



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Kok, D.P.

Citation

Kok, D. P. (2017, October 10). *Visualizing the classics : reading surimono and kyōka books as social and cultural history*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/58771>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/58771>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/58771> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Kok, D.P.

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

Issue Date: 2017-10-10

Chapter 4: Expanding circles: *kyōka* networks

4.1 Introduction

A new literary vogue in Edo in small circles

The world of *kyōka* is one of social connections. The sudden success of *kyōka* in Edo can be attributed to the fact that the genre provided an opportunity for cultivated people to connect and collectively enjoy a mix of literature, clever wordings, competition, cultural tradition, and social interaction. These were the ingredients in the early days of Edo *kyōka* and, despite a shifting emphasis, these ingredients were still in the mix near the end of the genre's popularity. A small circle of pioneering poets soon attracted an increasing following. Poetry masters later branched off and formed new circles, though always maintaining connections to other circles of the same era. Rarely does one find *kyōka*-related materials that do not display some kind of proof of an underlying network. Those networks are apparent in *surimono* and *kyōkabon* that feature poets belonging to different circles. *Surimono* albums, for instance, document personal connections between poets.²¹⁸

Competition poetry: the essence of *kyōka* practice

The cultural tradition of convening for the composition, judgment and enjoyment of poetry was strongly present in *kyōka* gatherings. *Kyōka* may have started out as a new literary vogue, yet in terms of execution - both in its poetic form and in its formulaic style of gathering - *kyōka* soon conformed to standards set in previous centuries. There is an obvious preoccupation with scores, especially in 1820s thru 1840s. Competition announcement flyers of those decades tell us that high scores resulted in many benefits: prizes were awarded, chances of being published increased, books were handed out free of charge to those who made the cut, and one could climb in the ranks. At gatherings, competing poets saw eye-to-eye; who are the opponents? How strong is the competition and what are the rankings? Gatherings were also events that attested to the scope of the network. Despite the genre of *kyōka* hinging on strong competition among poets, in essence all participants - often from all over the nation - contributed to the same cultural movement.

Scale of the *kyōka* world

What had started as an unorganized group of jaunty poets evolved into a nationwide society

²¹⁸ Other primary material that comes to mind is paintings on silk incorporating *kyōka* poems, written by major poets in their own handwriting. A number of these are known, for instance painted by *surimono* designers such as Kubo Shunman, Ryūryūkyo Shinsai, or Katsushika Hokusai. Even when these are inscribed by various *kyōka* masters, such as the example in the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, The Netherlands (inv. no. 6044-1), it is not known whether these poets were all present on one occasion and inscribed the painting then and there. Another possibility is that a painting circulated among these *kyōka* masters for a while before returning to the artist. Also, the function of these paintings is not exactly known. A possibility is that such paintings served as prizes to be won in a *kyōka* competition. Thus, such paintings seem to document personal connections, but for lack of certainty with regard to their conception, will not be considered here.

over the period of a mere decade. By the turn of the eighteenth century, the genre operated at an impressive scale. This expansion is reflected in the prints and books that were published. Owing to present-day online databases, it is possible to provide some actual numbers, both absolute and relative, to substantiate this statement. Once the growth of the *kyōka* world is visualized, it is possible to make a comparison to the publishing activities in other poetry genres. Moreover, establishing a growth line helps to understand the relative weight of *kyōka* publications of a particular year. For instance, one *surimono* of the Kansei era featuring a list of fifteen poets can be understood to represent - percentage-wise - a relatively larger portion of the *kyōka* world than a complete series of *surimono* of the Bunsei era that features 50 poets, since the overall *kyōka* world had become so much larger by that time. Understanding the evolving scale of *kyōka* puts the material output in perspective.

Connections between people, on various levels

Kyōka allowed participants to shape social bonds outside the family, professional or geographical vicinity. The often repeated statement that the genre created an environment in which social standing was of no consequence needs to be critically reviewed. Indeed, *kyōka* materials contain proof of the fact that different social groups interacted through the activities generated by *kyōka* circles and networks. The same materials, however, can and should be presented as proof of the assumption that boundaries of class and status were not entirely eclipsed. This investigation first requires an outline of how class, status and social identity were defined during the late Edo period. This approach results in an enhanced understanding of what it was that connected *kyōka* poets, and what continued to separate them.

(Personal) Social connections

Kyōka books and series of *surimono* offer information on the general circumstances of connections between poets in circles and networks. One could say that each poet was part of a circle, thereby part of a network of interconnected circles, and eventually part of the entire *kyōka* society - by which I mean the combined total of all people actively involved in *kyōka*. Being listed on a *banzuke* confirmed a poet's ranking within a circle, featuring in a *kyōka* book that circulated in the network confirmed a poet's position in that network. Being presented in a more general information book - perhaps commercially published even - can be seen as confirmation of a poet's importance in the entire *kyōka* society.

There is less material available to provide an insight into the personal connections of a single poet. Granted, privately issued single *surimono*, of the kind we mostly encounter before 1800, do give some idea of direct personal connections between fellow poets who appear together on these prints. More complete data on personal connections is found in *surimono* albums, of which a small number survive intact. Through the prints collected in such albums, and the connections they represent, it is possible to plot the position of a poet within his or her circle, in networks and in the larger *kyōka* society. Other than most printed *kyōka* materials - numerous though they may be - albums offer case-by-case information from the perspective of a single poet.

In this chapter, the network structure behind the *kyōka* genre will be discussed, supported by representative examples of the variety of *kyōka* materials specified above. It is through the investigation of a combination of primary materials that the workings of the *kyōka* competition become evident. The system of *kyōka* masters, their circles, and networks of circles as such does not seem to go through major changes, although the level of organization certainly rises. The evolution of *kyōka* society in terms of scale provides the necessary perspective on the relative impact of the genre at advancing stages of its development. It is in the light of these circumstances that the social and personal connections can be investigated, all with the ultimate aim of understanding how these networks functioned.

4.2 Competition: The essence of *kyōka* practice

4.2.1 Historic background of poetry competition

A constant factor in the history of Japanese poetry is its competitive element. When *kyōka* became popular, it had been common for many centuries to gather for a poetry match and recite poems. The center of these activities was the imperial court. Traditionally, *waka* poems were often judged by poetry masters who presided over the gatherings, judges providing a motivation for their rulings. The traditionally rather fixed nature of poetic conventions provided the possibility of judging the (technical) quality of poems somewhat regardless of personal taste.

Kyōka poets continued, or perhaps I should say mimicked this tradition to a great extent. *Kyōka* matches, *kyōka awase* 狂歌合, were similar in form to traditional *uta awase*. The organization of *kyōka awase* becomes more institutionalized some decades into its renewed popularity in Edo, in congruence with the growth in participation numbers. It is noteworthy that the genre that first seemed bent on throwing traditional rules with regard to poetry out the window later appears to conform to the very traditions shaped over centuries. I use the word ‘appears’, since a comparison of the objectives of a classical *uta awase* with those of a late-Edo *kyōka awase* reveals many differences. In aspects of form, surely, the latter resembles the former. While both could be said to represent a form of collective literary appreciation, both also differ considerably in terms of practicalities, poetic content, and sentiments that are aimed for.

A major difference between classical gatherings and *kyōka* competitions is the strong emphasis on individual scores in the latter.²¹⁹ The competitive element is specifically present in *kyōka* materials of the 1820s and 1830s. The system for keeping scores ensured that the qualities of participating poets could be calculated with mathematical precision. This not only applies to single occasion competitions. Points received by poets competing during an entire year of monthly *kyōka* competitions would be meticulously recorded. This meant individual poet’s qualities could be measured, and poets could be ranked accordingly

²¹⁹ As I have mentioned before, this tendency is also seen in *haikai* circles. A further comparison of emphasis on individual scoring between *kyōka* and *haikai* is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis - and beside the point here.

(treatment of the related primary materials follows in the sections below). For the participating poets this meant being able to monitor personal progress. In spite of the mechanism geared towards objective ruling, taste matters of course, also in *kyōka*. Judges will not have been able to judge the poems submitted to them completely objectively. Within the genre of *kyōka*, different schools and currents existed - hence the listing of individual *kyōka* judges' favorite poems in *Kyōkakei* (see section 3.3.4) - and surprising variations in scores can be seen in the number of points awarded to one and the same poem by two separate judges who judged at the same poetry match. Competition result books as presented in the previous chapter make this abundantly clear.

4.2.2 Competition announcements: much to be won

For *kyōka* enthusiasts, competition events offered many enticements. Leading up to competition day, there was the apprehension of submitting poems and hoping scores would be favorable. The day itself saw the excitement of donning an appropriate outfit, engaging in a sort of cultural role-playing even, savoring cultural roots and interacting with kindred spirits. The main climax was no doubt the moment when one's poem was read out loud before the judge(s) - if it was good enough to deserve mention at all - and hearing the subsequent comments on its quality as *kyōka*. High scores meant being awarded a spot in the intended publication - the better the scores, the better the position. Scores could also be of influence on the general ranking for that poetry season. Receiving high scores at such events also translated to an approval of sorts, a confirmation received from figures with a distinct aura of cultural and social standing, the poetry masters. Furthermore, prizes, for instance a deluxe wrapping cloth (*furoshiki* 風呂敷) or writing box (*suzuribako* 硯箱), were to be won for those who scored above a certain fixed number of points.²²⁰ The spoils, therefore, were both tangible and intangible.

An entry fee was charged for most competition events. With the advancing level of organization, financial systems surrounding the competition became ever more fixed as well. Ōta Nanpo, in one of his essays, mentions the poetry master Hamabe no Kurohito 濱邊(浜辺)黒人 (1720-1790, KJJ, p. 67) as the first to charge a fee to competing poets, in order to be able to cover publication costs.²²¹ Kurohito called this fee '*irebana* 入花', literally 'attaching a flower' (as one would to a gift). The word *irebana* became the standard term for the fees charged for competition entry and can be found on many competition announcements up until the Tenpō era. These announcements, most surviving examples dating from the Bunsei and early Tenpō eras, provide useful data on the practicalities of the *kyōka* competition. Poets commonly paid a fixed price to enjoy the matters mentioned above. Competitions were held at the

²²⁰ Maruyama (1978), p. 71.

²²¹ As explained in Ōta's *zuihitsu* (essays) *Yakkodako* (奴師勞之, or 奴胤, the title commonly translated as '*Footman Kite*') of 1818. See Suga (1936/I), p. 266; Hamada (1963), p. 269-272. According to KJJ, the name Hamabe no Kurohito is a nickname give to him because he always wore black clothes and dyed his teeth black as well. People used to call him 'black all the way to the teeth' (*ha made kurohito* 歯まで黒人). From there, it is a small step to Hamabe no Kurohito, 'the blackened man from the coast', an allusion to the classical poet Yamabe no Akahito 山部赤人 or 山辺(邊)赤人 (d. 736?) literally 'the red man from the mountain side').

residences of major poets or, in the case of larger events, at venues such as restaurants. In the latter case, the venue also had to be paid for. The *irebana*, therefore, came to cover more than just publication costs.²²²

In order to substantiate the points raised in the previous paragraphs, let us take a look at the material specifications and contents of competition announcements. First off, an important study of both competition announcements and ranking tables that were produced based on the competition scores, is an article by Maruyama Kazuhiko 丸山一彦 (1978). Maruyama uses the word leaflet, *chirashi* ちらし, to refer to these announcements. This word appears also in a contemporaneous preface written by Shikitei Sanba, and seems to have been the word used at the time.²²³ *Kyōka awase* announcements, just like ranking tables, were of a relatively fragile nature and had only the short-term purpose of notification and the slightly longer-term purpose of recording rankings respectively, which is why not many of these leaflets survive. Maruyama was able to study as many as 43 announcements and eleven ranking tables from between c. 1820 and 1855 (most from the late Bunsei era); I have been able to investigate just six announcements, yet 33 ranking tables, all from between c. 1832 and 1861 (the announcements mostly from the early Tenpō era, the ranking tables mostly from around the Kaei era).

Kyōka awase announcements were printed on one sheet of paper, printed in black ink and from one block only. They commonly measure c. 32 x c. 23 centimetres, or twice that size, c. 46 x c. 32 centimetres. These leaflets, flyers if you will, carried all the necessary information for poets to see whether they wished to compete and if so, where and when they should submit their poems, where to gather, what it would cost, and what kind of scores were required to get published. Commonly, somewhere in the top middle we find a promotional blurb by the main judge, in which choice for the theme is explained, or where a certain type of poem is advocated for that meeting. In the bottom half of the announcement we often find a list of collaborating clubs with their place of origin. The competition announcements that survive are mainly from the Bunsei era and onward, when the meetings are more institutionalized. Announcements were distributed for both monthly *tsukinami* competition meetings and single occasion events.

²²² As explained by Ishikawa (2011), p. 337-363. It must be noted that some competitions, for instance in honor of a deceased poetry master, required no entry fee. In that case, the number of poems to be submitted is usually limited to three per poet. See also Maruyama (1978), p. 70.

²²³ In the preface to the book *Kyōka yomibito nayose saiken ki* that came out in 1818. See transcription in Kobayashi, F. (2002), p. 229. More on this *kyōka* book in section 4.3. Other words used for announcements include 題摺 *daisuri* ('printing of the subject(s)'), and 報条 *hōjō* ('advertisement').



Fig. 7. *Kyōka* competition announcement for a single event competition organized by Kaien Umeaki. Coll. Ōtsuma Women's University (no inv. no.).

