

The Reception of Japanese Prints and Printmaking in Britain, 1890s – 1930s

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Abstract

This thesis examines the British perception of Japanese art from the 1890s to the 1930s. There has been a body of works on Japonisme, the phenomenon which is generally acknowledged as the western interest in and adoption of elements from Japanese art, focusing especially on the period from the 1860s to the 1880s. Also, the ways in which 'Japanese art' and the 'history of Japanese art' were constructed to be presented to a western audience by the Japanese government around the turn of the century as part of the process of Japan's modernisation and westernisation has been thoroughly investigated in the fields of Japanese art history and Japanese history. However, the following issues still need to be addressed. Firstly, how western audiences actually responded to the above mentioned Japanese government's representation of 'Japanese art' has not been adequately examined. Secondly, Japonisme after around the turn of the century has been a neglected field of research in the previous studies. This thesis considers these issues by investigating how Japanese art was perceived in Britain, as affected by the changing British and Japanese contexts from the 1890s to the 1930s.

As a case study of the first issue, this thesis investigates the representation of 'Japanese art' at the Japan-British Exhibition, London, 1910, and the British response to it. From around the turn of the century, the Japanese government began to present what they regarded as 'authentic' 'Japanese art' as distinct from what had been envisaged as 'Japanese art' by westerners in the fashion for Japonisme in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Japan-British Exhibition was the first opportunity to show this government representation of 'Japanese art' to a British audience on a major scale. However, the British audience did not respond to it as the Japanese government expected and hoped, and instead

picked up certain aspects that would justify their current aesthetic ideas – such as the then emerging modernism and primitivism.

In order to address the second issue, this thesis also looks at the reception of Japanese prints and printmaking in Britain. *Ukiyo-e* prints, which became immensely popular in the West from the 1860s, were virtually excluded from the Japanese government's discourse on 'Japanese art'. However, it was this officially neglected branch of Japanese art that continued to be appreciated in Britain, even after the general craze for things Japanese faded away around the turn of the century. Moreover, although it has been pointed out in many of the studies on Japonisme that western artists introduced elements of *ukiyo-e* like motifs, subjects and compositional devices in the nineteenth century, the period after the 1890s saw the emergence of a new group of British artists who adopted other aspects of *ukiyo-e* prints – they were the woodcut and linocut printmakers who produced prints, using the traditional *ukiyo-e* printmaking techniques, tools and materials.

There were two backgrounds which prompted these artists and designers to adopt the Japanese method of printmaking. One was the development of the studies on Japanese prints and printmaking in Britain from the 1880s onwards. These studies, which developed in accordance with the accumulation of Japanese prints in major museums, offered not only the valuable source of information about various aspects of Japanese prints but also the view in which Japanese printmaking was seen as embodying the Arts and Crafts ideas – such as 'truth to materials', 'artist-craftsmanship' and 'art for the people.' Another background was the artistic revival of printmaking in Britain from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In this revival, William Morris, the influential figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement, and his followers opened the way to promote woodblock printing as original expression by artist-craftsmen. Encouraged by these backgrounds, some British artists began to

produce woodcut prints using the Japanese method in order to achieve the Arts and Crafts ideas from the 1890s and disseminated Japanese techniques through teaching at major art schools. In the 1920s and 1930s, not only woodcut printmakers but also linocut printmakers adopted some Japanese printmaking techniques. Moreover, these woodcut and linocut printmakers promoted their prints by associating them with the factors which had special significance in the inter-war years – the notions of ‘Englishness’ and ‘modernity’ and the general rise in interest in home ownership and domestic interior. By examining how Japanese prints and printmaking continued to be appreciated and appropriated in Britain in these changing contexts from the 1890s to the 1930s, this thesis aims to shed a new light on second-stage Japonisme in Britain.

