It is quite common to find both *kingin* and *karazuri* in one *surimono*, however, *kira* is actually not frequently applied.
[90] Artists working in the Shijō style (*shijōha* 四条派), mainly operating in the Kamigata region, also designed *surimono*, although these constitute a minority.
[91] See also Miner et al.. (1985) p. 143.
[92] As translated by Keene (1976), p. 156.

one year was around eleven days shorter than necessary. Therefore, the calendar was corrected with occasional intercalary months, *urūzuki* 閏月, in order to stay synchronized with the seasons. This calendar required constant recalculations. For citizens, it meant a yearly need for remembering the division of months, the alternative being carrying around a 'calendar book', *koyomi no fumi* 暦本 or 暦書, which listed the division of months and provided information on yearly events, both those in nature and those decided by man.[93] According to Hasebe, at some point, people started devising ways of remembering the long and short months through certain expressions, poems, drawings, et cetera, and put these on paper. This is the origin of *daishō no surimono* 大小の摺物; prints that contained the division of long and short months, playfully hidden in a poem and/or illustration. Selling calendars or calendar books was a prerogative of the state, which is why a fashion of privately producing *daishō no surimono* and giving them out to friends and acquaintances developed, perhaps as early as the Jōkyō 貞享 period (1684-1688). These prints are now largely known as *egoyomi*, but this appears to be a word invented in the middle of the Meiji period (1968-1912), dixit Hasebe.[94]

Soon, *daishō no surimono* started featuring poetry, complementing the 'calendar-aspect'. *Haikai* poems were first to appear, and later, according to Hasebe, *kyōka* poems appeared from around Tenmei 4, 1784.[95] Hasebe provides one example, and in fact an album of *daishō surimono*, including many pieces from Tenmei 4 and 5 collected by Matsura Seizan 松浦静山 (1760-1841), former daimyo of Hirado domain living in Edo the second half of his life, shows that several of them contain *kyōka*.[96] Over the years, the illustrations on *daishō no surimono* - now frequently signed by the designer - became more extensive in an attempt to surpass the attractiveness of last year's print. Gradually, the calendar aspect became subordinate to the illustration and the *kyōka* poetry, and it is probably from this stage, during the second half of the 1790s, that we could speak of *kyōka surimono* 狂歌摺物.[97] Now, poets often had their (pen-)names printed next to the poems, and, gradually, the publication of New Year's prints clearly starts to show a larger degree of organization. Production of *kyōka surimono* was limited to single sheets of various formats and sizes until now, but along with the rising number of club members and the resulting level of organization came a development of *kyōka surimono* series in fixed formats, from 1799. A single sheet *surimono* carrying between one and five poems used to be sufficient for small poetry circles, but the increased popularity of exchanging *kyōka surimono* with members from other large *kyōka* clubs caused a demand for either larger prints, or larger sets.

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[93] Hasebe (1988), p. 18.
[94] Hasebe (1988), preface.
[95] Hasebe (1988), p. 142 and plate 28.
[96] Collection of Matsura Shiryō Hakubutsukan 松浦史料博物館, Matsura Historical Museum, Hirado, Japan, also mentioned by Kobayashi in Carpenter (Ed., 2005), p. 160, who counted three of these prints with *kyōka*. The albums are described in detail by Iwasaki Hitoshi (2010).
[97] McKee (2006), recognizes a "turning point" in 1797 [and the subsequent year], when "a significant number of *kyōka*-only works" were produced. Forrer (2013), pp. 13-14, provides an overview in which the period 1795-1800 is presented as moment when *kyōka surimono* came into their own (based on several examples designed by Shunman, Hokusai and "many amateurs" listed in the catalogue).

Haikai ichimaizuri in relation to *kyōka surimono*

Judging from the peak in publication numbers, the popularity of *kyōka*, in comparison to that of *haikai*, is really to be defined as a short-lived fashion. This is applicable to both prints and books. *Kyōka surimono* from Edo were issued in considerable quantities between the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the first four decades of the nineteenth century. *Haikai* prints were produced over a much longer period of time, from early in the eighteenth century almost up to the mid twentieth century.[98] This relation is comparable to the publication numbers of *kyōka* books versus *haikai* books, as shown in the graph in section 4.3.

With regard to style of design, very generally speaking, one could state that *haikai* prints feature a more subdued style, subtler coloring, and themes that reflect poetic feelings linked to seasonal changes. The illustrations are less conspicuous or flamboyant and leave more space for the poetry, both on the level of composition and that of content. McKee, who is one of few scholars outside Japan who study both *haikai* and *kyōka* prints[99], states that the relation between text and image is usually not as strong in *haikai* prints.[100] The above aspects should all be seen in the light of the nature of *kyōka* versus *haikai* poetry. *Haikai* poetry is often witty in ways similar to *kyōka*, but the latter genre is far more aimed at incorporating classical references, showing off wit and cultural or historic knowledge, a tendency that is reflected in the style of illustration in the commissioned prints.