The *kyōka* competition announcement above (fig. 7) serves as an example of an invitation to compete, as well as an informational sheet that provides information to poets on the specifics of the contest.²²⁴ On the right hand side is the title given to this contest: 狂歌十評英雄集一會大相撲立 *Kyōka jūppyō eiyūshū ikkai ōzumōdate*, which translates to ‘Collection of *kyōka* heroes, judged by ten [judges], one time only grand *sumō* match’. The word *sumō*, sometimes read *sumai* is used since early on in the popularity of *kyōka* in Edo, to signify matches. As is common on these announcements, the word for ‘one time’, *ikkai*, means it concerns a single occasion competition event. The title *Kyōka jūppyō eiyūshū* also served as the title for the ensuing competition result book as well as the accompanying ranking table, which are both known to survive in the Hōsa Bunko 蓬左文庫 collection in Nagoya.²²⁵ The databases of the National Institute of Japanese Literature provide some information: the book was edited by Kaien Umeaki 檜園梅明 (1792-1858, also known as Tatsunomon 龍廼門 Umeaki, KJJ. p. 24) ‘around the Tenpō era’. Most likely Tenpō 3 (1832), since the ranking table was dated to that year, according to the database. In essence these three documents make up a complete set of printed materials related to a singular competition event: the announcement, the ranking table with a listing of the results, and the

²²⁴ Ōtsuma Women's University collection, no inventory number.

²²⁵ I have not been able to study the actual result book nor the ranking table myself, but I rely on the information kindly transmitted to me by Dr. Makino Satoshi, who viewed photocopies supplied by Hōsa bunko.

published competition result book.

The announcement reveals more information on the organization of the meeting. To the left of the title, we find the listing of themes, judges and editors, which takes up about two thirds of the announcement surface. The contestants are divided into two sides, the ‘team of the left’ and the ‘team of the right’, which is commonly, though not always the case. The subjects for the left are ‘spring’, ‘summer’, and ‘love’. Those for the right are ‘autumn’, ‘winter’, ‘miscellaneous’. To the left of each list of judges is the remark that there are 500 prizes to be handed out to those who score ten points or over (with one of the judges). Each side is judged by five judges, ten in total - hence the title. None of these judges are particularly well-known, at least not anywhere near the eight ‘proofreaders’, *kōgyō* 校合, who are listed below. Apparently, these proofreaders oversee the final publication and rank above all others. The list, from right to left, consists of Shakuyakutei (Nagane), Hōshitei 宝市亭 (Masunari 升成, n.d., KJJ. p. 208), Ume[no]ya 梅屋 (Tsuruko or Kakushi 鶴子, 1800-1864 KJJ. p. 138), Bunbunsha 文々舎 (Kanikomaru 蟹子丸, 1780-1837, KJJ. p. 51), Garyōen 臥龍園 (Umemaro), Sensōan 浅草庵 (III, Harumura 春村, 1799-1867, KJJ. p. 175), Hanasakian 花咲庵 (Yonemori, 1781-1848, KJJ. p. 243), Chigusaan 千種庵 (II, Moromochi 諸持, 1791-1858, KJJ. p. 103). Each of these is known from multiple *kyōka* books, *surimono* and other related materials. The involvement of these *kyōka* heavyweights no doubt attracted many (paying) competitors.

The remaining one third of the sheet is reserved for practicalities. The short text mentions that one needs to score a total of at least 28 points, with at least two scores of ten or higher, for a poem to be published. Those who do will be presented with the ‘printed’ result book, which comes ‘in an envelope’. The *banzuke* and prizes for those who scored ten points or over from each of the judges will be handed out ‘on the day itself’. Poems to be handed in by 25th of the second month at the latest, ‘opening of the volume’, *kaikan* 開卷, i.e. reading aloud of the submitted poems (that received high scores), on the day that the actual meeting takes place, which is set on the 20th of the third month. This time in between deadline and the day of the contest is necessary for gathering all the submissions, producing an anonymized copy²²⁶, scoring by the (large number of) judges, and preparing and printing the ranking table.²²⁷ The actual result book includes a *tōza* section, which indicates that final editing and printing were done after the competition event. Even if this had not been clear, it would have been highly unlikely - given the short time span - that the publication had gone through all the stages of editing, drafting of illustrations, copying all poems and illustrations into the fixed layout, cutting of the blocks, printing, and

²²⁶ *Seisho* 清書 or *seishokan* 清書卷 (literally ‘clean book’/ ‘cleanly written volume’). It is this ‘volume’ that is ‘opened’ on the gathering day. Illustrations of *kyōka* gatherings often depict the presiding *kyōka* master reading from this volume (such as in *Kyōka nihon fudoki*, where Gakutei is seen seated behind a low table on which the manuscript is placed. See Kok (2010), p. 69). In this case, the *seisho* is stated to be the responsibility of Kaizankyo Hideaki 檜山居秀明 (n.d.). (Based on the characters in this poet’s name, likely a pupil of Umeaki’s.)

²²⁷ The time between deadline and gathering day varies, likely depending on the scale of the event. See Maruyama (1978).

binding. This means that the final publication was likely distributed through the same system of gathering poems, in reverse direction. Poems could be submitted in five locations. One of these was the residence of Shinkadō 神歌堂, being the *kyōka* name of *surimono* designer Gakutei Sadaoka, in Ōsaka. Poems could also be handed in in Nagoya, Sendai and two locations in Edo. One of these was operated by Shun'yūtei Umehide 春友亭梅秀 (n.d., KJJ. p. 24), son of the main organizer, Umeaki, who is listed all the way in the bottom left. The place of gathering for the *kyōka* contest announced on the flyer under scrutiny here is the establishment Kawachiya in Yanagibashi, a district known for its restaurants.

The cost for entering in this large-scale competition: two silver *monme* 匁 for four poems.²²⁸ Given the complicated currency system and fluctuating exchange rates of the Edo period, it is difficult to make an estimate as to the value of two *monme* at the time. A contemporary source does give some idea of what could be purchased for that sum: a small saw cost 2 *monme* 5 *bu* (effectively 2,5 *monme*); a small Bizen ware (*Bizen'yaki* 備前焼) *sake* jar ran 2 *monme* 8 *bu*; two “tobacco containers” for two *monme*.²²⁹ Whether paying two *monme* for entering a *kyōka* contest was expensive depends entirely on the outcome. For those who scored well, received congratulatory gifts and the honor of seeing their poems published on the ranking table and in the result book, it was likely a good deal. Somewhat akin to a lottery, those who scored too low to receive any rewards, must afterwards have thought they could have bought a nice little *sake* jar for the same money. And yet, the fact that so many of these contests were held throughout the year must be regarded as proof of the fact that enthusiastic poets gladly paid the required sum to enjoy the excitement, the cultural interaction, and the proximity to fame at these events. In fact, some poets may have increased their chances by submitting a larger number of poems. Another announcement, for a contest held in the fourth month of 1832 and judged by Shakuyakutei Nagane, not only mentions a fee of 3 *monme* per three poems (twice the price of the previous example), it also suggests the offers of submitting fifteen poems for 1 *nanryo* 南籛 (*nishugin* 二朱銀), which corresponds to some 7,5 *monme* - about half the price per submitted poem.²³⁰ The relatively high fees are explained by the fact that this concerns an illustrated book, with Yanagawa Shigenobu responsible for the “detailed designs in color”. Based on numbers found by

²²⁸ Submitting a parody on an existing poem, *kaeuta* 替歌, was priced at three silver *bu* 分; three tenths of a *monme*.

²²⁹ As quoted in Vaporis (1997), table 4. This source dates to 1833 and pertains to Edo prices, which should make it at least reasonably accurate. Table 3 in the same article dates two 1828-1829 and lists among other things a leaf-shaped ink stone for 2 *monme*.

²³⁰ Announcement in the Ōtsuna Women's University collection, no inventory number. Title: 狂歌劇場百首 *Kyōka shibai hyakushu* ('One hundred poems of the *kyōka* theatre'). The announcement states that 100 poems by Shakuyakutei will be added to the competition result book. A copy of the book survives in the Hōsa collection, Nagoya, inventory number 尾20-12. Not all competitions were aimed at producing a result book; some resulted in the commissioning of a wooden votive tablet, *hōgaku* 奉額, inscribed with the winning poems, to be donated to shrines in the hopes of securing enduring recognition. See Maruyama (1978), p. 64. Examples of stone steles, *sekihi* 石碑, engraved with *kyōka* are also to be found at temples. Makino Satoshi kindly pointed out one example to me at Sensōji temple 浅草寺, Tokyo. Such steles were likely also the result of similarly organized poetry events. These materials are, however, beyond the scope of this thesis.

Maruyama for two contests, it appears that poets on average submitted around seven poems.²³¹

The above may serve to illustrate two points. First of all, the *kyōka* society of the Bunsei and Tenpō eras was very much focused on competition. This focus is rooted in a traditional approach to poetry and not unique to *kyōka*. Second, poets were willing to invest considerable entry fees to be part of the competition. Engaging in a popular literary pastime, the recognition, the possibility of being published, the prizes to be won, and the proximity to fame were all powerful incentives that contributed to the justification of the financial investment. The competitive element is what attracted poets and their combined financial means in turn propelled the *kyōka* competition and its system of leaders and followers, events and publications.

4.2.3 Gathering: visibility of the network

Gathering days were the basis of poetry appreciation, in *kyōka* as much as many if not most other Japanese poetry traditions. Such events provided occasions for composition and instant delivery to fellow poets and audience, immediate appraisal and inspiration back and forth. The word *awase* itself captures much of this concept. It is derived from the verb *au* 合 ㄅ, ‘to meet’. Its causative form, *awaseru*, can literally be translated as ‘to make meet’. The basic meanings of *awaseru*, thus, are ‘to match’, ‘to compare’; *uta awase* therefore can be read as ‘matching poems against each other’. I have pointed out the social implications of this approach to poetry and literary appreciation before. The aspect that I will treat here is the fact that (*kyōka*) *awase* on the one hand shaped networks of poets, and on the other hand made the network visible to individual members of the network.

The evolution of *kyōka* poetry and poetry groups leads me to distinguish three stages in the development of gatherings, in terms of network reach and density. These stages also represent a gradual chronological development towards more formally organized structures of a larger scale. The *kyōka* meetings of the early phase of popularity in Edo - in the 1770s - constitute a first level; that of a closely knit network of poets who were either directly acquainted with each other, or through a common acquaintance.²³² These were meetings of a cultural avant-garde, of people who formed their private networks of (amateur) poets. Gatherings like theirs were directed inward rather than outward; public appeal was not the aim. Especially since the city of Edo was divided into wards that in principle housed persons of the same birth status or profession even, these early *kyōka* networks will have been limited in terms of geographical spread. Participation through written contributions may have been possible, but is not likely to have been common. Gatherings will have been relatively undefined in setup and were likely planned shortly beforehand in comparison to the later events.

²³¹ Maruyama (1978), p. 72. (5.116 Poems by 681 poets and 5.242 poems by 859 poets respectively.)

²³² As described by Iwasaki (1984), pp. 172-190.

Gatherings organized by (leaders of) *kyōka* groups for their direct members represent the second stage. The well-documented *kyōka* party organized by Ōta Nanpo on the occasion of his mother's 60th birthday in 1783 marks a turning point away from small-scale in-crowd get-togethers. Nanpo sent out an invitation (only) to his group members, yet so many *kyōka* enthusiasts responded to the invitation that a restaurant had to be hired to accommodate all.²³³ The party is described by Iwasaki and links to a remark she makes some 20 pages earlier: “While the *kyōka* and *gesaku* writers of the An'ei era moved in a small band of like-minded men, Tenmei writers carried their activities in large, semipublic parties and penetrated the worlds of the theater and the pleasure quarters, and even reached the backstage of politics.”²³⁴

It is around this same time, during the 1780s and 1790s, that groups started meeting on a regular basis. Nanpo's group gathered on the nineteenth of each month, according to Iwasaki.²³⁵ Such monthly *tsukinami* gatherings organized by *kyōka* circles were to become a standard for decades to come. In terms of network reach and structure, there are several differences with those of friends and direct acquaintances. As group leaders attracted more followers, the relation between poetry masters and regular members changed. It is difficult to say with certainty how new members went about procuring membership of a certain group. We can conjecture, though, that central figures in *kyōka* society may have held a specific appeal to an individual amateur poet, for instance because of stylistic approach, attractive publications to his name, class background of the poetry master and most members, or even just geographical proximity. Perhaps a request to become part of the group was sent in, accompanied by some sample poems. Even without knowing the exact circumstances, it is still discernable from printed output of separate groups over the years that membership was not something to be changed on a whim; poets commonly stayed in one circle for a longer period of time. Connections between the poets in these circles headed by one poetry master were likely quite close. Meeting every month for several years and appearing in the same publications undoubtedly forges bonds. Gatherings of these circles therefore differ from those attended by first and second-degree acquaintances. Nonetheless, poets attending gathering likely knew the (poetry) names of all the participating poets.

The large-scale *kyōka awase*, specifically the single occasion gatherings of the Bunka, Bunsei and Tenpō eras constitute a third stage. There was a higher level of participation from poets outside Edo. They could usually not attend the actual gathering and basically participated at a distance by mail.²³⁶ As is evident from *kyōka awase* announcements, the large-scale competition events were co-organized by several poetry circles and sub-groups. The net was cast widely when it came to inviting participants, resulting in contributions by *kyōka*-lovers from all over the country. The ratio of competitors to attendants was likely

²³³ Iwasaki (1984), pp. 204-205.

²³⁴ Iwasaki (1984), p. 173.

²³⁵ Iwasaki (1984), p. 178. Likely not every month of the year: The number of monthly *kyōka* meetings in a year is usually ten, particularly when the various groups gain momentum. The first monthly meeting of the year was held in the second month and the last meeting of the year was held in the eleventh month. A special New Year's meeting was held the first month, that not formed part of the regular monthly meetings.

²³⁶ Unless they happened to be in Edo, for instance for business. In that case, the fact that they resided in Edo at that time is marked by the term ‘*zai Edo* 在江戸’. See Takahashi (2007), pp. 93-100.

the most skewed in these third-stage contests. Furthermore, the day of gathering was surely the most public in character. The venue was open to poets from various circles and it seems even poets not associated with any specific circle could partake. The likelihood of poets knowing each other, either personally or by their *kyōka* persona, was lowest in these meetings.