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Fig. 122 "Machi" [Street] (1920), a woodcut by Kawanishi Hide'

An illustration from *Nihon no Hanga II*, ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art, p. 86

Fig. 123 "Lino-" (1925), a linocut by Okada Tatsuo'

An illustration from *Nihon no Hanga III: 1920-1930: Toshi to Onna to Hikari to Kage to* [Japanese Prints III: 1920-1930: the City, Women, Lights and Shadows], ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art (Chiba: Chiba City

Museum of Art, 2001), p. 97

Fig. 124 "Shin Tokyo Hyakkei: Shinjuku Kafe Gai" [New Hundred Views of Tokyo: Café Street in Shinjuku] (1930), a woodcut by Fukazawa Sakuichi'

An illustration from *Nihon no Hanga III*, ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art, p. 143

Fig. 125 "Ongaku Sakuhin ni yoru Jojō: No. 3 Raberu 'Dōkeshi no Asa no Uta'" [A Lyric by a Piece of Music: No. 3 Ravel, 'Alborada del Gracioso'] (1933), a woodcut by Onchi Kōshirō'

An illustration from *Nihon no Hanga IV: 1930-1940: Munakata Shikō Tōjō* [Japanese Prints IV: 1930-1940: the Advent of Munakata Shikō], ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art (Chiba: Chiba City Museum of Art, 2004), p. 72

Fig. 126 "Jūkōgyō" [Heavy Industry] (c. 1940), an etching by Kon Junzō'

An illustration from *Nihon no Hanga IV*, ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art, p. 86

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An illustration from *Nihon no Hanga IV*, ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art, p. 115

Fig. 128 "Rain-time, Japan" (1915), a woodcut by Fritz Capelari'

V&A, PDSR, Friedrich Capelari, EW2a, E.3025-1923

A photo taken by the author

Fig. 129 "Taikyō" [Before the Mirror] (1916), a woodcut by Itō Shinsui'

An illustration from *Ukiyo-e Modan: Shinsui, Goyō, Hasui: Dentō Mokuhanga no Ryūsei* [Ukiyo-e Modern: Shinsui, Goyō, Hasui: The Rise of Traditional Woodcut Prints], ed. by Takizawa Kyōji (Tokyo: Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts, 2005) p. 21

Fig. 130 "Shodai Nakamura Ganjirō no Kamiya Jihei" [Nakamura Ganjirō the first

as Kamiya Jihei] (1916), a woodcut by Natori Shunsen'

An illustration from *Ukiyo-e Modan*, ed. by Takizawa, p. 24

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An illustration from *Nihon no Hanga II*, ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art, p.

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Fig. 132 "Hansen: Asahi" [Sailing Boat: Morning Sun] (1921), a woodcut by Yoshida

Hiroshi'

An illustration from *Ukiyo-e Modan*, ed. by Takizawa, p. 23

Fig. 133 "Ōdōri: Shanghai Nyū Kāruton Shoken" [Dancing: An Impression of

Shanghai New Carlton] (1924), a woodcut by Yamamura Kōka'

An illustration from *Ukiyo-e Modan*, ed. by Takizawa, p. 28

Fig. 134 "Magome no Tsuki" [The Moon at Magome] (1930), a woodcut by Kawase

Hasui'

An illustration from The Folk Museum of Ōta City, *Kawase Hasui* (Tokyo:

The Folk Museum of Ōta City, 2007), p. 31

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List of Abbreviations

AAD	Archive of Art and Design
BLMD	British Library, Manuscript Department
BM	British Museum
DROMFAJ	Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
HFALHC	Hammersmith and Fulham Archives and Local History Centre
<i>Hōkoku</i>	<i>Nichiei Hakurankai Jimukyoku Jimu Hōkoku</i> [Official Report of the Japanese Commission, the Japan-British Exhibition]
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum
VAA	V&A Archive
V&A, PDSR	Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints and Drawings Study Room

Japanese names are given with the surnames first.

Introduction

On 13 November, 1895, seven months after Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Edward F. Strange, a curator from the South Kensington Museum, gave a lecture on the museum's collection of *ukiyo-e* prints at the Japan Society, London. At the discussion following the lecture, Katō Takaaki, the then Japanese Minister in Britain, remarked that *ukiyo-e* prints were only thought lightly of in Japan and that it 'surprised him to hear that these coloured prints were made so much use of by designers, and no Japanese remaining at home dreamt of the complimentary manner in which these little drawings were held by Europeans'. Furthermore, Katō went on to say that the 'events of the past few months had shown that his countrymen could do more than simply produce pretty pictures' and 'could now claim to be one of the civilized nations of the world, not lacking in qualities of both courage and art'.¹