2.2 *Surimono*: material qualities and main elements

Early western collectors of *surimono* marveled at their fine printing, recognizing the use of a very fine quality paper and luxurious pigments beyond those used in most *ukiyoe* prints. Indeed, the investments done in (metallic) pigments ensured the creation of refined textures. Furthermore, the occasional use of blind-printing in combination with the soft and thick paper resulted in graphic art that borders on a three-dimensional *objêt d'art*. Although *surimono* are usually linked to the world of *ukiyoe* prints, dissimilarities abound. Apart from the fact that many *surimono* designers were not active in the world of commercial *ukiyoe* prints, as mentioned above, there are many differences in style. An obvious compositional difference is the frequent occurrence of still-life in *surimono*. The cultural references made through visual patterns are often of a level of sophistication uncommon in *ukiyoe*. This is in part due to the poetic content of the prints and poetry together.

The images are complemented by printed poetry drafted in a fine hand, although it is typical that calligraphy on *surimono* is aimed at readability rather than reproduction of individual handwriting. Specific

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[98] McKee (2006), p. 35. Another interesting source on *haikai surimono* is an article by Moriyama (2013), which discusses *haikai surimono* commissions made by poets from the provinces.
[99] I study the world of *kyōka*, the networks and social background of the poets, and reinvention of classical literature, and therefore focus on *kyōka surimono* only, though the art historic ties to *haikai surimono* are undeniable. For instance, McKee (2006), p. 40-41, treats a *haikai surimono* designed by Kubo Shunman, proving that artists did not necessarily work exclusively for one or the other genre.
[100] McKee (2006), p. 41.

elements mentioned in the poetry are echoed in the images, with a subtlety that challenges the viewer/reader to recognize the links. This text-image relation in *surimono* is comparable to other genres in Japanese art, ranging from paintings, lacquer ware and motifs on porcelain, for instance, but also recognizable in certain other Japanese prints.

The main elements to be discussed here, are applicable to a large portion of *kyōka surimono* in general, though - naturally - not every element will feature in every *surimono* from every period. I am not concerned with specific early (*haikai*) *surimono* that contain text or image only, but with *surimono* of common (small to medium sized) formats made for *kyōka* poets or poetry groups, which form the bulk of the production, or at least of what is left for us to investigate now.[101] Furthermore, the elements presented here pertain to the period that the overall setup of *kyōka surimono* had stabilized, roughly between the 1790s and 1830s.

2.2.1 Material qualities

In comparison to most commercial prints, the majority of *kyōka surimono* are obviously produced using very fine materials. These include, to start with, soft, thick paper commonly identified as *hōshogami* 奉書紙.[102] Apart from the visually pleasing aspects of this paper, the thickness allowed for an effective use of blind-printing, achieved by powerfully rubbing the lightly moistened paper onto sharply-carved printing blocks that were not inked. The result of this technique, frequently applied in *surimono*, is a textured surface of certain elements of the illustration. This effect is best admired holding the print in a raking light which accentuates the shadows. The textures achieved through this method contribute to a more tactile experience of these graphic materials, and one could say that it gives these prints a third dimension, beyond two-dimensional graphic art.

As discussed above, colors were printed using generally the same pigments as were used in commercial prints. Different from commercial prints, many *surimono* feature the use of metallic pigments such as leaf gold and powdered brass and tin. These pigments were specifically used to highlight metal objects depicted, such as sword blades, axes, mirrors, bells, et cetera. In some cases, metallic pigments were used to print the poem, mostly against a black or very dark background, for instance positioned in the empty sky of nightly scenes. Printing in multiple colors of course required additional investment in both printing blocks en pigments, but it is to be expected that the metallic pigments were particularly costly.

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[101] It is not unthinkable that large, full-sheet *surimono* have a lower survival rate due to their impractical size for collectors, or perhaps due to the impermanent nature of their contents - since they regularly functioned as announcements for performances. Regardless, *surimono* of this format form a minority when compared to the small to medium-sized varieties.

[102] The term is often abbreviated to *hōsho*, which designates government orders that were traditionally written on this type of paper. A high-grade mulberry paper, originally made in Echizen province: see Barrett and Winifred (1983), pp. 227-229 and Asano, Fukushima and All Japan Handmade Washi Association (1991), p. 120.According to Kobayashi Fumiko in private correspondence (2017), another deluxe type of paper known as *danshi* 檀紙 was also sometimes used.