The participants in such heavily populated events cannot be said to form part of a fixed network. Participation was simply too fluid from one occasion to the next. Rather, these events should be regarded as instances of connections *between* networks that belonged to the same *kyōka* world. On some announcements, a common connection to the poetry circles that claimed connection to either of the two main currents can be discerned - one being the Yomogawa, the large poetry group headed by Yomo no Utagaki Magao; the other the Gogawa, headed by Rokujuen.²³⁷ In the Tenpō era, after both these figureheads had died, the many large nation-wide competitions seem to have been less bent on one or the other school. For poets attending the day of the gathering, part of the participants will have been known to them through their personal poetry circle connections, yet many other poets will have been from outside their circle of acquainted poets. Yet another cluster of poets will not have been visible at all, due to their absence. To the individual participant, it will have been clear that the literary pastime they were engaged in drew followers from far and wide. All these fellow participants were in search of the perfect *kyōka*, which may have contributed to a sense of strong connectedness on the part of each contestant, hindered only, perhaps, by the individual focus on personal scores.

4.2.4 Ranking tables: to be judged on one's merits

Besides the cultural and social aspects of *kyōka* gatherings, there was the decidedly practical aspect of ranking the poets by the quality of their poems. In general, the 'pioneers' seem to have been less fixated on a predetermined scoring system. Composition of *kyōka* poetry was, practically speaking, the main objective of the day. In later decades, most of the composition was over and done with weeks before the day of the gathering. A major practical function of the day itself was hearing the scores and receiving the associated spoils. Apparently, only very confident poets would engage in composition at the scene, *tōza*. And even for the *tōza* segment, subjects were often pre-announced on the *kyōka amase* announcements, which gave poets ample time to prepare phrases beforehand. Although prizes were made available for poets competing in 'impromptu' composition 'at the scene', the number of poems in the *tōza* segment in

²³⁷ The proposed rivalry between these two *kyōka* masters is often exaggerated. They actually collaborated on many books throughout the period of popularity of *kyōka*, until their respective deaths in 1829 and 1830. They did have quarrels, though, as evidenced by the fact that they publicly reconciled at a *kaomise* (litt. 'face-showing'; a yearly preview performance introducing the star actors scheduled for the new theater season) at the Nakamura theater in the 11th month of 1817. This event was recorded in various sources, among which the 'kabuki chronology' *Kabuki nenpyō* 歌舞伎年表 (Ihara et al. (1956-1963), vol. 6). Through mediation of Ōta Nanpo, they ended their dispute (which had apparently lasted three years) over a portrayal. The rivaling *kyōka* masters recited poems on the topic of reconciliation and drank sake from the same cup. The fact that this reconciliation was a public affair attests to the popularity of these men. Kasuya (1986), pp. 243-244, states that the event was recorded in many more sources than the three he quotes, which also confirms the impact of this event in literati circles.

the back of competition result books is usually meager at best.

As is often stated on announcement leaflets, a ranking table is to be distributed on the day of the gathering to those who scored a sufficient number of points. Whether or not the positions of poets were completely dependent on their qualities as poets, or also influenced by their connections to the judges, or perhaps related to their financial support of the circle, is very difficult to determine.²³⁸ Important is the fact that the position of poets within their circles is revealed in the ranking tables. This provides valuable information about the success of individual poets who are encountered in other materials such as *surimono*. The possibility of climbing ever higher in the rankings and seeing one's poem published in the (colorfully) illustrated pages, reserved for only the best poems, must have been a great incentive for poets to work hard on the quality of their poetry and consequently make it to the illustrated pages.

The ranking tables mimicked those of *sumō* wrestlers, which is why they are often dubbed 'parody ranking tables', *mitate banzuke* 見立て番付. The basic format as applied to the *sumō* world was actually parodied in many more worlds and applied to courtesans, actors, historical heroes, restaurants, spas (*onsen* 温泉), etcetera. *Kyōka* poets themselves commonly used the word *kōotsuroku* 甲乙録 ('Record of the superiority and inferiority'). I will continue to use the word *banzuke*, since this is the word that is in common use now in (scholarly) literature and databases. *Banzuke* issued by *kyōka* circles have survived in small numbers and the majority dates from the Bunsei and Tenpō eras, although younger examples are also known. The earliest example listed by Maruyama dates to the second year of the Bunsei era, 1819.²³⁹

The standard format of a *banzuke* is as follows. Similar to *sumō* 'stables', the contestants are divided into two 'teams', called East and West, or occasionally Left and Right (traditionally common in poetry). In the middle of the sheet, between the columns for East and West, is a vertical bar that states the title, names of the judges, organizer, topics, and other such practical information. The names of those who are ranked are listed vertically in rows, left and right of the center bar. The listed names are separated by horizontal lines, font size decreasing per row further down. The two top scorers are listed first, all the way to the left in their respective section, as *ōzeki* 大関, corresponding with the highest rank in *sumō*.²⁴⁰ Then follow *sekimake* 関脇 and *komusubi* 小結, one each, followed by the *maegashira* 前頭, the rank bestowed upon the remainder of the poets. The *maegashira* are also sorted according to score, which is explicitly noted in some ranking tables.

²³⁸ In the (paraphrased) words of Takahashi Akinori (in private conversation, 2013): 'if the scoring procedure in one circle is perceived as unfair by participating poets, they will soon move towards other circles to compete'.

²³⁹ Maruyama (1978), p. 66.

²⁴⁰ The rank of *yokozuna* 横綱, currently the highest rank in *sumō*, is said to have been introduced during the Edo period. See Lee A. Thompson (1998) in Vlastos (Ed.). *Yokozuna* is actually a rank within that of *ōzeki*, which is perhaps why the rank of *yokozuna* does not feature in this *banzuke*. I have never encountered any *banzuke* of the Edo period featuring the rank of *yokozuna*; the highest position - if divided according to *sumō* ranks - is generally marked *ōzeki*. The rank *yokozuna* does appear in *banzuke* from the Taishō period and onwards, see Segi, Shin'ichi (2000), for instance p. 109.



Fig. 8. *Banzuke* for a competition titled *Kyōka kanadehon chūshingura* 狂歌假名手本忠臣蔵 ('*A Kyōka Treasury of Loyal Retainers*'). This document is date Tenpō 11, 1840. The then common word for ranking table, *kōotsuroku*, is seen straight above the word *saishu* 催主, organizer, in the lower section of the center bar. Coll. Tokyo Metropolitan Library, inv. no. 加7424-22-2.

The tendency towards hierarchical arrangement of poets is encountered throughout the genre of *kyōka*. The 'parody' in form of ranking tables was a serious matter for *kyōka* poets in terms of content. Sorting based on such hierarchies is not only seen in *banzuke*, but also on the book pages were the poems

are listed, on announcements and on *surimono*. Positions of poets are almost always determined based on rankings in relation to other poets. The hierarchy sorting is from right to left, highest points on the right. However, the position far left is an honorary position and reserved for judges and selectors on *surimono*, and in the case of *kyōka* result books sometimes also for organizers. The persons placed in the honorary positions are often marked with a small circle printed next to their name or their poem. Although judges and selectors were *hors concours* and stood above the competition, even they are generally also sorted according to a hierarchy based on their merits. This is reflected in the titles used to designate them. A judge at a contest was called a *hanja* 判者, *kyōka* masters were often called *sensei* or *ushi* 大人, and the major figures who headed large circles are designated with the term *sōshō* 宗匠, master/teacher, a term also common in for instance tea ceremony hierarchies.²⁴¹

Although rooted in a historic tradition, the *kyōka* genre carried the system of scoring points and ranking poets according to their scores to a new level, with a standard that came to be employed nationwide. Opportunities for engaging in *kyōka* competitions were manifold. The fees for competing were relatively high, but then again, there were luxurious prizes to be won. Furthermore, care was taken by organizers to publish the results in attractive books. The elaborate scoring system allowed poets to monitor their progress with considerable precision and aspire to join the ranks of *kyōka* celebrities. The competitive element attracted enthusiasts from all over the nation who engaged in a cultural pursuit that was both traditional and fashionable. Gatherings provided occasions where these amateur poets would meet members of the network of enthusiasts, who were at the same time their rivals in the competition. And, perhaps more importantly, the masters and leaders of the poetry circles could be met and seen in action at these events. As evidenced by the surviving printed materials discussed above, the entire system of *kyōka* poetry circles, leaders and followers, competitions, fees and rewards was a successful formula, refined over several decades and reaching its heyday - in terms of volume - in the Bunsei and Tenpō eras.

4.3 Scale: Expanding circles

Kyōka books and *surimono* must be understood as products of the individuals or circles that published them. Furthermore, these publications should be related to the respective sizes of the circles at different points in time. Investigating just a limited number of *surimono* or *kyōka* books can result in a patchy understanding of the networks of people who commissioned them. More books and *surimono* were issued in the Bunsei era than the Tenmei era. It is important, however, to investigate reliable data on publication numbers of both books and *surimono* and compare these to *kyōka* circle membership wherever possible. This way, publications can be put into perspective as commissions by poetry circles of varying size and

²⁴¹ Poets who had the title of *sōshō* are usually mentioned in KJJ to have received this title from *sōke* 宗家, ‘grand masters’, in Kyoto. What the claim to authority of these Kyoto-based grand masters is, is unclear to me, and may benefit from further research.

level of organization.

4.3.1 *Kyōka* expansion timeline

The expanding scale of the *kyōka* society can be illustrated by a number of landmark points per era. The landmarks I selected are based in part on materials that provide calculable numbers and in part on publications or events that I consider game-changing. This simple timeline will serve as an argumentation in itself for the rate of expansion - and decline - of the *kyōka* society.

In the 6th year the Meiwa era, 1769, the first *kyōka* meeting in Edo was held at the house of Karagoromo Kisshū. The poetry composed at this meeting is recorded in the manuscript *Meiwa jugoban kyōka awase* 明和十五番狂歌合 (*Kyōka match of fifteen in the Meiwa era*), dated to the first month of the next year.²⁴² In the An'ei era, the number of *kyōka* meetings continued to grow.

The Tenmei era saw the first commercial publication of major *kyōka* anthologies.²⁴³ Furthermore, information books such as *Kyōka hama no kisago* (which was published commercially) started to appear. As I have argued before, these publications mark a major step from limited groups of enthusiasts, to a much wider audience. From this point onwards, interested readers and amateur poets could get their hands on the poetry produced by the foremost figures in *kyōka*, without being a direct member of their circle.

During the Kansei and Kyōwa eras, issuing deluxe New Year's *kyōka* albums had become a yearly occurrence for *kyōka* circles such as the Asakusagawa.²⁴⁴ Many were privately commissioned, and not published with the intention of making profit by selling these to the general public.²⁴⁵ The quality of these albums was very high; the now mature *kyōka* society clearly generated sufficient funds for such extravagance. It is noteworthy that in these albums, we already find some contributions by poets from the provinces.²⁴⁶ This indicates that circles such as the Asakusagawa already had a reach that extended beyond their district, or even the entire city of Edo. The percentage of poets from (far) outside Edo is, however, low in comparison to the ratios seen in competition result books from the late Bunka and the Bunsei eras, when many poets from various other cities and villages throughout Japan contributed and *kyōka* clubs operated on a national level.

²⁴² See Suga (1936/I), pp. 281-281; Kobayashi, F. (2009), p. 379; Iwasaki (1984), p. 61. The manuscript has variant titles; the title mentioned being the most commonly used.

²⁴³ See previous chapter.

²⁴⁴ *Kyōka* albums of this era are treated in depth by Forrer (1982).

²⁴⁵ Kobayashi, F. (2005) uses the term '*shunkyō* 春興 poetry anthologies' to designate these New Year's *kyōka* albums. Some of these albums were produced by commercial enterprises of publishers such as Tsutaya Jūzaburō. These include colophons and were apparently marketed to the general public as well. Kobayashi, F. (2005), p. 171, however, suggests that these albums were "clearly [...] produced without a profit motive", even when they include a publisher's name. This point is inherently difficult to prove. Tsutaya was known for his entrepreneurship, and cooperating on an elaborate publication without any profits (to him) seems uncharacteristic. From the point of view of the poetry circle, however, making profit was indeed likely not intended.

²⁴⁶ For instance in *Yanagi no ito* 柳の糸 (*Strands of the Willow*), issued in Kansei 9, 1797. Some poets are indicated to be from places, for instance, as remote as Numata in present-day Gunma Prefecture.

Meanwhile, the publication of *kyōka surimono* evolved from single sheet into serial publications.²⁴⁷ The Bunka era witnessed the emergence of titled *surimono* series, which gradually came to be issued yearly.²⁴⁸ *Surimono* series grow in size, the paper format essentially gets standardized, and more and more poetry groups give their commissions to dedicated *surimono* designers.

The Bunsei era marks the heyday in the printed output resulting from organized *kyōka* group activity; major *surimono* series in the *shikeshiban* format were issued and a multitude of competition result books were published - far more than commercially published *kyōka* books in these years. The competition result book *Kyōka yomibito nayose saiken ki* 狂歌よみ人名寄細見記 (*Directory of the names of kyōka poets*) issued in the first year of Bunsei, 1818, features an overview of scoring marks that are made to resemble the marks used in the ‘*saiken*’ directories of courtesans and prostitutes of the Yoshiwara. The overview also lists the days of the month that ten *kyōka* circle leaders held their respective monthly gatherings. Among them are Yadoya no Meshimori, Garyōen Umemaro, Shakuyakutei Nagane, Shōfūdai Teitei (n.d. 松風臺停々) and Dondontei Wataru. These ten figures that are listed by no means represent the full extent of gatherings that were held during these years as several major leaders are not included in the overview, apparently because they did not participate on this particular occasion. For instance, Yomo Utagaki Magao, Sensōan Ichindo and Bunbunsha Kanikomaru are not listed. Furthermore, competitions were also held in the Kansai region and elsewhere throughout Japan and major figures such as Senryūtei Karamaro (Sendai) and Tsurunoya Osamaru (Osaka) are not listed. Nonetheless, the overview given in *Kyōka yomibito nayose saiken ki* illustrates the fact that a considerable number of circles were active during the Bunsei era. *Kyōka* books of these years in most cases relate to the activities of one or more of these circles. Even commercial publications published during the same period should be considered against the background of the large-scale *kyōka* society of the time, and can seldom be viewed as entirely ‘independent’ from the competition.