As epitomised by this episode, from the mid-nineteenth century, *ukiyo-e* prints gained huge popularity in the West, while Katō's countrymen were bent on raising the status of their country to the height of a major power in the international community. After the arrival of the American naval force in Edo Bay in 1853 and the subsequent abandonment of the seclusion policy by the Tokugawa government, the dramatic increase of information about Japan in the West aroused the

¹ Edward F. Strange, 'The Japanese Collections in the National Art Library, South Kensington Museum' (a paper read on 13 November, 1895), *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, 4 (1900), 2-17 (p. 17).

phenomenon called Japonisme from around 1860 onwards. Japonisme is generally acknowledged as the western interest in and adoption of elements from Japanese art.² As Watanabe Toshio, Mabuchi Akiko and Ono Ayako remark, it not only overlapped the phenomenon called Japonaiserie, which was the western artists' interest in and imitation of exotic and fanciful motifs and objects from Japanese art without differentiation from elements from other countries especially in its early stages, but also embodied the more advanced understanding of Japanese art than Japonaiserie, encouraging the western artists to incorporate techniques, styles and principles of Japanese art into their own art.³ Japonisme was, of course, not just a naïve admiration for Japanese art; it sometimes coexisted with the negative attitudes to Japan, coloured by the notion of 'superiority' of the West and affected by the power relations between Japan and western countries.⁴ Japonisme, which

² Although Japonisme in the branches of culture other than the visual arts such as literature, music, and performing arts have also been examined in the following works, this thesis confines the use of the term 'Japonisme' to the realm of the visual arts. The proceedings of the symposium, 'Nihon Hyōshō no Kōsa: Japonisumu no Bungaku to Ongaku' [Interaction between the Representations of Japan: the Literature and the Music of Japonisme], *Center for Comparative Japanese Studies Annual Bulletin*, 4 (2008), 5-69, Hada Miyako, *Japonizumu Shōsetsu no Sekai: America Hen* [The World of Japonist Novels: America] (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2005), Hashimoto Yorimitsu, 'Chaya no Tenshi: Eikoku Seikimatsu no Operetta *Geisha* (1896) to Sono Rekishiteki Bunmyaku' [The Angel in the Tea House: Representations of Victorian Paradise and Playground in *The Geisha* (1896)], *Studies in Japonisme*, 23 (2003), 30-50, Kawamoto Kōji, 'Musume ni Miserareta Hitobito: Eishi no Japonisumu' [The People Who Were Fascinated by 'Musume': Japonisme in English Poetry], *Studies in Japonisme*, 21 (2001), 10-37, Aizawa Yoshihisa, 'Japonizumu ni Okeru Nihonzō: *Mikado* o Yomu', [The Western Image of Japan in Japonism: a Reading of *The Mikado*], 'Japonizumu ni Okeru Nihonzō: *Chōchō Fujin* o Yomu' [The Western Image of Japan in Japonism: a Reading of *Madam Butterfly*], *Studies in Humanities*, Ibaraki University, vol. 29 (1996), 67-98, vol. 26 (1993), 131-158.

³ Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme* (Bern; New York: P. Lang, 1991), pp. 13-16, Mabuchi Akiko, *Japonisumu: Gensō no Nihon* [Japonisme: Représentations et des Européens] (Tokyo: Brücke, 1997), pp. 10-11, Ono Ayako, *Japonisme in Britain: Whistler, Menpes, Henry, Hornel and Nineteenth-century Japan* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 2.

⁴ Anna Jackson points out such attitudes underlying the western knowledge about Japan by focusing on the representation of Japanese art at the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876. Anna Jackson, 'Imagining Japan: the Victorian Perception and Acquisition of Japanese Culture', *Journal of Design History*, vol.5, no.4 (1992), 245-256.

emerged among a small circle of artists at first, soon spread to a wide range of people and became one of the major fashions in the West in the second half of the nineteenth century.

After Japonisme began to emerge, both Japan and Britain underwent major changes in social, economic and diplomatic terms. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Japan achieved modernisation, industrialisation and westernisation at a remarkable speed in order to avert western colonisation, and, encouraged by its victories in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 claimed itself to be a 'first-class' nation comparable to western powers. On the other hand, Britain, which had already achieved industrialisation, reigned as the largest empire in the world in the nineteenth century. However, at the same time, there grew concerns about the harmful effects brought about by the industrialisation and modernisation, one of whose manifestations in the realm of art was the Arts and Crafts Movement. Moreover, from around the time of the South African War, 1899-1902, there also grew anxiety about the stability and unity of the empire. How, then, was Japanese art perceived in Britain under such social, economic and diplomatic circumstances in the period from the mid-nineteenth century to the early-twentieth century?