2.2.2 Sizes and formats

Surimono were printed on a variety of paper formats. In most cases, a sheet of the larger type of high grade paper, the *ōhirobōsho* 大広奉書, which measured approximately 58 x 44 cm, was cut once or twice horizontally, and once, twice or three times vertically, resulting in four, six, eight, nine or twelve sheets of decreasing size.[103] The relation of print formats to certain publishers, as discussed by Forrer, does not apply to the privately published *surimono*.[104] The choice for a certain format seems to have been made based on preference of the designer, but costs and number of poets involved must have also been factors of consequence. *Surimono* from the 1780s through 1800s were generally printed on smaller formats, such as the 'cut-into-nine' *kokonotsugiriban* 九切判, measuring roughly 13 x 18 to 14 x 19 cm. From the 1810s onwards, the almost square *shikishiban* 色紙判 became the favored format. A *shikishiban* was achieved by cutting the *ōhirobōsho* sheet once horizontally and twice vertically, resulting in six sheets of - theoretically - 22 x 19,3 cm. In practice, most *shikishiban surimono* measure around 21 cm in height and 18,5 cm in width. This is probably due to losses occurring in cutting and trimming, or due to slightly smaller full sheets to begin with.

The *shikishiban* format was both a practical and classicist choice. The word takes its root from the word *shikishi* 色紙 (literally 'color paper'), a squarish sheet of colored deluxe paper only slightly smaller in dimension than most *shikishiban surimono*. *Shikishi* were already in use from the Heian period; first as a vehicle for a poetic addition to paintings on folding screens or sliding doors, later independently for inscribing calligraphy, encompassing poems and (small) ink painting.[105] These sheets are often colored with overlapping wavy patterns, and sprinkled with flakes of gold or silver leaf. *Shikishi* therefore epitomize the tangible remains of the Japanese poetic tradition. Those inscribed by revered court poet Fujiwara Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241), for instance, have been highly prized throughout Japanese history. The *shikishiban* may have been a suitable print format for *surimono* in terms of spatial balance between poetry and image - to be discussed hereunder - the echo of poetic practice of earlier centuries certainly played a role in the popularity of this format from the 1810s onwards.[106]

2.2.3 Main elements and their functions

Illustrations

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[103] As far as I'm aware, the combination of two cuts horizontally and three vertically, resulting in 12 small sheets, does not occur in *surimono*, although *egoyomi* of rather small sizes were printed.
[104] Forrer (2004), pp. 171-205.
[105] Entry for *shikishi* on Japanese Art and Architecture Net Users System: http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/ (20120716) The *shikishi* is the square counterpart of the *tanzaku* 短冊, often translated as 'poem slip', an elongated slip of equally luxurious paper with similar coloring, measuring some 36 x 6 centimeters, usually used for poems only, that was popular in the Edo period.
[106] McKee (2008 [1]), pp. 444-445, suggests that the transition to the *shikishi* format "perhaps not coincidentally" coincided with [Yomo Utagaki] "Magao's attempt to completely rename the *kyōka* form, titling it *haikaika*, after the irregular *waka* of the Kokinshū" ("c. 1807-8").

In terms of surface area, the illustrations on *surimono* take up about half to two thirds of the print. The remainder of the surface area, then, being reserved for poems. In general, the illustrations are place in the (bottom) right, to be viewed first, before moving on to the poetry, which is placed in the (top) left. Illustrations range from relatively light compositions on an empty background - leaving plenty room for the poems, to *horror vacui*-style compositions that reserve only a specific portion of the composition open for the poetry. Among examples of the first sort are designs by Shunman and Shinsai, designers known for very full compositions are for instance Gakutei and Hokkei.

The illustration is usually signed by the artist, somewhere to the bottom of the composition, although the placement of the signature varies considerably. Sometimes, signatures are - like poems - cleverly incorporated into the design, for instance made part of illustrations on scrolls or folding screens within the composition of the *surimono*'s illustration. Unsigned *kyōka surimono* are quite uncommon. The signature serves the same general purpose of identifying the artists, just as it does in paintings or commercial prints. Of course, the signature of high-ranking artists allow the viewer/reader to further appreciate the economic and social capital that is connected to the production of a particular *surimono*, but this is a matter for discussion in later sections of this thesis.

Artists' signatures

Artists' signatures on *surimono* are sometimes preceded by indications of a commission made to them, such as *ōju* 應需 (also read *motome ni ōjite*), meaning 'on request'. Under, or partly over the signature, a seal is sometimes printed, or hand-stamped. Hand-stamping the seal may have been an indication of a final approval by the artist. A good example of *surimono* that are known with and without the hand-stamped are the prints in the series *Katsushika nijūshishō* 葛飾二十四将 ('*Twenty-Four Generals for the Katsushikaren*') by Gakutei.[107] The studio name Gakutei is printed, yet the personal artist's name Sadaoka is a hand-stamped with vermillion ink (*shuniku* 朱肉) from a seal. The keen observer will have noticed the difference, and appreciated the added personalized exclusivity of this feature.