Despite the obvious decline in the output of *surimono* series and (deluxe) competition result books, the competition still attracted many poets in the Tenpō era. A *banzuke* dating from Tenpō 12, 1841, unusually states the number of poets and poems that competed on that occasion: 451 poets submitting a total of “more than” 11,700 poems.²⁴⁹ It is clear from the many ranking tables surviving from the Tenpō era that the competition was still going strong. In fact, *banzuke* from as late as the Bunkyū 文久 (1861-1863) era survive. The publication numbers of *surimono* and *kyōka* books, however, sharply plummet from the mid-Tenpō era onwards. This is clearly visible in the graph presented in the next paragraph for the case of *kyōka* books and in appendix III, which shows the output of *surimono* series per era.

²⁴⁷ Forrer (2013), pp. 13-14, gives a convenient overview of “The development of *egoyomi*, *surimono* and related issues”.

²⁴⁸ As I have mentioned before, Kobayashi, F. (2005) investigates the reasons for this development, and ascribes it in part to government regulations with regard to color-printed books.

²⁴⁹ Kept in the Hōsa Bunko collection, Nagoya, inv. no. KA7424-042. This number of poems per poets calculates to almost 26 per poet on average. This seems unusually high, which may be why it is marked so specifically.

4.3.2 *Kyōka* and *haikai* book publication numbers

Despite frequently declared qualifications such as ‘*kyōka* craze’, the number of book publications in the genre should not be overestimated. The deluxe materials qualities of the *kyōka* prints and books that lead to the high survival rate in collections in our time may give the false impression that the publication output of the genre was relatively high. Contrary to that expectation, a calculation of the percentage of *kyōka* related publications per period reveals that, despite an obvious peak between the Tenmei en Tenpō eras, *kyōka* books never exceeded 3,26 percent of the total output of titles.²⁵⁰ Comparison to the graph for the publication of books in the genre of *haikai*, with a percentage constantly hovering between c. 6 and 15 from the middle of the Edo period onwards, illustrates the fact that *kyōka* were never as widely consumed - at least in book form - as *haikai*. The graph combining the percentages of *haikai*, *waka*, and *kyōka* books reveals that *kyōka* books only (just) surpassed the publication numbers of *waka* books between the Tenmei and Tenpō eras. The graphs shown here, the contents of the books, the dissemination of *surimono* and the networks of *kyōka* circles treated in the subsequent chapters point out that the elitist pastime of a handful of Tenmei era literati would indeed gain a nationwide following, though never shed that elitist aura.

Percentage of *kyōka* publications within total output of published books

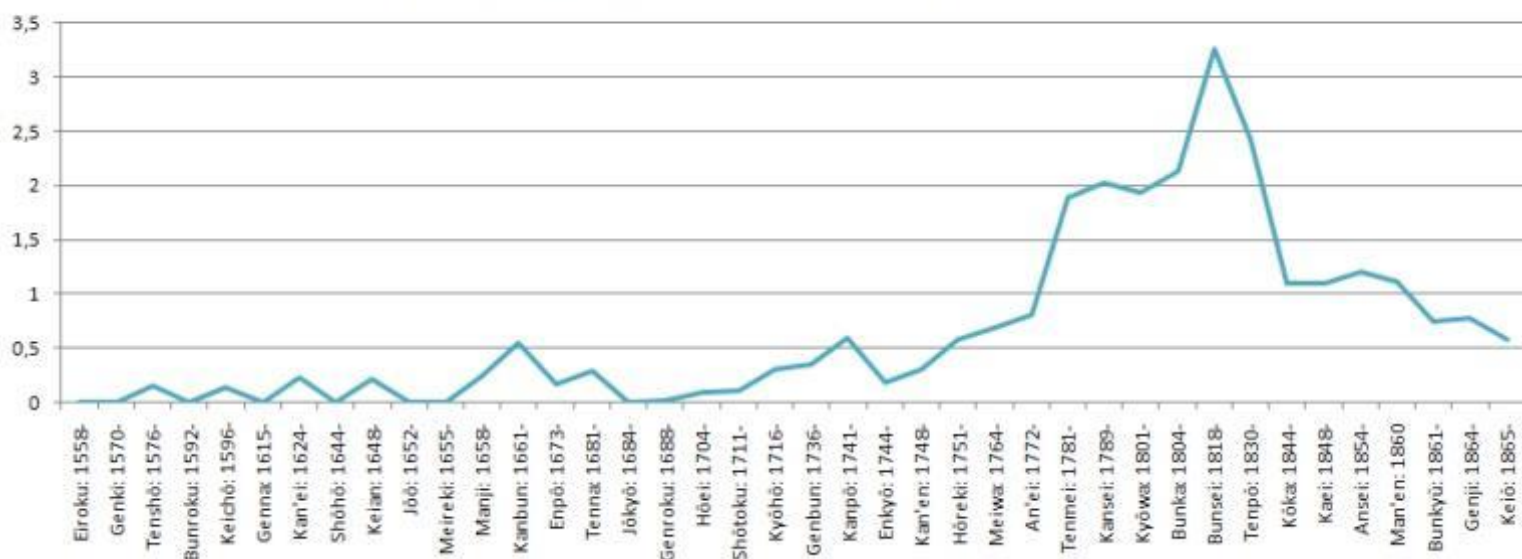


Fig. 9. Percentage of *kyōka* publications within total output of published books

²⁵⁰ Based on data taken from the Union Catalog of Early Japanese Books (*Nihon koten sōgō mokuroku* 日本古典籍総合目録), hosted by the National Institute of Japanese Literature (NIJL), on March 31, 2011 (<http://base1.nijl.ac.jp/~tkoten/about.html>). The percentage is calculated by comparing the number of titles in the genre of *kyōka* to the total number of titles issued in each period. The percentage could only be calculated for each period as a whole, not per year. Furthermore, the calculated percentage has no bearing on the print run of each title. I estimate, however, that print runs of *kyōka* books - especially the relatively expensive color-illustrated publications - never exceeded those of popular novels or *haikai* books. To give an idea of the absolute numbers: the total number of *kyōka* books found to be published during the Bunsei era is 294, about 25 per year.

Percentage of *haikai* publications within total output of published books



Fig. 10. Percentage of *haikai* publications within total output of published books

Percentages of *haikai* books, *waka* books and *kyōka* books within total output of published books

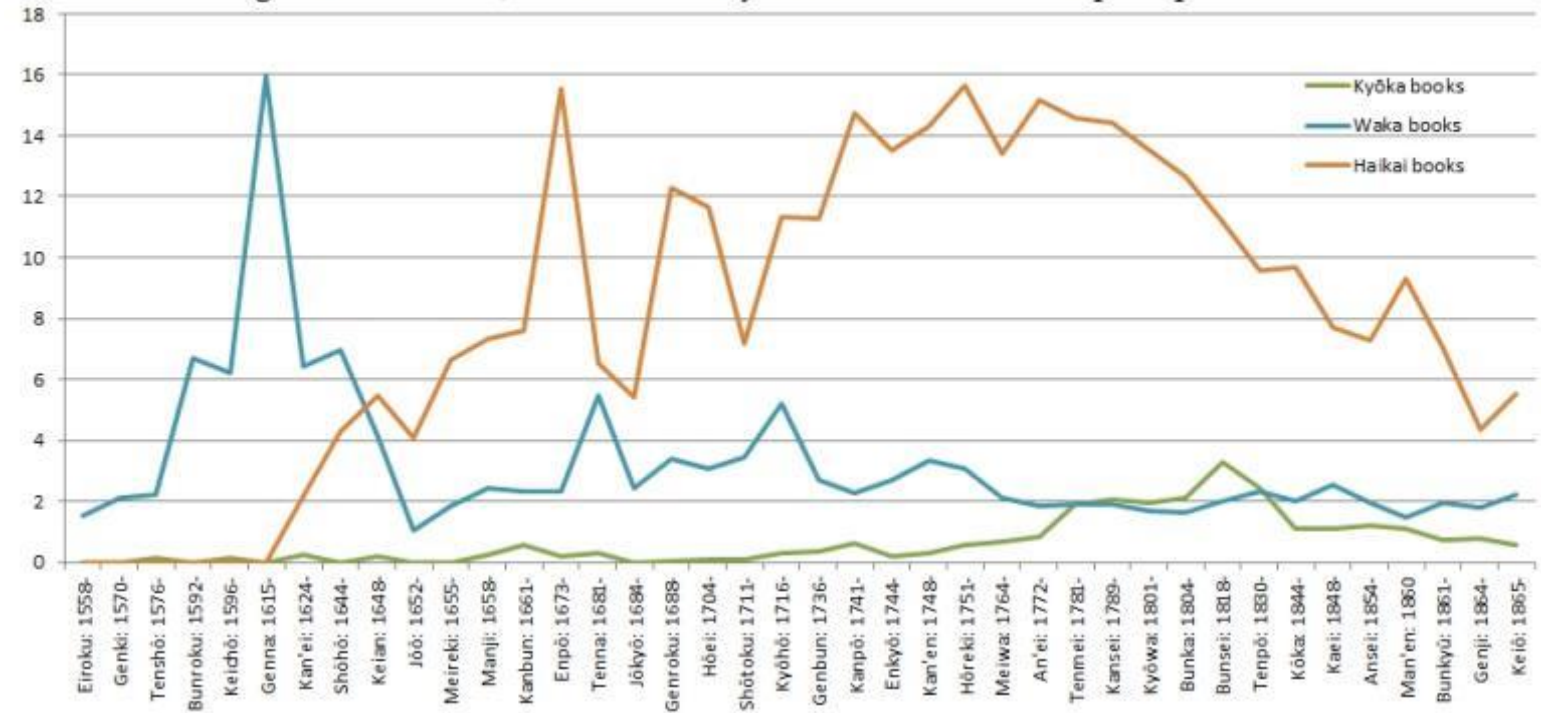


Fig. 11. Percentages of *haikai* books, *waka* books, and *kyōka* books within total output of published books

4.3.3 *Surimono* series publication numbers in relation to number of active poets

Surimono numbers give a false impression of the activities of *kyōka* poets and their networks. In fact, one could jump to a number of incorrect conclusions when considering the body of *surimono* issued over the years. One could be led to think that *kyōka* poets were all very rich and published only full-color marvels of Japanese printmaking. It may appear that *kyōka* as a genre became popular and organized only

at the beginning of the Bunka era, when more and more *surimono* series were commissioned by poetry groups. It would seem that most of these groups consisted of some twenty or thirty poets, based on numbers derived from *surimono* series numbering six or ten prints, for instance.

I have introduced ample materials in the previous chapters to illustrate the fact that the *kyōka* genre yielded many more publications, and that not all of these are ‘deluxe’. The data on *kyōka* book publication and the materials related to poetry matches revealed how the genre’s popularity and degree of organization rose, well before the appearance of larger-scale *surimono* projects. And while it is true that the peak in *surimono* series publication largely followed that of *kyōka* (competition result) books, the early years of the Tenpō era witness a sudden decline in *surimono* series’ publication numbers sharper than that of *kyōka* books. The drop in *surimono* series’ numbers is so sharp that if one considers these prints only, it may appear that the *kyōka* fashion was over in an instant - in exactly 1833, judging from appendix III. Again, the continued appearance of *kyōka* books and ranking tables proves that popularity of the genre dropped, though not as sharply as *surimono* publication numbers.²⁵¹

The matter of poetry group size in relation to *surimono* series presents a complex case to prove. Certainly, the evidence that the poets featured in *surimono* series represent only a portion of the poetry group that commissioned the series is overwhelming. Books and ranking tables give more, and more reliable data on participation numbers. The difficulty lies in matching these materials to specific *surimono* series. One case in which a match could be made is in the activities of the Katsushikaren in 1821. In that year, the circle led by Bunbunsha issued its largest *surimono* series, *Katsushika nijūshishō* 葛飾二十四将 (‘*Twenty-Four generals for the Katsushikaren*’), illustrated by Gakutei.²⁵² In the same year, the circle issued the competition result book *Kyōka chūyagyōjishū* 狂歌昼夜行事集 (‘*A kyōka anthology of events of the day and of the night*’), also illustrated by Gakutei, who actually also participated in this contest as a poet.²⁵³ The two

²⁵¹ Reasons for the decline in popularity of the genre are often attributed to the deaths of main leaders Magao and Rokujuen in 1829 and 1830 respectively. The sudden decline in *surimono* series may also have been caused in part by an economic downturn after the Bunsei era. Both these matters would benefit from further investigation. Since the correlation between poetry group membership numbers and *surimono* series’ publications is the main issue here, particulars with regard to said decline will not be discussed further.

²⁵² I have discussed the entire series in Carpenter (Ed., 2008), pp. 108-121.

²⁵³ The data I gathered are based on two copies; one in the Hirosaki City Public Library, acc. no. 272-296-3, and one in the National Library of Korea, acc. no. 古5-53-10. The former is original, yet incomplete and bound together with a separate volume issued by the Hanazonoren. The latter is the commercial edition published by Kadamaruya Jinsuke 角丸屋甚助 and Kawamura Giemon 川村儀右衛門, both located in Edo. This edition features an added preface by the “Master of publishing house Kōbundō 書肆耕文堂のあるし”, the firm name of fellow publisher Iseya Chūemon 伊勢屋忠右衛門, who promotes the book as a fine selection by Bunbunsha (although the original selection was done by Bunbunsha and Bunreisha 文齡舎 together!), from poems on subjects related to the ‘fixed events’ during the day and night, with illustrations by Gakutei. The selection was made, he writes, from poetry submitted by poets from Edo and also by poets ‘of name’ from (far) outside Edo. The volume is further stated to provide good examples for those starting to learn how to compose *kyōka*. The preface is dated Spring of the year of the Horse, which corresponds to 1822, one year after the initial release (it should be noted that the date of 1821 as listed in the database of the National Institute of Japanese Literature could not be verified in the first edition. The contents of the volume do, however, support this designation.). The awarded points are omitted in the commercial edition. An illustration of a fulling block and a mortar for treating cloth under a full moon, by Gakutei, is added, featuring a poem by Bunbunsha on this theme (Tamagawa/kinuta).

publications make for a valid comparison of scales.