There is already a body of research on Japonisme in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵ Also, the ways in which 'Japanese art' and the

⁵ Tanita Hiroyuki, *Yuibi Shugi to Japanizumu* [Aestheticism and Japanism] (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004), Ono, *Japonisme in Britain, Kurisutofā Doressā to Nihon* [Christopher Dresser and Japan], ed. by Kōriyama City Museum of Art (Kōriyama: "Christopher Dresser and Japan" Catalogue Committee, 2002), Linda Gertner Zatlin, *Beardsley, Japonisme, and the Perversion of the Victorian Ideal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, Satō Tomoko and Toshio Watanabe, *Japan and Britain: an Aesthetic Dialogue 1850-1930* (London: Lund Humphries in association with the Barbican Art Gallery and Setagaya Art Museum, 1991), *Japonisumuten: 19 Seiki Seiyō Bijutsu e no Nihon no Eikyō* [Japonisme], ed. by National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo (Tokyo: National Museum of Western Art, 1988), Kawamura Jōichirō,

'history of Japanese art' were constructed to be presented to a western audience by the Japanese government around the turn of the century as part of the process of Japan's modernisation and westernisation has been thoroughly investigated in the fields of Japanese art history and Japanese history over the past twenty years.⁶ However, in spite of these insightful works, the following issues still remain to be addressed. Firstly, how western audiences actually responded to the above mentioned Japanese government's representation of 'Japanese art' has not been adequately examined. Secondly, Japonisme after the turn of the century has been a neglected field of research in the previous studies. This thesis considers these issues by investigating how 'Japanese art' was perceived in Britain, affected by the changing British and Japanese contexts from the 1890s to the 1930s.

In order to address the first issue, this thesis investigates the representation of 'Japanese art' at the Japan-British Exhibition, London, 1910, and the British response to it. The Japan-British Exhibition offered the Japanese government the first opportunity to present what it had established as 'Japanese art'

'Igirisu no Naka no Nihon: Biazurī no "Japonesuku"' [Japan in Britain: Beardsley's "Japonesque"], *Hitotsubashi Review*, vol. 94, no. 6 (December 1985), 38-63. The above listed work by Satō and Watanabe deals with the period from 1850 to 1930 and among the fourteen chapters the last two are devoted the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910, and works by British and Japanese artists in the early twentieth century. However, although they offer a general overview on Japonisme in this period, more detailed studies on each issue still need to be done.

⁶ Kitazawa Noriaki, *Kyōkai no Bijutsushi: 'Bijutsu' Keiseishi Nōto* [History of Art in Boundaries: Notes on the Formation of 'Bijutsu'] (Tokyo: Brücke, 2000), *Me no Shinden: 'Bijutsu' Juyōshi Nōto* [Temple of Eyes: Notes on the Reception of 'Bijutsu'] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1989), *Kataru Genzai Katarareru Kako: Nihon no Bijutsushigaku 100 Nen* [The Narrating Present and the Narrated Past: 100 Years of History of Art in Japan], ed. by National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999), Satō Dōshin, *Meiji Kokka to Kindai Bijutsu: Bi no Seijigaku* [The Meiji Nation and Modern Art: the Politics of Beauty] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1999), *'Nihon Bijutsu' Tanjō: Kindai Nihon no 'Kotoba' to Senryaku* [The Birth of 'Japanese Art': the 'Words' and Strategies of Modern Japan] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996), Takagi Hiroshi, 'Nihon Bijutsushi no Seiritu Shiron: Kodai Bijutsushi no Jidai Kubun no Seiritu' [An Essay on the Formation of the History of Japanese Art: the Establishment of the Periodization of the Ancient Art History], *Journal of Japanese History*, 400 (1995), 74-98.

and 'history of Japanese art' on a major scale in Britain. Moreover, a number of reviews on the Japanese works of art displayed at the exhibition were written for contemporary British magazines and newspapers. Therefore, this exhibition forms a suitable case study to investigate the issue of western, and particularly, British, perceptions of the 'Japanese art' as represented by the Japanese government in the early-twentieth century.