Poems

The poems on *kyōka surimono* are usually written vertically and placed in the top half or top third of the print, and read from (top) right to (bottom) left. Due to constraints in height, the stanzas are broken off and continued on the next line, just to the left of the previous line, with an indentation to ease reading. Where possible, the stanzas are cut up according to meter, although this is not always consistently done. Poems are sometimes placed in the left third of the print when the illustration takes up the majority of the vertical space in the right of the print, and poems are then usually written as a single vertical line, with no breaks (as is also common in *kyōka* book pages without illustrations). These are the most common layout varieties, yet - as is to be expected from creative artists who designed *surimono* - poems are

[107] I discussed the entire series in Kok (2008).

sometimes cleverly incorporated into the design, showing up as an inscription on a scroll or folding screen that is illustrated. In *surimono* of the 1820s and later, poems are regularly placed in some form of cartouche, adorned with colored background patterns and/or decorated borders. The number of poems varies between one and some six or seven - depending also on print-format - although it is most common to encounter two or three poems on one print.

The position of the poems shows a high degree of hierarchal conscience. Prominent poets usually feature all the way to the left, which is therefore commonly referred to as the position of honor. Sometimes, the name of the poet in this position, or his[108] poem, is preceded by a small circular mark, the meaning of which has frequently been the object of speculation in the past. In *kyōka* books, this circular mark is used to indicate the *kyōka* masters who selected the poetry for that particular book, and were *hors concours*. It is likely that the meaning of the circular mark is the same in *surimono*, meaning in that case that the poet with the circle before his name selected the poems from - perhaps a number of - candidates submitted by the other poet or poets.[109] When contributing poets live outside Edo - presuming that the *surimono* was made there - their city of residence is sometimes included.[110] This is yet another practice that is similar to that in *kyōka* books.

Next to the poems is the poet's name, usually a pen name, it is highly uncommon to see a poet's true name on a print.[111] In most cases, the name is printed preceding the poem. On occasions, the poet's name is printed after the poem. When the poem is written in an unbroken vertical line, as described above, the poet's name is placed straight under the poem, after a small space. Again, this is congruent with the layout in pages without illustrations in *kyōka* books, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

The poems on *surimono* were not inscribed by hand, but printed from a wooden printing block in the same process as the rest of the print. The delicate, sometimes even slightly gradient, black and dark grey tones of the characters may seem to be aimed at evoking the image of a skillful inscription on a *shikishi*, as mentioned in section 2.2.2. The style of calligraphy, however, is aimed at readability, and not at reproducing a personal hand. Reasons for this no doubt lie in the function of *surimono* as works that were meant to be read - text and image - by many different persons. On a practical level, having every poet inscribe their poem within the right dimensions and adding these somehow to the design must have posed a graphic and logistic near-impossibility. Carpenter, who initially arrived at *surimono* out of his research on calligraphy, believes that only a handful of calligraphers were responsible for the majority of calligraphy on *surimono*.[112] Indeed, the handwriting of individual calligraphers seems to return on *surimono*

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[108] I have yet to encounter a female poet's name or poem that is preceded by a circular mark.
[109] The function of the circular mark in *kyōka* books will be further described in the corresponding section in chapter 4. The possibilities for clarification of details like these offer further arguments for including *kyōka* books in the study of practices surrounding *surimono*.
[110] On *surimono* produced in Osaka, a poet or designer is sometimes indicated as living in Edo. The meaning of the inclusion of the city of residence is further treated in section 4.4.
[111] More on the implications of using pen names in section 4.4.
[112] As suggested in conversation, Zürich, 2008. Carpenter wrote his doctoral dissertation on the courtly calligraphy of Fujiwara no Yukinari 藤原行成 (972-1028).

commissioned by the same poetry group, or designed by the same artist. The fact that calligraphy styles are so close to one another could also be seen as further proof of the aim for relative standardization and readability. The skill of the calligrapher is, to my knowledge, never acknowledged on *surimono* - as opposed to that of the artist, and also regularly the engraver or printer - which underlines the relative absence of the aim for individuality in this element. An exception to this general rule is the reproduction of the handwriting of famous poets and the kabuki star Ichikawa Danjūrō VII 七代目市川団十郎 (1791-1859), reproduced in *surimono* by Utagawa Toyokuni 歌川豊國 (1769-1825).[113]

As for incorporation of poetry during the design process, an album of sketches and printing proofs from the studio of Totoya Hokkei, kept in the Chiba City Museum of Art, provides evidence that the poems were inscribed on a printed proof of the line-block, in an apparent aim to achieve a balanced layout of the text.[114] Since the line-block for the illustration was already cut at this stage, and with the possibilities for printing the text in different tones than the line-block in mind, it seems logical that the (best-fitting, mistake-free) calligraphy was then transferred to a separate printing block, to be cut and added to the total set of blocks for a print. A misprint in the Blomhoff collection at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, The Netherlands, provides an example where the text was printed separately from the line-block (a *surimono* designed by Hokkei, see fig. 1), once upside-down, by an apparently negligent printer.