To start with the simple numbers: the *surimono* series features 47 poems by 45 different poets, whereas the result book features 733 poems by 172 different individuals. Considering the fact that competition result books represent only part of the total number of competing poets, the number of individuals competing in this event likely exceeded 200. If indeed so, the ratio of the number of poets in the *surimono* series for that year to the number of poets active in the regular competition boils down to around 1 to 4, perhaps even 1 to 5.²⁵⁴ The matter at hand here is that of scale, and the above example indicates that even a large *surimono* series such as that of the twenty-four generals for the Katsushikaren features only a relatively small portion of the poets active in that *kyōka* group.

The relative incongruence between the size of *surimono* output and *kyōka* competition activity can be further illustrated by an example from the early years of the Tenpō era. The Sugawararen, led by Shakuyakutei Nagane, organized a large one-time competition in the fourth month of 1832. The dated announcement for this event survives in the Otsuma Women's University library collection.²⁵⁵ The results are stated to be published in two volumes, to be illustrated by Yanagawa Shigenobu. The 'assistants' to the organization, *hojo* 補助, number no less than 36 persons and (sub) circles.²⁵⁶ Shakuyakutei selected 100 topics on which the competitors should compose their *kyōka*. Clearly, the Sugawararen still operated on full steam in 1832. For the New Year of that same year, the group commissioned two sets of *surimono*: one consisting of two prints and one consisting of six prints. These are *Sugawararen niban* 菅原連二番 ('A set of two for the Sugawara group'), designed by Kien Keisei 葵園溪栖 (n.d.), and *Mutamagawa no uchi* 六玉川の内 ('The six crystal rivers'), designed by Utagawa Sadakage, respectively.²⁵⁷ The Sugawararen usually did not issue *surimono* series consisting of more than three designs in any year. In that respect, the total of eight designs commissioned for 1832 is relatively high for this group. Yet, in absolute number of designs (and

In the commercial edition, a colophon is, naturally, also added. The last page before the colophon is reserved for advertisements for four books (to be) issued by Kōbundō (!), all either illustrated or written (one occasion) by Gakutei. (One could say that his involvement is apparently of greater consequence to sales than the involvement of one or the other poetry master.) The two copies combined provide the necessary information with regard to the initial conception and execution of the publication.

²⁵⁴ Of course, we do not know whether a similar process applied to the selection of poets for the *surimono* series - i.e. not all poets who wished to see their name on a *surimono* for that year made the cut. It appears, however, that a different selection procedure was in place for *surimono* series. This question will be further addressed in section 4.5.

²⁵⁵ This document has no inventory number, however.

²⁵⁶ The *hojo* - whether (sub)circles or individuals - likely not only assisted with the preparations of the event, but also made a further financial contribution on top of the regular participation fees. Individuals who are listed as *hojo* usually competed as well, against poets who entered the competition the 'regular' way. Such individual poets who acted as *hojo* generally appear in the *banzuke* in the same way as other poets. In case the *hojo* was himself a judge, the marks given by fellow judges are listed, and a small circle is usually inserted in the position where the mark given by the judge in question would otherwise be placed.

²⁵⁷ One of the *surimono* of *Sugawararen niban* can be found in Keyes (1985), pl. 210. Kien Keisei is also known as Aoigaoka 葵岡 Keisei, after his teacher Hokkei. (Keisei and Sadakage also collaborated on a *kyōka* competition result book issued in 1831 for the Biwaren.) An entire set of six designs of *Mutamagawa no uchi* is kept in the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, The Netherlands, inventory nos. RV-3713-28~33. Five out of six designs are kept in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and feature in the catalogue by Forrer (2013), nos. 577-581.

poets featuring on these *surimono*), the small total could lead one to believe that the group was not very sizeable, while the output of books and the number of participating poets certainly contradicts that notion. Even in 1832, when the entire *kyōka* society is often stated - in *surimono* catalogues at least - to have been in strong decline, participation numbers were much higher than *surimono* publication numbers suggest.

In conclusion, the figures presented in the above section substantiate the argument that *kyōka* books and *surimono* series are for the most part to be understood as products of networks of poets. Furthermore, the implications of certain materials - whether books, prints or otherwise - with regard to *kyōka* group size and activity should always be weighed against the scale of the *kyōka* society as a whole in the year of publication. A book published during the Tenmei era featuring 50 poets may represent a substantial portion of the *kyōka* society of that year, whereas a book issued during the Bunsei era featuring twice the number of poets may in comparison be relatively inconsequential within the entire *kyōka* society of that later year. And even then, while the scale on which the genre of *kyōka* was practiced may have increased considerably and rapidly from the Tenmei era onwards, *kyōka* books took up only a modest share compared to *haikai* poetry books published during the same years. Lastly, the decline in publication numbers of *surimono* series during the Tenpō era prove to be a not so trustworthy reflection of the *kyōka* competition activities that were being held. In other words; although the age of *surimono* may have come to a sudden end, *kyōka* networks and their members continued their pursuits for some years to follow.

4.4 Status, class, and social identity: redefining boundaries

The sudden rise in popularity of the genre of *kyōka* is often attributed in part to the fact that class boundaries were disregarded at the poetry meetings. With regard to the important early *kyōka* meeting organized on the occasion of Ōta Nanpo's mother's 60th birthday in 1783, Iwasaki Haruko states: "Clearly, a new world was taking form, free from society's hierarchies", and subsequently quotes the prominent poet Baba Kinrachi 馬場金埒 (1750s-1808)²⁵⁸, who commented: "At this happy party, held in celebration today, all distinctions of class have been discarded and, dispensing with rigid formality, people are addressing each other with "ore" and "ware," the most casual forms of "I" and "you.""²⁵⁹ The situation

²⁵⁸ Also known as Zeniya Kinrachi 錢屋金埒. He was a moneylender by trade living near Sukiwabashi and was renowned as one of the 'four heavenly kings of *kyōka*' (狂歌四天王 *kyōka shitennō*) of the Yomogawa. See KJJ p. 57 and Kobayashi, F. (2009), pp. 309-325. He died at the age of 'over 50' on the 4th day of the 12th month of Bunka 4, i.e. January 1st, 1808.

²⁵⁹ Iwasaki (1984), pp. 205-206. Baba's quote translated by Iwasaki. Baba's observation is recorded in *Kyōka kyōbun rōraishi* 狂歌狂文老萊子 (Rō Raishi [Ch. Lao Laizi, living in the Kingdom of Chū 楚, which existed from c. 1030 to 223 BC] was a filial son who, at the age of over 70 himself, dressed and acted as a child in order to make his parents forget their age. Nanpo's kindness of throwing his mother such a party is apparently likened to Rō Raishi's exemplary filial piety.). This book, according to Iwasaki, "grew out of the gathering". It was

of discarded class boundaries that she detects is not unique to *kyōka*, for Ikegami Eiko makes a similar claim with regard to *haikai* poetry networks: “The *haikai* universe encouraged the participating poets to socialize with others by neglecting worldly categorical identities of individuals.”²⁶⁰

The notion that class boundaries were temporarily suspended during these cultural meetings is problematic in various respects. First and foremost: although ‘class’ was undeniably very consciously perceived by Japanese of the Edo period, the definitions and ramifications of class and status are complicated by a discrepancy between official views of the time and the actual situation in daily life. Second, there is both tension and overlap between the concepts of class and status. It is no coincidence that Iwasaki and Ikegami use terms such as “society’s hierarchies” and “worldly categorical identities” to evade this terminology. I largely follow the definitions that Howland has formulated with regard to the situation in Edo society: Status refers to the legal category into which one was born, whereas class is a combination of status and economic position.²⁶¹

The following section aims to explore the definitions of these concepts in the late Edo period in the eyes of those who were active in the genre of *kyōka* - essentially a cultural pursuit. The very fact that *kyōka*-related materials make frequent mention of, or illustrate matters with regard to, class and status indicates that the poets were conscious of these issues. The discussion of these materials will result in the view that although class and status were by no means a requirement or indeed a constraint for joining the *kyōka* competition, the idea that class and status were of no consequence is false.

4.4.1 The configuration of social identity

Traditionally, the Edo-period society was divided into four status groups: the samurai, the farmers, the artisans, and the merchants. The Japanese term for this status used in the Edo period is *mibun* 身分. The four groups are together known as *shinōkōshō* 士農工商 and based on a Confucian concept implemented loosely by the government.²⁶² These four groups are thus separated by birth status in an inherently rigid hierarchic system of hereditary social ranks. The primary separation is that between the samurai, *shi* 士 or *bushi* 武士, and the peasants, *nō* 農. The samurai ruled over the peasantry and in turn the peasantry sustained the livelihood of the samurai rulers, such was the general idea(l). A primary separating aspect - which was observed fairly strictly - was the monopoly on violence in order to enforce

published by Tsutaya Jūzaburō in 1784, the year after the party, in five volumes.

²⁶⁰ Ikegami (2005), p. 171. The entire chapter seven in Ikegami (2005) is devoted to the network qualities of *haikai* poetry and the opportunities for cross-class engagement in cultural networks.

²⁶¹ Howland (2001).

²⁶² See Fogel (1996), p. 430. By the way, although the division into four classes may seem extensive, it does not account for several groups in society; the imperial aristocracy, *kuge* 公家, the class that historically (Heian period) relied on the samurai to enforce their government regulations, is ignored in this system. The clergy - both Buddhist and Shintō - a substantial part of the population, is omitted. Third, and perhaps unsurprisingly, outcastes known as *eta* エタ, ‘untouchables’ or *hinin* 非人 ‘non-humans’, receive no mention. According to Howland (2001, p. 358), relying on various sources among which a contemporary account by Von Siebold, the “shoguns’ law described roughly eight legal statuses”. Howland offers an extensive discussion of (debate on) samurai status and class in the Edo period.

rule, which translated to being allowed to wear swords or not. This policy was originally implemented by samurai overlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537-1598) in 1588. The artisans, *keō* 工, were regarded of less value than the food-producing peasants, but were equally ruled over by the samurai. The merchants, *shō* 商, were seen - in the Confucian view - as parasitic for not producing anything and busying themselves only with the accumulation of financial wealth.

In the urban society of Edo, the balance between these status groups did not match the ideal. By the late eighteenth century, several developments that were not accounted for in the concept, had taken place. In the broadest strokes: The samurai were confronted with a shift in tasks from military to administrative.²⁶³ Although the samurai represented only some six percent of the population, the city of Edo was populated with a higher percentage due to the city's central administrative function within the government of Japan. Peasants, on the other hand, by far the largest group in Japanese society, were hardly represented in the city. Most of the non-samurai inhabitants of Edo fell in the groups of artisans and merchants, with a wide variety among them. The term that was used for the general population of the major cities is *chōnin* 町人, 'townspeople'. The division between samurai and *chōnin* was strict in the sense that *chōnin* could not aspire to any position in the government administration, let alone political posts. It must be noted, on the other hand, that samurai were expected not to lower their standards and dabble in trade of any kind. The permission to wear swords is a bit of a grey area. Only those of samurai stock were allowed to wear a pair of swords, one long, one shorter, yet some *chōnin* were allowed to wear one short sword.²⁶⁴ To inhabitants of the cities, however, whether a man standing before them belonged to the samurai class or not will have been instantly clear, not (only) from the absence or presence of sword, but from the entire appearance, clothing, hairstyle, etc., and also from intangible attributes such as speech. It must be noted, however, that there were considerable differences in standing between samurai as the entire samurai class was meticulously ranked based on ties to the shogun's family, fief size, capability in official duties, etc., which in turn had an effect on the height of the stipend.

A major factor in the blurring of class perimeters in late Edo society is economic capital. As long as the peasantry is able to produce sufficient crops to feed the nation, and artisans and merchants are sufficiently and effectively taxed, the equilibrium is sustained. The early modern economy of the late Edo period, however, relied on a monetary system that was all but favorable to the samurai, whose stipends were calculated in rice.²⁶⁵ Thus, discrepancies arose between impoverished samurai and wealthy merchants. While the former ranked higher in birth status, the latter may have enjoyed a superior economic status. The *bakufu* issued various measures to counteract such situations throughout the Edo period, none ultimately successful. When measuring class by means of economic power, then, the population was

²⁶³ Ikegami (1995) deals with this shift extensively.

²⁶⁴ A set of two swords is commonly known as *daishō* 大小 ('large and small'), usually consisting of a long sword, *tachi* 太刀 or an *uchigatana* 打刀, and a shorter sword, *wakizashi* 脇差. Howland (2001) mentions on p. 358 and p. 361 that some townsmen or farmers would "exceed their status" (financially for instance) and marry into samurai status or receive special permission to bear swords.

²⁶⁵ See also Nakane (1991), for a succinct overview of "Tokugawa society" and the divisions between classes.

divided along lines that differed considerably from those drawn in the concept of *shinōkōshō*. This helps to explain how merchants were able to interact with samurai in *kyōka* society, in such an egalitarian manner.