This thesis examines the second issue by focusing especially on the reception of *ukiyo-e* prints and printmaking in Britain from the 1890s to the 1930s. *Ukiyo-e* prints, which had been appreciated by the populace in Japan from the mid-eighteenth century, were virtually excluded from the Japanese government's representation of 'Japanese art'. However, it was this officially neglected branch of Japanese art that kept its popularity in Britain from the mid-nineteenth century and on to the early twentieth century. Moreover, it was rather after the general craze for things Japanese faded away around the turn of the century that more systematic studies on *ukiyo-e* developed. At the same time, this branch of Japanese art came to attract some British artists in a different way from that in the nineteenth century. There have already been a number of studies by scholars of Japonisme on the influence of *ukiyo-e* prints upon western artists in the nineteenth century, especially French Impressionist painters and poster designers. These artists adopted Japanese motifs, subjects and compositional devices from *ukiyo-e* prints to innovate their art. Some British or British-based painters and illustrators, such as James McNeil Whistler, Aubrey Beardsley and Walter Crane, also adopted these qualities of *ukiyo-e* prints to establish their own styles.⁷ Although they promoted various styles

⁷ Ono, *Japonisme in Britain*, Mabuchi, *Japonisumu*, Zatlin, *Beardsley, Japonisme, and the Perversion of the Victorian Ideal*, Satō and Watanabe, *Japan and Britain*, Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, National Museum of Western Art, *Japonisumuten*, Kawamura, 'Igirisu no Naka no Nihon', pp. 38-63, Jacques Dufwa, *Winds from the East: a Study in the Art of Manet, Degas, Monet, and Whistler*,

of art inspired by *ukiyo-e* prints, what these artists in the nineteenth century had in common was that they used western-origin media such as oil paintings and lithography and adopted only what appeared on the surface of *ukiyo-e* prints, that is, motifs, subjects and compositional devices in these media. While these qualities of *ukiyo-e* continued to be appropriated by British artists, the period after the 1890s saw the emergence of a new group of artists who adopted other aspects of *ukiyo-e* prints. They were the printmakers who adopted the method of *ukiyo-e* printmaking including techniques, tools and materials. Some of them also paid attention to the original context in which *ukiyo-e* prints were consumed in Edo Japan. Moreover, their writings and statements on printmaking reveal that they saw *ukiyo-e* prints and printmaking as embodying Arts and Crafts Movement ideals, such as 'truth to materials', 'artist-craftsmanship' and 'art for the people'. They continued to produce prints, based on the Japanese method, from the 1890s and on to the 1930s.

Several articles have paid attention to these British printmakers.⁸ However, the ways contemporary studies on Japanese prints in Britain saw Japanese printmaking as the embodiment of the Arts and Crafts ideas and eventually encouraged a group of printmakers to adopt the Japanese method of printmaking has not been considered. By paying attention to this previously

1856-86 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1981), *Ukiyo-e to Inshōha no Gaka Tachi* [*Ukiyo-e* Prints and the Impressionist Painters: Meeting of the East and the West], ed. by Ōmori Tatsuji (Tokyo: Committee for the Year 2001, 1980), Ōshima Seiji, *Japonismu: Inshōha to Ukiyoe no Shūhen* [Japonisme: the Impressionists and *Ukiyo-e*] (Tokyo: Bijutsu Kōron sha, 1980).

⁸ Nancy Green, 'Temptation of the East: the Influence of Japanese Colour Woodcuts on British Printmaking', in *Color Woodcut International: Japan, Britain, and America in the Early 20th century*, ed. by Christine Javid (Madison, Wis.: Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2006), Hilary Chapman, 'John Edgar Platt and the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour', *Print Quarterly*, vol.20, no.2 (June 2003), 145-58, *The Colour Woodcuts of John Edgar Platt 1886-1967* (London: 20th Century Gallery, 1999), Alan Guest, 'The Colour Woodcut' in *British Printmakers 1855-1955: a Century of Printmaking from the Etching Revival to St. Ives*, ed. by Robin Garton (Aldershot, Hants: Scolar Press, 1992), pp. 217-235.

neglected aspect of the phenomenon, this thesis aims to consider the printmaking by these artists in the wider context of the continuing impact of Japonisme in Britain in the early twentieth century. Moreover, the development of studies on *ukiyo-e* prints in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Britain, especially those by the leading experts on the subject at the time such as Laurence Binyon and Edward F. Strange has not been examined thoroughly either in the field of studies of Japonisme or in that of history of *ukiyo-e*. By examining their extensive works which were published in this period, this thesis aims to shed a new light on the British reception of *ukiyo-e*, thereby contributing to the studies in these fields.