[113] See Forrer (2013), pp. 270-274, for the entire series of seven designs and details on the commission and execution of this series. The exception with regard to the reproduction of the individual hands is in part to be ascribed to the atypical commission for this series; the series was likely made on request of Ichikawa Danjūrō VII himself, or perhaps his fan club. Execution of the prints was closer to conventional actor prints than to the deluxe *surimono* of the day, according to Forrer.
[114] See for instance no. 2-2, 2-4, and the illustration at the top of page 223 in Kobayashi T. (Ed., 1995), vol. 10.

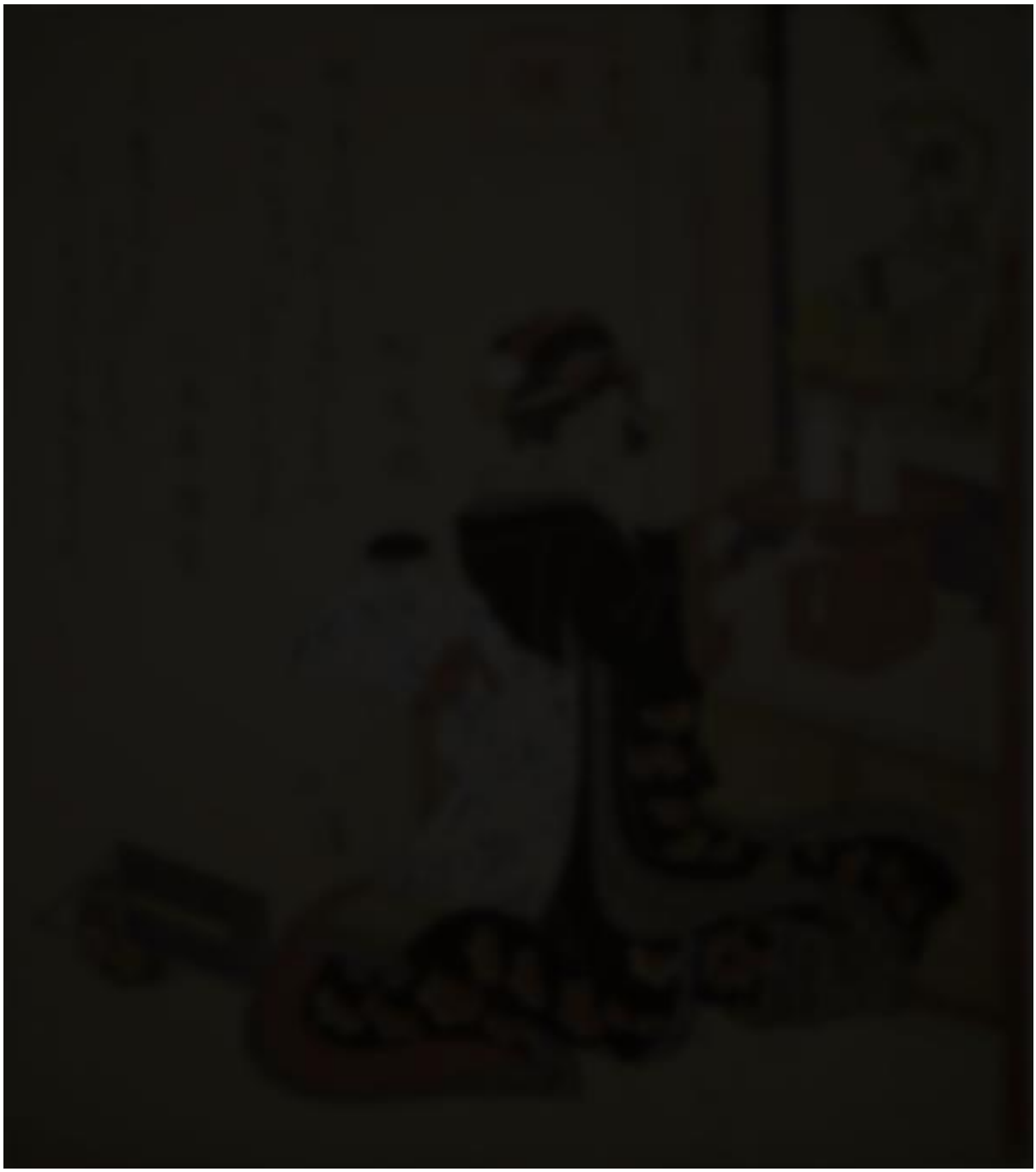

Fig. 1. Totoya Hokkei, *surimono* issued in c.1820, National Museum of Ethnology, inv. no. RV-360-2345r. The series is titled *Gokin no uchi* 五金之内 (‘*The five metals*’), print title *Suzu* 錫, ‘*Tin*’.