Economic capital was not distributed in congruence with the traditional division status groups, and neither was cultural capital. Certainly, samurai were expected to adhere to a code called *bunbu* 文武, ‘arts and weapons’, meaning they were to keep up both their fighting skills and their literary skills. The latter was nurtured at domain schools, *hankeō* 藩校. Enrollment in these domain schools was, as explained by Dore (1965), granted or required for “sons of all but the lower ranks of samurai retainers”.²⁶⁶ Yet, according to Nakane (1991), since the curriculum was bent on instilling Confucian ethics, “as a status group the samurai had little scholarly impact upon society”.²⁶⁷ Nakane sees this as a reason for Japan’s strong popular culture in the Edo period:

[...] because there was no specific social stratum assuming responsibility for the furtherance of scholarship, the arts, and culture in general, it was left to the common people to provide the driving force for their development. This is why Japan has such a strong tradition of popular culture. Ironically, the hereditary separation of samurai and peasants limited the economic power of the samurai elite while at the same time it unleashed the energies of the common people.²⁶⁸

The theory of a ‘cultural vacuum’ that was then filled by commoners is appealing. It requires, however, answering the question where and how the common people acquired their knowledge and cultural tastes. During the second half of the Edo period, such information was less difficult to attain than might be expected. Commoners had the opportunity to attend *terakoya* 寺子屋, little private schools aimed foremost at elementary education in *yomi kaki soroban* 読み書き算盤 (reading, writing, abacus). Teachers would come from all social backgrounds and the curriculum could further include moral education, letter writing, geography, history and skills useful in daily life - sometimes specifically aimed at girls.²⁶⁹ Those who had learned to read had access to a vast array of educational and informational books, known collectively as *ōraimono* 往来物, published during the Edo period. Scholarship on (classical) literature and most every other thinkable cultural pursuit were also available in print. Furthermore, education was not necessarily limited to the *terakoya*, as specialists in various fields - *waka* for instance - would teach students for a fee. The availability of such knowledge and the ‘impact of print’ are of course simultaneously an impetus for, and a result of market demand. Well-developed education and the advent of print created the circumstance in which cultural knowledge could be transmitted between classes.

²⁶⁶ Dore (1965), p. 60.

²⁶⁷ Nakane (1991), p. 228.

²⁶⁸ Nakane (1991), p. 228.

²⁶⁹ A popularizing illustrated explanatory book (Ichikawa and Ishiyama (2006)) published in correspondence with an exhibition on the subject of learning in the Edo period held at the Edo-Tokyo Museum in 2006 presents various primary materials in support of this.

The way individuals in Edo society, and *kyōka* poets in particular, viewed themselves and others is the result of various factors of which those discussed above are of greatest consequence. Certainly, other factors must have been of influence; geographical location, occupation, talent(s), position within family, age, social connections, fame, etc., etc. In theory, the primary factor for *kyōka* poets was the degree of cultural sophistication, followed by talent perhaps. Regardless of class background or occupation, those who excelled at composing poetry - in a genre that relied heavily on cultural references - could aspire to the highest ranks within *kyōka* circles. The following section discusses primary materials that incorporate references to status, occupation, or cultural knowledge in order to see how social identity was perceived among *kyōka* poets.

4.4.2 The regard for status in *kyōka* groups

It becomes apparent from *kyōka* books throughout its Golden Age that *kyōka* poets were very socially conscious. This is clear from several *kyōkabon* that not only list each poet's pen-name, *kyōka* circles of affiliation, but also record their real name, hometown or sometimes full address,²⁷⁰ and sometimes even birth status or occupation. Any possibility of anonymity is obviously out of the question this way. The many portraits of poets found in *kyōka* books convey important information on the status and social identity of individual poets, which can be judged from types of clothing, the types of hairdo, and the presence (or absence) of swords and other paraphernalia. At times, this status and identity are played with but most portraits appear to depict the poets in congruence with their actual personal situation.

The fact that an indication of status is given is remarkable in two ways. It indicates that status was a factor in the categorization of poets, despite the notion expressed by authors such as Iwasaki²⁷¹ that such boundaries were of little or no consequence in the *kyōka* world. Furthermore, it shows that the *kyōka* poets themselves, or at least the selectors, were conscious of the mix of people from various stations in life active in their poetry genre. Readers apparently valued the inclusion of this information, which may have helped them appreciate both the prestige and variety in their circle or network. The information may have also helped in the communication between members at gatherings, or in correspondence and interaction outside the *kyōka* meetings.

An example of a *kyōka* information book in which birth status is explicitly mentioned is *Kyōka gazō sakusha burui* 狂歌画像作者部類 ('*Illustrated categorization of kyōka poets*'), edited by Rokujuen, illustrated by Hōtei Gosei, and published in two *ōhon* volumes by the firm Bunkōdō 文光堂 of Edo in 1811.²⁷² The total number of *kyōka* poets portrayed is 173. Additionally, many more poets both from

²⁷⁰ Since different status groups were to live in designated parts of the city, especially in the case of Edo, the address can be a clue with regard to the status of a person.

²⁷¹ Iwasaki (1984). It must be noted that Iwasaki's thesis concerns the early stages of *kyōka* popularity.

²⁷² Rokujuen states in his preface that Gyokkōsha Uramasa was the driving force behind the editing work of this book, checking what everyone's actual name and address was. The copy discussed here is kept in the National Institute of Japanese Literature, inv. no. ナ2-237.

earlier times and contemporaneous poets are featured with a poem only, placed in the space above the portraits. For the poets who feature with both poem and portrait, biographical data is given. This consists of other pen names, actual names, places of residence, and in many cases an indication of their status. Since this part of the data is not complete for the entire group of poets, no exact numbers can be calculated with regard to ratios. However, 38 poets of samurai descent and eighteen merchants could be identified.²⁷³ Fig. 12 shows a samurai in full attire on the right hand side and a merchant on the left. This image was selected to illustrate that samurai and merchants could feature side by side. Poets are not sorted according to birth status in this book - nor in any other *kyōka* book that I encountered. In fact, in this book, there are no specific criteria to be found with regard to the order in which the poets are presented. The book is an overview of a large number of poets and not the result of a competition, which is why scores will not have been the principle selection method. Nonetheless, it is possible that the ranking of these poets within the Gogawa, for instance based on their position in the monthly *tsukinami* competitions, was of influence in the position they got assigned in the book under investigation here. Among the remainder in the book are eight women, four of whom courtesans, three of the others with a direct family relation to other male poets. Other indications include seven farmers, a handful of doctors, an occasional priest, and one actor (portrayed in a female role). Four men are listed as book traders, *shoshi* 書肆. One would think that these fall in the category of merchants, but apparently this trade deserves a specific mention.

²⁷³ Either indicated as such, or likely belonging in this status group based on attributes such as a *kamishimo* and/or a pair of swords (samurai), or account books and/or abacuses (merchants) - the regular iconographic clues. This is not indisputable, I admit; one merchant (indicated as such in the biographical text) sports a fine pair of swords. As I have explained earlier, some merchants were able to acquire rights to bearing swords through the purchase of family titles from impoverished samurai.



Fig. 12. The samurai (“*buke* 武家”) Sodehiko 袖彦 (KJJ, p. 117) from Gifu (right) and the merchant (“*kojin* 賈人”) Mitsumori 満守 (KJJ, p. 223) from Edo on the left (sheet 15V and 16R in *Kyōka gazō sakusha burui*). coll. National Institute of Japanese Literature, inv. no. ナ2-237. The pen name Mitsumori, written with the characters ‘full’ and ‘protect, guard’, is likely a play of words referring to his occupation, since a *mitsumori* 見積もり is the business term for ‘quotation’. According to KJJ, Mitsumori was a rice trader.

The status of the individual poets is also recorded in the *kyōka* information book *Kyōka kijintan* 狂歌奇人譚 (‘*Stories of kyōka eccentrics*’), written and illustrated by Gakutei, and published by Ōsakaya Mokichi 大阪屋茂吉 (firm name Bunkaidō 文魁堂) of Edo, in 1824. This book gives a short biography and an interesting story for various poets.²⁷⁴ Each story starts with a mention of the poet’s status. The table of contents lists only the poet’s names and the category in which they fall. The total number of poets in *Kyōka kijintan* is 48. Five are listed as *buke* 武家 (unusually, one of them female; most women in appearing in *kyōka* books are from the licensed quarters), just two are listed as *nōka* 農家, three are listed as *kōka* 工家,²⁷⁵ 28 are listed as *shōka* 商家. The remaining ten fall into other categories. That is to say, they are marked differently, although some of them should be considered to belong to the same status group. For instance, a (former) daimyo of a domain in the Chūgoku 中國 region, Kitsugoen Kagumi 橘

²⁷⁴ The book consists of three volumes in six fascicles. The preliminary notes in the second volume state that the poets who had an interesting story to their name were selected, regardless of their fame.

²⁷⁵ Reading could not be confirmed; other possibilities include *kōke* or *kuge* (not to be confused with 公家).

五園香久美,²⁷⁶ essentially belonging to the *buke*, is listed as *kōke* 侯家, to be translated as '(feudal) nobility'. In some cases, the indication of profession seems to have been given prevalence over the Confucian division in four status groups. We find one fisherman, who would have probably belonged to the peasantry legally. One courtesan is listed, two doctors and one Shintō priest. One poet has no designation of status or profession. Three poets are listed as *yūmin* 遊民, or 'play folk', a designation used for those who can make a living from their activities as popular writers or poets.²⁷⁷

It is clear from the previous examples that the traditional Confucian division into four groups was to some extent adhered to, albeit with the addition of some categories. The reality of Edo society demanded a little more precision than the standard four status groups. Some added categories represent merely a further division by occupation - fisherman instead of peasantry; doctor instead of (in most cases likely) samurai status. In the case of *buke* or *shōke*, however, it is just the birth status that is noted, without further specification - despite the variation in samurai rank or mercantile success. Other categories such as priest or courtesan can be considered actual additions. These two categories are similar in the fact that one is not born into it and they therefore do not constitute birth status. A courtesan may have been born into a peasant family and underwent extensive cultivation at a Yoshiwara brothel. Her social identity would have been quite poorly reflected in the designation 'peasantry' as birth status.

The networks around Rokujuen and Gakutei give the impression of a more or less balanced mix of social backgrounds, representative of the urban society of the Edo period. Not all circles have such a varied membership. The Katsushikaren, headed by Bunbunsha who was of samurai birth, is a case in point. The high concentration of men sporting a fine *kamishimo* 袴 garment and a fashionably mounted pair of swords is obvious from this group's portrait books, even without counting. Not only the samurai, other members of this group too, mostly merchants and doctors, were clearly well off. Judging from the luxurious books and *surimono* issued by this group, the members could amass considerable funds for their publications.²⁷⁸

The boundary of birth status did not completely dissolve in the *kyōka* world. Two cases can be identified in which a (former or future) daimyo, in essence a high-ranking samurai, was portrayed in a *kyōka* book. I have mentioned Kitsugoen Kagumi in *Kyōka kijintan* above. Another example is Ryūōtei Edo no Hananari who would become twelfth daimyo of Chōshū 長州 domain, present-day Yamaguchi prefecture, some three years after his appearance in *Azuma fūryū rokurokassen jinmeiroku* 東風流六々歌仙

²⁷⁶ Judge for the Gogawa during the Bunsei era, see KJJ p. 41. Exactly which domain he led is unclear. At the time this *kyōka* book was issued, he had apparently already retired and lived in Nagoya.

²⁷⁷ The use of the word *yūmin* in *Kyōka kijintan* is discussed by Ishikawa Jun, in his *Edo bungaku shōki* (1980, pp. 7-19) where he explains that *yūmin* are the people of Edo who make their living from playful activities such as *kyōka*. The ones listed as *yūmin* are Rokujuen, Kyokutei Bakin and Jippensha Ikku, each successful writers and prominent figures in popular literary culture. It deserves mention here that Huizinga (1974, pp. 33-34) presents the word *asobu* as an example of the expression of the concept of "play" in the Japanese language. As a matter of fact, Huizinga's concept of the playing man, *homo ludens*, could very well be translated into Japanese with the word *yūmin*.

²⁷⁸ Bunbunsha's biography in *Kyōka kijintan* reports him to be skilled at numbers, which may have helped him make sound calculations for meetings and publication projects.

人銘録.²⁷⁹ Both these men are portrayed in the opening illustration in the respective books. The biographical data in each book does not specify their ranks, but it is telling that these poets take this prominent position in the publications. Hananari features in *Sansaihana hyakushū* 三才花百首 ('One hundred poems from a trinity of flowers') and is listed there as Hananari [*no*] *kimi* 花成君, 'Lord Hananari'.²⁸⁰ Rank, it seems, was not entirely ignored.

The *tentori* system with the awarding of points, led to a meritocratic view of poetry. In the *kyōka* competition - in theory at least - poets were only judged by the merits of their poems, not by their social standing. As a matter of fact, when people of samurai status, townsmen of all kinds, and peasants joined to compete, it was possible that, based on the quality, poems by citizens of lower status were printed in the highly awarded sections of the book, and even on the illustrated pages. This meritocratic ideal is fascinating from a sociological point of view, yet is also contradicted in primary materials. The boundary of economic class remained intact even if birth status had been completely ignored. The entry fees, discussed section 4.2, dictated that those with a limited budget could only submit small numbers of poems, or perhaps none at all. Submitting larger numbers of poems increased the chances of scoring well in the overall ranking. Investing money, in short, increased the chances for talent to be recognized.

The overall impression given through the status indications and the various portraits is that of a network that consists of serious enthusiasts who do not necessarily share birth status, occupation or social identity, who perhaps fit into the same economic class to a certain extent, but principally share a cultural interest. Any network can only survive if there is a common connecting element. In the *kyōka* society at large, this connecting element was a cultural understanding, the mutual interest in the content of the genre, rather than a specific social status. In smaller parts of the network, *kyōka* circles around one *kyōka* master, the variety in cultivation and status was smaller accordingly. Yet, while status was not the common denominator in either case, it was all but ignored.

4.5 Social connections: What you know and who you know

Kyōka poets are simultaneously part of a small-scale circle, medium-sized network, and large-scale society. They advance in the genre through tutelage from a poetry master, they meet poets from other circles at gatherings that are open to the full scope of the network, and as purveyors of the *kyōka* genre, they form part of an entire society that connected likeminded spirits from all over the country. When the *kyōka* society was at its peak, it was - in theory - possible for enthusiasts to form part of the society without

²⁷⁹ As I have mentioned earlier, in section 3.3.3. See Tsuda (2008), pp. 62-71.