In terms of the period it deals with, this thesis also contributes to the current development of studies on Japonisme. In order to explore the hitherto neglected period of study, the major three-year project entitled 'Forgotten Japonisme' has been launched by the University of the Arts Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation (TrAIN), London.⁹ From September 2007 to September 2010, this project investigates the taste for Japanese art in Britain and America from the 1920s to the 1950s. This thesis, which investigates Japonisme from the 1890s to the 1930s, bridges the gap between the classic studies on nineteenth-century Japonisme and the ongoing project on the period from the 1920s to the 1950s.

In exploring this period, this thesis has been influenced by the field of post-colonial studies. In *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said concludes from his examination of the western discourse on the Middle East that 'the West' constructed a binary system through which it could establish its own identity and secure its superior position over 'the East'.¹⁰ On the other hand, in his general survey of

⁹ The Centre was established to undertake historical, theoretical and practice-based research about the impact of identity and nation on artworks in various media including fine art, design, craft and architecture in the period of globalisation.

¹⁰ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978; repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

various arts in Britain representing or being inspired by cultures of 'the East' in *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, John M. Mackenzie criticises Said's rigid binarism by insisting that, in the field of art, the relation between 'the West' and 'the East' was more ambivalent than Said claims, and pointed out western artists' continuous reverence for and willingness to establish contact with Oriental traditions even in the age of high imperialism.¹¹ This thesis draws upon Mackenzie's remark on the fluid and unstable nature of the relation between 'the West' and 'the East', but aims to give more subtlety to his argument by showing that such western reverence for Oriental tradition was rather selective, as exemplified by changing British appropriations of certain aspects of Japanese art. A similar kind of selective appropriation was also seen in the representation of 'Japanese art' by the Japanese themselves as they chose to adopt certain western tastes and concepts in order to achieve their most prioritised task during different periods ranging from late nineteenth century industrialisation to Japan's early twentieth century claim for inclusion in the international community as one of the great powers.

This thesis also draws on recent studies of printmaking and graphic arts. In the nineteenth century, stimulated by the invention of photography and photomechanical processes which deprived the traditional method of printmaking of its status as the primary means of reproducing images, the meaning of 'print' came to be redefined in Britain. The artistic revival of printmaking which emerged in various methods of printmaking from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, such as etching and wood-engraving, has been considered in this context in the previous studies.¹² The woodcut revival from the late-nineteenth century

¹¹ John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).

¹² Emma Chambers, *An Indolent and Blundering Art?: the Etching Revival and the Redefinition of Etching in England, 1838-1892* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), Joanna Selbourne, *British Wood-engraved Book Illustration, 1904-1940* (Oxford: Clarendon

onwards can also be examined in the same light and, in addition to the development of studies on Japanese prints in Britain in the same period, this artistic revival of woodcut printmaking became the background for the reception of Japanese printmaking in Britain. Also, the concept of 'originality' and the division of labour in printmaking which were the focal points in the contemporary debates about the definition of 'print' in Britain was to prompt the British printmakers to interpret Japanese printmaking in their own way – whereas traditional Japanese printmaking was based on the division of labour, the British printmakers, while adopting some of the Japanese printmaking techniques, adhered to the principle of 'originality' and undertook the whole process of printmaking by themselves. In examining these issues, existing scholarship which offers insightful analyses of the definition of 'print' and the artistic and social circumstances which surrounded the revival of various methods of printmaking has proved particularly useful.¹³

As to the primary sources, this thesis draws on various materials. In order to examine the Japanese government's representation of 'Japanese art' and the British response to it, this thesis looks at the official publications by the government and the government-related people and organisations and the contemporary British journals and newspapers. Memoirs of Japanese private art-dealers and merchants and the contemporary literature about them, on the other hand, reveal what happened outside the government undertaking in the same period. Also, an examination of acquisition records and the actual objects which are still preserved in

Press, 1998).