Group logos

Group logos, when included, are often hand-stamped. When *kyōka* groups commissioned *surimono*, in particular when it concerned series of prints, a group logo was often added. This practice is mostly seen from the 1810s and 1820s onwards, when *kyōka* groups and *surimono* projects reached their peak in terms of size. The logos take a variety of shapes.[115] Most logos are relatively simple stylized flowers or birds, or

[115] See for instance the overview given by Goslings (1987), pp. 9-12.

representations of objects such as fans, sometimes incorporating the club's name in writing. The more elaborate logos are sometimes akin to Chinese style artist's seals, squarish and filled with characters. Apart from identifying the group that issued a particular print or series or prints, logos again serve as proof of exclusivity, especially when hand-stamped.[116]

Series and print titles

Series titles and print titles are, not dissimilarly to commercial prints, regularly found on *surimono*. Print titles are often printed right after a series' title or logo, and combinations of these last two also occur. In other instances, they consist of a (hand-)stamped series' logo and a title printed from a key block (either the index block or the text block), simply written in characters, the same way that the poetry is written. In most cases, series titles and print titles are placed somewhere in the top right hand of the print. The function of the print title varies slightly from series to series. In some cases, the print title is basically a quote from a classical literary text that served as the series' inspiration, as in the case of the *Tosa nikki* series designed by Shunman, discussed in chapter five. Most of the time, however, the print title rather simply states the name of the person depicted, the name of the color or element in a 'series of colors/elements', the name of an object in a set, et cetera.

The exclusivity and overall sense of dedicated attention paid to a project is further enhanced when the group logo is supported by the series' title, in particular when the two are integrated. Series' titles identify the overarching theme. This is by no means new in *surimono*; in commercial prints, series' titles were printed in cartouches during most of the eighteenth century, although decorated cartouches only started to appear more frequently during the nineteenth century. Some *surimono* series' titles form part of a logo, sometimes combined with the name of the club. In this last case, a separate group logo was usually left out. As in commercial prints, series' titles in *surimono* often include a reference to the total number of prints in the series. The function of this feature may lie in the ease with which those who engaged in exchanging these prints could keep track of which part of a (larger) series they were dealing with. Otherwise, it may have functioned as a proud proclamation to other poetry groups, showing off the size of their project for that year. That hypothesis is in part supported by the competition that seems to be going on between *kyōka* groups in the 1820s, as is palpable from the yearly mounting numbers of *surimono* series, visible in appendix III, where *surimono* series are listed per club and per year.

Publishers' seals

I have noted previously that publisher's seals are absent in *surimono* for the fact that these prints were not produced commercially. There are, however, other seals - relating to production for instance - that can be found. Block-cutters or printers who lent their skill to a print are sometimes credited through the inclusion of their seal. On some cases, a seal of a '*surimono* production studio' features on *surimono* (see

[116] Facsimile editions of *surimono* - from re-cut blocks - can often be recognized as such through the incorporation of emblems in the printing block.

section 2.1.1). Usually, these seals are not hand-stamped, but rather incorporated into the printing blocks. Other seals one finds are those of latter-day collectors, in particular those from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As mentioned by McKee, this practice is now frowned upon, but was quite common at the time.[117] These collector seals may indeed intrude into the original work, they do allow for investigation of provenance.[118]

2.3 *Surimono* categorization: subjects and series

Subject matter in the illustrations in *surimono* varied enormously, from Yoshiwara beauties, actors, historic and/or legendary figures, to landscapes, birds and flowers (*kachō* 花鳥), (shell)fish, et cetera, et cetera. Where subject matter was also treated in commercial prints, styles of depiction tended to show a degree of overlap. This is true in particular for artists who were active in both commercial prints and *surimono* design. For instance, actor *surimono*, such as those by Utagawa Kunisada, are closely related to his commercial actor prints.

On the other hand, many *surimono* illustrations depict subjects outside the usual scope seen in commercial *ukiyoe* prints. Typical to *surimono*, as I have mentioned before, are still-lifes. The depiction of inanimate objects was uncommon in commercial prints, yet very suitable for *surimono* illustrations, since this often allows for an easier connection to the content of the poetry. Depicting an object or set of objects outside the pictorial traditions of commercial prints or other accessible art forms demanded a certain degree of artistic independence on the part of the artist. This does not necessarily mean that *surimono* artists who drew still-lifes operated outside the *ukiyoe* style, rather that they worked outside the established subject matter, and therefore outside pictorial traditions. It is no surprise that still-life *surimono* were often designed by artists who operated largely outside the commercial circuit, such as mentioned in section 3.1.

2.3.1 Categorization according to research objective

Scholarly efforts to categorize *surimono* of recent decades have always been influenced by objectives of the publication or its author(s). Major catalogues of *surimono* often list the works according to designer, however arbitrary the sequence becomes in alphabetic rendering of the Japanese artists' names - considering also the fact that most artists were known by multiple names. An art-historic approach - with an emphasis on development - would lead to sorting *surimono* by artistic school or lineage. Due to the non-commercial and overall less-regulated nature of *surimono*, this would be far more difficult than for commercial prints. Despite the complex nature of *surimono* as research material, even scholarly publications often simply categorize *surimono* chronologically, or - in connection to that - according to paper format.