²⁸⁰ Collection NDL, inv. no. 特1-2427, last poem on sheet 5 verso. The title alludes to the concept of *tenchijin* 天地人, Heaven, Earth, and Man, along which the poems are divided. It in turn points to the three judges who judged each of these sections. The *kyōka* competition event was held in Kawachiyarō 河内屋楼 (Restaurant Kawachiya, the name of this restaurant surfaces in other *kyōka* materials as well) in Yanagibashi, Ryōgoku, Edo, on the 26th day of the 4th month of Bunsei 11 (1828). The blocks for this book were in possession of Shun'yūtei Umehide, a major player in the *kyōka* world of the Tenpō era. He hosted *kyōka* competitions with support from the Higakiren 檜垣連 (headed by his father Kaien Umeaki) and financed/owned blocks for other high quality *kyōka* books as well.

being connected to a teacher or network. Through the many *kyōka* publications aimed at the general public, amateurs could learn without receiving direct instruction. It will have been more difficult to actively participate in the events organized by circles and networks, though. It will have been equally or even more difficult to reach a prominent position within the institutionalized society and be awarded the coveted exposure in ranking tables and illustrated books, at least compared to those who invested in regular lessons and competition entry fees.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on the parameters of circles, networks, and the entire *kyōka* society. Working from small to large, I will explain and illustrate the outlines of each of these levels that I discern. The position of poets within each level shall be discussed, mainly for the Bunka and Bunsei eras. Without having access to exact personal thoughts of any poet on his or her position in the *kyōka* society, it is through *kyōka* books, *kyōka* paintings, *surimono* and *surimono* albums that can be explored how poets were connected to one another. The position of poets within their circle, their network and the *kyōka* society as a whole can be deduced from appearance in *kyōka* books. *Surimono* albums, rare though they may be now in complete form, offer an insight into the personal connections that single poets maintained.

4.5.1 Circles, networks, institutionalized *kyōka* society

The *kyōka* society in Edo essentially started with a single circle. The induction of *kyōka* in Edo surrounding the *waka* teacher Uchiyama Gatei and the subsequent popularization starting with the likes of Ōta Nanpo and Karagoromo Kisshū have been mentioned in the section 3.1.1; the rate of expansion of these circles has already been treated in section 4.3. The concept of a poetry circle consisting of a teacher and pupils existed since long before Edo *kyōka*. The major difference with *waka* is perhaps that education in these older poetic forms could be regarded as part of a cultivated upbringing. Composing *kyōka* initially entailed playing around with poetry. The cultural prestige of a *kyōka* poetry master could therefore not be compared to the eminence of teachers of classical *waka* poetry. This would change with the progressing popularity of the genre of *kyōka*, to a point where certain *kyōka* masters were seen as major cultural figures in the popular arts.

The boundaries of *kyōka* circles, in terms of size and geographical spread, are inherently limited in comparison to networks and the entire society. The circle in essence consists of one leader and a group of followers. The followers may occupy different levels, depending on the entire size and degree of organization of the circle. In contemporaneous sources, amateur poets who receive tutelage of a *kyōka* master are described with the phrase “[...] の門に遊ぶ *no mon ni asobu*”, which literally translates to “play at [...]’s gate”. *Mon*, in this case, means ‘private school’ or ‘class’, and the phrase is commonly used for any relation of a pupil to a master.²⁸¹ The original meaning of the word *mon* does confer the idea that a master received pupils at his or her residence, and taught them there. In a society that essentially travelled on foot,

²⁸¹ The related word *monjin* 門人, translates to ‘pupil’ or ‘disciple’.

this had repercussions for the geographical distance between the master and the pupils - at least those who wished to receive direct instruction on a regular basis.

The common Japanese term used in contemporaneous sources to designate such a circle is *ren* 連, ‘party, company, gang’. Another, less common word that is used is *shachū* 社中, ‘company, clique, troupe’. Two notable examples are the Hisakataya *shachū* 久堅屋社中 and the Shakuyakutei *shachū*. Another word commonly encountered is *gawa* 側, literally ‘side’. This word is mostly used for the major organizations headed by Magao and Rokujuen.²⁸² The reason for the use of the word *gawa* with its meaning of ‘side’ probably lies in the antagonistic relation between these two *kyōka* greats. Magao and Rokujuen attracted such a large and nationwide following that these should be designated as network rather than circle. This is not to say that the word *gawa* should be translated as ‘network’. The use of this word is inconsistent in primary sources, one example being the relatively small circle around Dondontei Wataru that is pertinently dubbed Taikogawa. Furthermore, it is questionable to what extent the poets of the time were preoccupied with (sociologically) framing the various interrelations. One term that surfaces in for instance competition announcements could be regarded as equivalent to ‘network’ as I use it here; *sōren* 総連, or ‘cluster of circles’.²⁸³ This term is used as a sort of umbrella term for *ren* that interconnect and cooperate, for instance in organizing an event. The bottom line, however, is that the use of the various words is not consistent and care must be taken to consider the circumstances of the use of these terms in contemporary sources when translating them.

Circles around a *kyōka* master were by no means isolated entities. Many *kyōka* events were open to participants from the various circles. Furthermore, circles connected to circles in other cities. In some cases, these should be considered branches of the main trunk that was located in Edo. It is these types of connections that constitute networks of *kyōka* circles.

The connections being forged are a by-product, argues Takahashi, of the circumstances of the Edo period, when *bakufu* government required a constant circulation of personnel.²⁸⁴ The majority of communication between poets separated by lengthy journeys, however, will not have been face-to-face. The advanced infrastructure and level of organization of monetary and postal systems of the mid to late Edo period paved the way for connections between people that would have never had any means of communicating perhaps only as little as a century before. Moriya Katsuhisa sketches the development of communication channels during the Edo period:

²⁸² A notable example is *Shinkyōkakei* 新狂歌鱧 (‘New *Kyōka* Lineage’), edited by Shakuyakutei, where the designation *gawa* is used for most circles. This publication comprises two volumes in four fascicles, *chūhon* format, and dates to 1837.

²⁸³ Usually written with the older version of the character, 總. I thank Dr. Makino Satoshi for his confirmation of my findings, through email, April 2015.

²⁸⁴ Takahashi (2007) labels these people - or should we say *this* people - as *tenkinzoku* 転勤族, ‘the work transfer tribe’.

As cities came into existence all over early modern Japan, an inter-urban communication network became firmly established. Much of the information in the system was political, but the main body of data was economic. Once a town reached a certain level of maturity, however, cultural information also proliferated.²⁸⁵

Kyōka poets made good use of these possibilities. Since some of them were active in the government and many were active in trade, they were familiar with or had access to these ways of information exchange on a professional basis, even before they would use these networks for the dissemination of cultural information.

The clearest evidence of this is found in announcements for competitions and similar *kyōka* events. The reliability of the postal system ensured that participation of poets from outside Edo could be invited for *kyōka* competitions. After the gathering, ranking tables and result books would be dispatched to poets in other cities, likely through one central figure in each separate city who had also taken responsibility for gathering the poems before they were submitted to the judges. Before such a competition and all the assisting partakers could be announced, many preparations would have needed to be discussed through extensive written communication.

²⁸⁵ Moriya (1991), p. 114. This chapter by Moriya (in Nakane and Ōishi (Eds, 1991) also covers transformation and postal routes, and delivery of mail within cities.



Fig. 13. Announcement for *kyōka* awase in commemoration of Fugurumaan, 1832, coll. Otsuma Women's University library (no inv. no.).

Fig. 13 presents an announcement that illustrates the points made above. It was organized in commemoration of Fugurumaan Fumikazu 文車庵文員, who died on the 6th day of the 5th month of Tenpō 3 (1832), aged 66 by Japanese count.²⁸⁶ This event was held in the 8th month of the same year; although that part of the date is not specified, it can be just made out from the introductory text in Shakuyakutei's distinctive hand.²⁸⁷ Poets are invited to submit four poems, two for each subject: 'moon' (judged by Shakuyakutei) and 'geese' (judged by Sensōan [the third]).²⁸⁸ Those who end up in the top three rows of the large ranking table will be given a prize. There is no fee, costs are borne by the supporting poets and *ren*. Those are grouped into *ren* and *sōren*, which are in turn sorted by city. First listed are the Suigyo *sōren* 水魚總連, various judges and circles grouped under the Suigyoren.²⁸⁹ Ten judges (marked

²⁸⁶ See KJJ, p. 193. Reading uncertain; could alternatively be Bunshaan Bun'in.

²⁸⁷ This announcement is kept in the collection of Otsuma Women's University, Tokyo. No inventory number assigned. The text is of course printed, as is the entire announcement, yet in shape the characters are copied after Shakuyakutei's individual, typical, and rather difficult to decipher handwriting. He writes that Fugurumaan passed away "in the middle of this fifth month", "此臯月なつかば *kono satsuki nakaba*".

²⁸⁸ Shakuyakutei is marked here as *sōsho*, Sensōan - the third (Harumura 春村), a *kokugaku* scholar - is marked as *ushi*.

²⁸⁹ According to Ishikawa (2011), p. 377, the Suigyoren is a combination of the former Gogawa headed by

with a circle) and poets from Edo are followed by three from Sendai, one from Nagoya, one from Asō 麻生, one from Nishio 西尾, one from Tsu 津, three from Mikawa, Shimōsa province 三河 下総, one from Hatchōme 八丁目 and one from Kawamata 川俣. Then follow seven members of the Sugawararen, all from Edo.²⁹⁰ Next, nineteen poets and judges of the Asakusagawa, listed as Senmon sōren 浅門總連, ‘The entire circle of pupils of Sensōan’. These too are all from Edo. The fourth section is reserved for the Chigusa sōren 千種總連, headed by Chigusaan Moromochi 千種庵諸持 (1791-1858). Three of them come from Edo, three others from ‘Echi’ (indicating either Echizen 越前 or Echigo 越後 province), Hōjubana 宝朱花, and Asō. The remainder, about two-fifths, is filled with the names of poets who belong to the Fugurumashachū. They come from Dewa 出羽 province (the Obanaren 尾花連, ten poets), Iida 飯田 in Musashi 武蔵 province (the Fūgetsuren 風月連, six poets), and 30 from Edo. It is specifically indicated that certain members of the Fugurumashachū bore the cost of printing, and miscellaneous costs. The list, which in its entirety takes up half of the announcements’ surface area, ends with the names of three proofreaders, one calligrapher, and three organizers, last of which the Fuguruma sōren.

The fact that such a large number of participants could be mobilized in such a relatively short time span is indicative of an efficiently functioning network. In distance, the network spreads out over 800 kilometers: 400 kilometers to the northeast and equally far to the southwest. The number of days between Fugurumaan’s death and the closing date for submitting the poems is 78. Within that limited timeframe, the news of his death had been spread, at least some 60 people had agreed to support a commemorative event, a venue and poem collecting locations had been fixed, and an announcement had been drafted, printed and distributed. All these tasks had to be completed well before the closing date - I estimate at least a month and a half - in order to allow poets from far away *ren* the time to receive the announcement, compose and submit their contributions in time. In an era essentially without wheeled transport or telecommunication, this was no mean feat. It is, however not unique to this event. Announcements for similar or even larger events, commemorative and regular competition, are found in the Otsuma Women’s University library collection. The scale, geographical spread, and level of organization as witnessed in these announcements is testament to the well-defined and reliable network structure of the *kyōka* genre during the late Bunsei and the Tenpō eras.

Rokujuen, and the Sugawararen headed by Shakuyakutei. Nonetheless, the circles under the Sugawararen are listed separately in this example. According to the entry for Hōshitei Masunari *Shin kyōkakei* of 1837, the Suigyoren included also Hōshitei Masunari (originally Senshūgawa), Shiseidō Sutena (originally Taikogawa), Hakumōsha Manmori (originally Katsushikaren), and Hasakian Yonemori (originally Hanazonoren); I thank Makino Satoshi for pointing this out to me. The word *suigyo* derives from the expression “*suigyo no majiwari* 水魚の交わり”, which translates to “close as water and fishes”.

²⁹⁰ The Sugawararen is not listed as *sōren*, but as *goren* 御連, an honorific used likely because of Shakuyakutei’s involvement as the principal judge.

In simple terms, *kyōka* society is the entirety of all the circles and networks together. Other terms used in English literature are for instance ‘*kyōka* world’, and ‘*kyōka* movement’. ‘*Kyōka* world’ is fairly neutral, and I employ the term sporadically throughout this thesis. The term ‘*kyōka* movement’ has a political connotation that I deem too strong to make the term useful in my discussion of the social structures of *kyōka* poets. Furthermore, the word movement may inadvertently suggest a group with a central governing body, which was not in place. Not all circles were interconnected and some networks took care not to intersect. However, all active *kyōka* poets, both amateur and professional, and regardless of their affiliations, belong to this - what I call - (institutionalized) *kyōka* society. The general public, which may come into contact with *kyōka* through the inclusion of poems in commercial prints, for instance, does not form part of *kyōka* society in my definition.

4.5.2 Featuring in *kyōkabon* as confirmation of position in *kyōka* circle or network

Taking into consideration the competitive nature, scale of the *kyōka* society, social and economic prerequisites, and cultural elevation discussed above, it is obvious that featuring in a *kyōka* book is the result of investing time, talent, and funds. When a poem submitted for a contest was listed in a result book, this meant that the quality of at least that poem was good enough to make the cut. That no doubt instilled pride on the part of the poet in question. If more of the poems submitted by one poet ended up in the resulting publication, this poet was obviously consistently scoring well. Those who scored high enough to occupy the first row of *banzuke*, could make it to the illustrated pages - whether they were for instance attractive landscapes, or portraits of the poets themselves. Appearing in an illustrated section was an even greater the confirmation of success within one’s circle and/or network, if not within the entire society. Receiving high points from a universally acknowledged *kyōka* master is an enviable endorsement. An example of a *banzuke* presented below, however, indicates that scores alone did not guarantee a place in the illustrated pages. On the other hand, despite the apparently inevitable effect of financial superiority, a career in *kyōka* could neither be bought with money alone. Success, in *kyōka* too, was ultimately the result of continued effort.