¹³ William Mills Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), Susan Lambert, *The Image Multiplied: Five Centuries of Printed Reproductions of Paintings and Drawing* (London: Trefoil, 1987), Pat Gilmour, 'On Originality', *Issue*, London Polytechnic of East London, vol. 2, no.1 (1991-92), 4-37, Paul Jobling and David Crowley, *Graphic Design: Reproduction and Representation since 1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), Gordon Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity: English Art Institutions, 1750-1950* (London; New York: Leicester University Press, 2000).

the two major museums in Britain, the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the contemporary literature about *ukiyo-e* prints show how the collection and study of Japanese prints developed in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and traces links with the resultant interest in printmaking based on the Japanese method. This thesis investigates the kinds of Japanese printmaking techniques the British artists adopted, why they were attracted to these techniques and how they promoted their prints and printmaking. In order to investigate these issues, it examines not only prints, which can be seen in Print Study Rooms in major museums, but also tools and teaching examples and the curricula of major art schools preserved in the school archives. Articles, books and pamphlets by British printmakers and the exhibition catalogues and records of the organisations to which they were affiliated are also important sources.

Utilising these sources, this thesis addresses the above mentioned issues in five chapters. Chapter 1 takes an overview of the Japanese government's policies on 'Japanese art' in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by drawing on work in the field of Japanese art history and Japanese history as a background, and then moves on to investigate the representation of 'Japanese art' at the Japan-British Exhibition, London, 1910, and the British response to it. Also, throughout this chapter, the importance of the two Japanese art publishers, Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin, emerges not only in its relation to the government discourse on 'Japanese art' but also to the preservation and development of the traditional method of *ukiyo-e* printmaking.

Chapter 2 examines how, outside the Japanese government's policies on 'Japanese art', *ukiyo-e* prints were received in Britain from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. It also considers how systematic studies on *ukiyo-e* prints and printmaking developed from around the turn of the century in accordance with the

growth of public collections of Japanese prints in Britain. The accumulation of the studies on *ukiyo-e* prepared the ground for the development of the British printmaking based on the Japanese method.

Chapter 3 looks at another factor which prompted the British printmakers to adopt the Japanese method of printmaking – the artistic revival of printmaking in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In considering this phenomenon, it pays special attention to the woodblock printmaking promoted by William Morris and the artists who fell under the impact of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Chapter 4 considers how, encouraged by the factors which are examined in Chapters 2 and 3, some British woodcut printmakers began to adopt the method of *ukiyo-e* printmaking in order to achieve the Arts and Crafts ideas from the 1890s. It also looks at how the Japanese method of printmaking was disseminated across the country through teaching at major art schools.

Chapter 5 examines how printmaking based on the Japanese method came to be reinterpreted and promoted in the new contexts in the 1920s and the 1930s. In order to address this issue, it considers how British printmakers who adopted elements of *ukiyo-e* printmaking associated their works with the notions of 'Englishness' and 'modernity'. It also examines how they promoted their prints as components of the domestic interior as part of the general rise in homeownership in the 1920s and 1930s. In dealing with these issues, this chapter looks not only at the woodcut printmakers who introduced the Japanese method of printmaking from the 1890s but also at the colour linocut printmakers who flourished in interwar Britain. The examination of these issues reveals that *ukiyo-e* printmaking continued to be appropriated by British artists in the changed British contexts in the 1920s and the 1930s.

Lastly, before moving on to the main part of the thesis, let us look at the

basic facts concerning *ukiyo-e* printmaking, whose impact in Britain is traced and discussed throughout this thesis.¹⁴ As its name indicates, *ukiyo-e* [picture of the floating world] is a kind of graphic art which depicted aspects of the contemporary society which changes rapidly and never remains the same – as if floating on the water. *Ukiyo-e* was first created as a form of painting, but it developed as printmaking in the Edo Period (1603-1867). Because of their multiplicity and cheapness, *ukiyo-e* prints greatly exceeded *ukiyo-e* paintings in number. The term *nishiki-e*, which can be translated literally as ‘brocade picture’, is sometimes used to refer particularly to *ukiyo-e* prints in colour.