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[117] McKee (2006), p. 63.

[118] Forrer (1983) has compiled a list of collector's seals, aiding collectors in tracing the provenance of the prints they own or wish to buy.

Those catalogues that do take a more analytical stance tend to sort the prints by subject or iconographic theme. Bowie et. al. arrange the works in their catalogue in "categories suggested by their general subject matter", and then subdivide them chronologically where possible. The result is "Egoyomi or calendar prints; Saitan and other surimonos pertaining to seasonal festive occasions; Literary and legendary subjects; Moral edification; Interest in nature; Private motivations: name change and elegies; Satire and fun".[119] The downside of such a division, when strictly applied, is that series can theoretically be split up and divided over separate categories. McKee, too, loosely divides the *surimono* in *shikishiban* format in the Schoff collection exhibition catalogue according to the subjects depicted and arrives at: "Still-life and festival floats; Nature and landscapes; Beautiful women and domestic subjects; Legendary, Historical, and warrior subjects; and Kabuki drama".[120] This last category is the addition that most obviously breaks away from the categories already suggested by Bowie et. al. It is actually strange that this theatre category is absent in the catalogue by Bowie et. al., since it contains many of what are currently often called 'actor *surimono'*, illustrated in both the introductory section and the separate section "*Surimono* and the Kabuki Theatre".[121] The purposely selected still-life *surimono* in the exhibition/sales catalogue of Galerie J. Ostier, are divided according to certain objects depicted in their illustrations.[122] Divisions like these are of course made with a predefined selection of prints in mind. No matter how much effort was done to make a representative selection from within a collection, the division according to subject or iconographic theme remains somewhat arbitrary.

The two main research themes in this thesis, social networks and reception of classical literature, demand different categorizations altogether. First of all, understanding social networks through *surimono* requires a categorization of *surimono* according to their displays of group affiliation, social connections. Second, understanding the ways in which literary history was incorporated into *surimono* requires dividing them according to themes, and - more specifically - the class and provenance of literary works they are based on, and their treatment of these literary sources in word and/or image. In both cases, period of publication is of obvious importance, since both the degree of organization of *kyōka* groups, and the contemporary appreciation and scholarship of classical literature vary over time. Another criteria that I take into account in general is the place of publication - in this case focusing on Edo as center of the *kyōka* vogue of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century - since *surimono* issued in different cities provide different information with regard to networks, and perhaps also to traditions in reception of literature.

2.3.2 *kyōka* poetry networks of Edo: (large) *surimono* issued by groups or in series

The affiliations between *kyōka* poets featuring on *surimono* are most obvious from works that were

[119] Bowie et al. (1979), p. 45.
[120] McKee (2006), pp. 34-183. The non-shikishiban formats encompass *haikai surimono*, *egoyomi* and "*Kyōka Surimono* in Miniature Formats".
[121] Bowie et al. (1979), pp. 7-23 and pp. 98-147, respectively.
[122] Ostier et al. (1978)

issued by groups rather than individual poets. Large *surimono* listing multiple poets who were apparently connected to a certain poetry master provide data on affiliations at a certain point in time. Series of *surimono*, issued by one group and/or for one occasion, also reveal data with regard to poetry networks. The Bunka and Bunsei eras show a sharp rise in *surimono* issued in series by poetry groups, instead of single sheets issued by one, two or three individual poets.[123] Titled *surimono* series range between simply a pair of prints, up to as much as 36 prints.[124] Appendix III shows an overview of *surimono* series in the years 1797-1835. The combination of poets featuring in such series reveals social connections. Both for large *surimono* and *surimono* series, social connections between poets are identifiable, yet the connection between certain poets or group and artists is also of importance.

The reasons for the development of *surimono* series deserve some attention here. As mentioned above, increasing membership numbers of *kyōka* groups meant a necessity for more space to print poems. Steadier finances, generated by enthusiastic followers of the genre during a period of economic flowering, were probably an important factor that allowed poetry groups to publish the output of their members in larger projects. Single sheets of small formats could only hold so many poems, and the development of large *surimono* - printed on a full and uncut sheet of paper - must in part have resulted from the need to list more poets.[125] Kobayashi discusses the reasons for poetry groups to choose for a bound *kyōka* album or a series of *surimono* in the early nineteenth century. Her main argument is that *surimono* series provided a flexible and effective alternative to albums and large *surimono*, from a practical production point of view. I would argue that *surimono* series had further advantages over albums or large print formats in that the quality of printing could be elevated even higher in relatively small prints, since these could be made from thicker paper than could be bound into books or albums. Furthermore, a series of loose prints allowed for a more focused production, which may have accommodated individual preferences within a group, i.e.