The fact that appearing in the illustrated pages of a competition result book represents a confirmation of a poet’s position within a network is illustrated by a ranking table of Higakiren, (fig. 14). This *banzuke* ranks some 200 poets, of whom 17 are marked with a red, hand-stamped seal reading ‘画像 *gazō*’, ‘illustration’.²⁹¹ There are two points that need to be addressed concerning this primary material. First, this *banzuke* dates to 1854,²⁹² which is quite some time after the years that my research focuses on.

²⁹¹ Collection National Institute of Japanese Literature, inv. no. ㄩ2-99. The word *gazō* in itself does not clarify whether or not a portrait or another type of illustration is meant. However, the usage of this word in *kyōka* book titles usually pertains to portrait books. Illustrations of, for instance, landscapes are usually dubbed *e* 絵/画, picture(s). In fact, the illustrations in this book are indeed portraits of the poets.

²⁹² The *ren* published the book 本朝風俗水滸画像集 *Honchō fūzoku suiko gazōshū*, ‘Collection of Fashionable Images of the Water Margin of Our Nation’, selected by Tatsunomon (Kaie) Umeaki, illustrated by Utagawa Yoshitora 歌川芳虎 (n.d., active late Edo to early Meiji period). It was issued in two volumes (and in two

Second, not all poets in the top row are selected for the illustrations. This appears to confirm that selection for the prestigious places in the resulting book was not based on scores alone. It may also have something to do with the fact that this is just one month's worth of results, whereas the final publication is based on the combined results of that *kyōka* season. Whichever may be the case, the graphic effect of this sheet and its manual additions is that - knowing that a portion of the competitors not even made it to the *banzuke* - the pyramid on which the poets in the illustrated pages stand becomes visible.

fascicles) in 1854, most probably based on the series of *tsukinami* of which this *banzuke* represents one month. Likely, the publication dates from late in the year after the competition (CiNii gives the tenth month, although it is not specified where this information comes from. The data in CiNii does specify “Kaei 7”, a year that did eventually come to be indicated as Ansei 1. This seems to support to the trustworthiness of this date, as poets may have still been using the *nengō* Kaei before it was changed to Ansei during the year. [<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA80624805>, accessed 17 December 2014]). This leads me to also date the *banzuke* to 1854. The book is discussed in Takahashi (2010 [1]), where it is also listed as dating from Kaei 7/1854) and Takahashi (2010 [2]), pp. 23. Takahashi (2010 [2]), however, gives 1856 as the year of publication, as does the database of the Kanō bunko 狩野文庫 collection that holds a (perhaps later) copy.



Fig. 14. *Banzuke* for the fifth installment of the monthly *tsukinami* competition of the Higakiren with the title *Honchō suikogazōshū* 本朝水滸画像集, 'Collection of Images of the Water Margin of Our Nation', hosted by Shun'yūtei Umehide, and with assistance of the Suigyoren. 45,2 x 32,7 cm, c. 1854, coll. National Institute of Japanese Literature, inv. no. コ2-99.

4.5.3 Featuring in *surimono* as confirmation of position in *kyōka* circle or network

For a poet to feature on a *surimono* will have signified considerable prestige; perhaps even more so than featuring in the illustrated section of a *kyōka* book. The circumstances of the publication of that particular *surimono*, however, come into play when assessing the importance and degree of confirmation that I discuss here. The large, full sheet *surimono* bearing the name of many poets, such as often issued

during the Kansei and Kyōwa eras, were often commissions of the major circles in Edo. The selection procedure for the poets on these prints is not known, but in most cases the listing reflects both membership of the commissioning circle and connections to (leaders of) other circles in Edo.²⁹³

In the case of *shikishiban surimono* of the Bunka and Bunsei eras, however, we have to consider the division between series commissioned by *kyōka* circles, and single *surimono* commissioned ostensibly independently of the system of circles and networks. Certain instances are known of poets who clearly financed *surimono* individually, such as Arakitei Shikyō 荒木亭史喬 (n.d.), who commissioned many single *surimono* that depict turtles and/or tortoises, with just one poem by himself on them.²⁹⁴ Another example is Ryūōtei Edo no Hananari, whom I have mentioned in section 4.4, who features individually on several actor *surimono*.

As for *surimono* series issued by poetry groups, certain patterns can be discerned that indicate that the usual ranking system found in books of the same era was not applied to the prints. Forrer provides examples of pairs of poets who feature together on one print in a series, several years in a row.²⁹⁵ That is indeed too much of a coincidence considering the numbers involved in the regular competitions. When we take another look at the *Twenty-Four generals for the Katsushikaren* and the result book *Kyōka chūyagyōjishū* issued by the Katsushikaren in 1821, we find that of the 45 who poets featured on the *surimono*, 23 do not appear in the result book. Certainly, poets will not always have been able to compete in every event. The ratio, however, certainly appears larger than expected for two projects conducted so shortly after one another. Considering the fact that moving up in the ranks required constant involvement in the competition, the appearance of poets in *surimono* without any presence in a result book of the same year is striking. Appearing on a print in a *surimono* series, therefore, confirmed not so much poetic prowess, but rather the quality of one's connections and likely the appreciation for one's financial support of the circle. This is not to say that talentless poets could buy their way into a *surimono* series. *Surimono* circulated among a privileged portion of *kyōka* society and held great appeal to any poet who came in contact with them. Including a poor poem on an otherwise luxurious printed artwork would reflect rather negatively on the circle in question. Those in control of the commission will have certainly been cautious of such an unwanted situation.

4.5.4 Proof of connections in *kyōka* society: *surimono* albums

Surimono albums offer a view into the way *kyōka* poets were connected within *kyōka* society. Since albums were carefully filled with *surimono* obtained through exchange, they constitute ego-documents that record the various connections of a single poet. From the perspective of the poet in question, one's (growing) *surimono* album was even better proof of his or her position (rather than rank) within the society

²⁹³ Kobayashi, F. (2008) provides an overview of 83 such *surimono* with extensive additional data on poetry circles and poets on the prints.

²⁹⁴ For a short discussion of this poet's commissions and some examples of *surimono* bearing his poem, see for instance Forrer (2013), pp. 17, 182-183, and 234.

²⁹⁵ Forrer (2013), pp. 17-25.

than *kyōka* books were. Each *surimono* in an album represents an encounter, with a revered poet, with a fellow enthusiast, with a cultivated peer, etc. To *kyōka* researchers of today, such albums are invaluable primary material for investigating social interaction between *kyōka* poets.

Unfortunately, many albums have been disassembled in order to sell the prints separately. Often, traces of glue and thin and tiny scraps of paper are found around the edges of the reverse side of *surimono*, indicating that they were once mounted on a paper backing, most likely of such an album.²⁹⁶ A small number of contemporaneous *surimono* albums have survived intact. Most notable among these are a set of three kept in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, known as the Duret albums, which were assembled by the Edo poet Nagashima Masahide 長島雅秀, also known as Kameyama 亀山.²⁹⁷ Second, a *surimono* album formerly in the collection of novelist and folklorist Fujisawa Morihiko 藤澤衛彦 (1885-1967) and legated to Kamogawa City, Chiba Prefecture, belonged to one Saya no Uraeri 佐屋裏襟 (1780-1841, often using the pen name Imontei 衣紋亭), also from Edo.²⁹⁸ A third example is the (former) set of two albums assembled by the poet Iga no Kurimi 意雅栗三, from Osaka. One album of this set (dismounted) is kept in the Rhode Island School of Design and the other in the Chiba City Museum of Art.²⁹⁹ These three albums show strong similarities in configuration, relative obscurity of the assemblers, and presence of prefaces by prominent *kyōka* masters of the day inscribed - by request - into these albums. The extensive previous investigations of these albums provide the opportunity to plot how their original owners/assemblers were connected to poets of their era, and what their position was within their respective circles, networks and within *kyōka* society.

The albums assembled by Kameyama, Uraeri and Kurimi each contain similar proof of the position of these poets in *kyōka* society. They managed to acquire around twenty *surimono* per year on average.³⁰⁰ Assuming, as does Keyes, that one could only receive a *surimono* in return for giving one, this means that the album owners, over the years, ordered around (or perhaps, at least) as many prints as the number they acquired. Each album does indeed contain *surimono* that feature a poem by the respective album owners, though not the same number as the number of years that were spent collecting the *surimono* in the albums. The *surimono* they received were issued by individual poets and by poetry circles of considerable variety. Although each album displays a certain tendency towards one or other circle that they were directly affiliated to, they by no means show any sign of exclusivity. The albums of Kameyama and Uraeri consist mostly of *surimono* produced in Edo, although an occasional print from outside the capital appears. Kameyama certainly had connections to poets outside Edo, proven by the fact that a poet from

²⁹⁶ As noted by Kondō (1984 [1]), p. 28 and Mirviss and Carpenter (1995), p. 22.

²⁹⁷ The Duret albums, which also contain some twenty manuscript item such as *tanzaku*, were extensively investigated by Kondō Eiko (1984 [1][2][3]) and received further treatment by Asano (1989).

²⁹⁸ Reproduced in full and introduced by Nagata, S. and Katō (1998).

²⁹⁹ The Kurimi albums were discussed by Roger Keyes (2004).

³⁰⁰ Kameyama gathered a total of 439 between 1790 and 1812 - an average of 19 per year. Uraeri gathered a total of 242 between 1803 and 1812 - an average of 24 per year. Kurimi gathered a total of 166 between 1820 and 1828 - an average of 18 per year. It must be noted, however, that Kurimi acquired most of the 79 prints of his first album in one year, 1821, in Edo.

Osaka wrote a preface to the first of his three albums.³⁰¹ Kurimi, who apparently travelled to Edo in 1821 and perhaps maintained contacts afterwards, gathered prints mostly from Osaka and Edo. In other words, all three poets exchanged *surimono* with poets from the entire *kyōka* society. All albums feature both individually commissioned *surimono* and prints from *surimono* series, yet none of the albums contains a series in its entirety. This is further proof of the variety in direct personal connections between poets, regardless of their affiliations. Thus, *surimono* albums illustrate the position of an individual poet within various *kyōka* networks, as opposed to the *kyōka* books and *surimono* that demonstrate the workings of a circle or network situated above a community of poets.

4.6 Conclusions chapter four

One of the main attractions of the genre of *kyōka* was the opportunity to connect with other people, on a social and cultural level. And while participants interacted socially at gatherings, they were also connected through written correspondence and printed works. The basis of the genre was a cultural endeavor, but it was the competitive element that propelled the movement as a whole. The appending rewards - climbing in the ranks, prestige, and also tangible prizes - were ample motivation for poets from throughout the country to spend their money on tuition and participation fees. The increasingly organized structure of networks and their competitions resulted in an enviable output of deluxe publications. By appealing to a cultural elite - or better yet, elitist bourgeoisie - enough economically powerful amateurs could be mobilized. Combined with apparently sound accounting, *kyōka* circles and networks gained considerable financial momentum, so that entire restaurants could be hired, lavishly illustrated books and prints could be commissioned, and a portion of the *kyōka* masters could make a living from their activities in the genre. These are the fruits of a joyful social interaction that was institutionalized as the scale increased, in essence the result of a common goal harbored by entire networks of enthusiasts.

The institutionalized system of competitions and publications grew exponentially until the Bunka and Bunsei eras, when more *kyōka* books than *waka* books were issued. Although the printed output of the genre of *haikai* was always larger, the genre of *kyōka* reached an impressive scale. Taking the number of active *kyōka* poets into consideration reveals that every *kyōka* book or *surimono* represents a much greater number of participating poets than the number of poets actually printed in or on them. Especially behind *kyōka* competition result books are veritable ‘pyramids’ of competitors, of which only the top section can enjoy the pride of featuring in the book at all, let alone in the illustrated pages, when these were included. *Surimono* series too, reached their peak publication numbers in the Bunsei era. Contrary to what the sharp decline in *surimono* publication in the early years of the Tenpō era suggest, my investigation of *kyōka* books and ranking tables has shown that the activities of *kyōka* society did not all end as quickly.

Building on the successful formula initially discovered around the start of the Tenmei era, *kyōka* leaders helped create a world with its own set of standards and rankings. Many have argued that this world

³⁰¹ Kondō (1984 [2]), p. 4-5.

was less bent on traditional divisions of society by birth status; the poetry was judged based on literary merit, which resulted in a higher or lower rank within the circle or network. However, the hierarchies of the real world were never entirely out of view. The pen names *kyōka* poets used were by no means in place to secure any kind of anonymity. On the contrary, many *kyōka* books such as the ones I presented in this chapter make implicit or explicit mention of birth status of individual poets; some provide a family name and other biographical information, and even give a home address. These showed that, during the Bunka and Bunsei eras, birth status was certainly a factor in membership of one or other *kyōka* circle.

The structure of what I refer to as *kyōka* society also underwent considerable changes between the Tenmei era and the Bunsei era. Yet, the fundamental building block of that *kyōka* society was and continued to be the *kyōka* circle, led by a poetry master. What had started with one circle, revolving mainly around Ōta Nanpo, developed into more circles, since individual members attracted their own followers. These circles interconnected and essentially started forming the first networks of *kyōka* circles. *Kyōka* society as a whole grew into a nationwide structure of poetry masters, their circles, and networks of circles that were connected through for instance a lineage of style that they had in common. The large scale of the entire *kyōka* society, the publication of various teach-yourself *kyōka* guides, and the ostensibly more fluid membership of the Bunsei and Tenpō eras created the opportunity for individual *kyōka* poets to enter competitions regardless of the affiliations to the hosting circle or network. The fully-developed *kyōka* society, thus, came to consist of not only poets encapsulated in circles and networks, but of less officially connected poets as well. The poets featuring in *kyōka* books and in *surimono* series, however, usually have a clear affiliation to a well-established *kyōka* circle. Despite the large scale of the entire *kyōka* society, most poets secured tutelage from a *kyōka* master, perpetuating the historically constant arrangement of poetry master and pupil.