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[123] Valuable data on *surimono* issued in series is presented by Goslings (2002) in an unpublished manuscript. From this manuscript, the increase in publication numbers of *surimono* in series can be clearly noticed around the year 1805. As I have noted in chapter one, Kobayashi, F. (2005) gives the year 1804 as turning point (specifically because *kyōka* anthologies were published in far lesser numbers, perhaps – as she argues – due to "regulations forbidding colour printing books" being implemented from the fifth month of 1804 (p. 173)). Forrer (2013) gives the period 1805-1810 as the first in which *surimono* were "often issued in titled series" (p. 14).

[124] An example of a series of only two prints is *Tsurukame niban* 鶴亀二番 ('*Crane and tortoise, a set of two*'), by Gakutei for the Yomogawa, 1819. Examples of series of 36 prints are *Kasen awase* 歌仙合 ('*A matching game of the immortals of poetry*' [each of the designs taking a different species of shell as subject]), designed by Ryūryūkyo Shinsai for the Yomogawa poetry group for the year 1809, and *Genroku kasen kai awase* 元禄歌仙貝合 ('*Shell-matching game with poets from the Genroku period*'), designed by Katsushika Hokusai for the Yomogawa for the year 1821. Hokusai also designed an untitled set of some 55 prints on the subject of the Tōkaidō coastal highway, which was issued in 1804 for an unspecified number of groups related to the Asakusagawa poetry group. Around eight of the original designs were issued in a format twice as wide (c. 13 x 37 cm) as the rest of the series, later to be replaced by designs on the regular format (c. 12 x 17 cm) by Hokusai's pupil and son-in-law Yanagawa Shigenobu 柳川重信 (1787?-1833). Examples, of both the edition with the original poetry in place and the more commonly encountered later edition with the poems omitted, to be found in the collections of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, under inventory nos. 3654-34 and 3654-35 (with poems in place) and more or less complete sets under nos. 1-4476-1~55, 360-4591~4619, 1353-503~538 (without poems).

[125] Early large *surimono* also often feature invitations to (musical) performances, not necessarily held around New Year, that do not list poems or poets. See for instance Keyes (2005), p. 221-224.

producing higher numbers of prints that included more important or more popular poets or poets that had perhaps contributed a larger sum to the overall project. There are other reasons imaginable for the popularity of *surimono* series as a publication means over albums. Separate prints allowed for a more exclusive exchange between individual poets, which was less personal with albums, books or large sheets that contained the poetry of so many fellow poets. Furthermore, one would think that separate sheets of the highest quality would likely find their way to other groups and poets, perhaps throughout the nation, more easily, impressing rivals and attracting new members. Whatever may be the case, *surimono* series give an insight into the affiliations of poets to the various groups, and their connections to certain artists, and will be taken into account in chapter five, where *kyōka* networks are discussed.

Surimono from Edo

This thesis is concerned with networks of individuals on the forefront of a popular movement in early modern culture, and it is therefore that I concentrate on the center of this current, which was the city of Edo. Here, the pivotal figures of the *kyōka* society held most *kyōka* meetings and the majority of *kyōka surimono* were issued by their clubs. Due to the nature of the peaking popularity, the *kyōka surimono* made in Edo are generally most exorbitant. This does not mean that *surimono* from Osaka, where *kyōka* was also a very popular pastime, are any less intricate. Nonetheless, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the *kyōka* clubs in Edo were largest and most stable. Edo was the 'center of *kyōka*' from which the *kyōka* masters would incidentally travel to other areas and the center to which *kyōka* enthusiasts would travel to pick up on the latest trends, instead of the other way around. The fact that Edo was the center of popularity has forced me to limit the research materials of Edo only, although once again, it must be mentioned that other cities where *kyōka* was popular also saw a considerable amount of *kyōka surimono* publications, as can for instance be seen in the section on Osaka *surimono* provided by Keyes.[126] When applicable, *surimono* from outside Edo are taken into account, in order to elucidate the position of the *kyōka* groups in Edo.

2.3.3 *Surimono* incorporating classical literature

For the research theme of reception of literary history in *surimono*, a categorization would be aimed primarily at dividing *surimono* into those incorporating classical literary works and those that do not. The distinction is not always entirely clear, and any attempt at being strict about the extent to which classical literary has formed the main inspiration for a print or print series would only result in complications. A number of series is undeniably based directly on classical literary themes. These can often be clearly identified by series titles or logos that include the (chapter) title of well-known Japanese literary classics, such as *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語), *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語), *The Pillow Book* (*Makura no sōshi* 枕草子; tenth-eleventh century), et cetera. In line with the puzzle-aspect of

[126] Keyes (1985).

surimono, literary allusions are hidden in many other prints - single sheets usually in this case. Sometimes, it is only after discovering a specific word in the poetry that the link to a work of classical literature can be established with certainty. This type of *surimono* featuring literary inspiration should also be taken into account when investigating the treatment of classical literature in the *kyōka* society in general. In this thesis, however, I will focus on *surimono* series that evidently revolve around a certain work of classical literature, which allows for an investigation of the reception history of that particular literary work and the position of the *surimono* series within that reception history.