The production of *ukiyo-e* prints is characterised by the division of labour among designers or painters (*e-shi*), carvers (*hori-shi*) and printers (*suri-shi*), and all these three groups of artists and craftsmen are mediated and supervised by the publishers (*han-moto*). The subjects of *ukiyo-e* prints are decided by publishers, depending mostly on popularity and saleability. Given the subjects by publishers, designers or painters draw designs, taking into consideration how they are to be carved and printed. The designs are carved on the plank of cherry-wood with knives and gouges by carvers. For a *nishiki-e* print, one key block for black outline and several colour blocks for flat areas of colour are produced. It is important to cut register marks (*kentō*) on each block in exactly the same positions in order to ensure the correct registering of design when printing separate blocks. The invention of this technique of registering in the mid-eighteenth century made multicolour printing possible and greatly helped the development of *ukiyo-e* printmaking.

¹⁴ The following information about *ukiyo-e* is derived from Tanabe Masako, *Ukiyo-e no Kotoba Annai* [Guide to Terms of *Ukiyo-e*] (Tokyo: Shōgakusan, 2005), Kobayashi Tadashi and Ōkubo Junichi, *Ukiyo-e no Kanshō Kiso Chishiki* [Basic Knowledge for Appreciation of *Ukiyo-e*] (Tokyo: Shibundō, 2000), *Edo no Ukiyo-e: Edo no Hito wa Dō Tsukattaka* [*Ukiyo-e* in Edo: How People in Edo Used It], ed. by Tsuji Nobuo (Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu, 1999)

Printing is done by hand. After water-colour mixed with rice paste is brushed onto a block, moistened paper is put on it and rubbed on its back with the small pad called a *baren*, which is made mainly of bamboo fibres and leaves and layers of paper.

In the Edo Period, the finished prints were sold by the publishers themselves or small outlets which were found at every corner of the city. There were various subjects for *ukiyo-e* prints, but famous actors, beautiful women and popular touring spots were most frequently depicted. The formats and uses of *ukiyo-e* prints were also diverse. The most common formats of *ukiyo-e* prints were single sheets (*ichimai-e*) and book illustration. In addition to these, *ukiyo-e* was printed in every conceivable format such as designs on fans, toys, stationery, paper bags, and so on. It was also printed as advertisements or posters. Ready-made *ukiyo-e* prints produced in these various formats were appreciated and consumed mainly by people of lower ranks rather than those who could afford to commission or patronise academic artists. The prices of *ukiyo-e* prints depended on their quality but the average price of a large-sized single sheet is said to have been 20 *mon*, while a bowl of noodle cost about 16 *mon* in the Edo Period. Because of its association with the populace, *ukiyo-e* prints were undervalued in Japan until fully-fledged studies on *ukiyo-e* began to develop in the early twentieth century, stimulated by the preceding studies on *ukiyo-e* by westerners. This plebeian art of Japan which was first widely known in the West in the mid-nineteenth century was to have continuing impact on British artists by being constantly appropriated to suit the changing British contexts.

Chapter 1

'Japanese art' as represented by the Japanese

1-1 Government policies on 'Japanese art'

The first part of this chapter looks at the Japanese government's policies concerning 'Japanese art', especially its promotion of export of handicrafts in the 1870s and 1880s and the 'history of Japanese art' represented as a 'self-portrait' of Japan for the international audience around the turn of the century. A number of studies in the field of Japanese art history and Japanese history have investigated this area thoroughly. Therefore, this introduction takes an overview of this topic as background for the issues which will be examined from the next section by drawing on these previous works. Also, it pays attention to the role of the two Japanese publishers, Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin, in propagating the government discourse on 'Japanese art' for an international audience and preserving and developing the traditional method of colour woodcut printmaking.

The emergence of Japonisme

From the early-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century the Tokugawa shogunate strictly regulated contact and exchange with the outside world except China and Holland, and only a limited amount of information about Japan was available to western countries during this period. As regards Japanese objects available in the

West, a certain number of Japanese lacquer works and porcelain were exported to Europe via China and Holland, but they were often regarded by the Europeans just as Chinoiserie together with objects from China and other Oriental countries.¹ In the mid-nineteenth century, Japan opened the country to the world and the tide of Japonisme began to spread to a number of western countries. As strong interest in Japanese aesthetics and in the novelty of things Japanese spread from a small group of artists and connoisseurs to the general public, a considerable number of Japanese objects were brought to western countries as imported goods and souvenirs. Among such Japanese objects, *ukiyo-e* prints and handicrafts were particularly popular.

In this respect, international exhibitions held frequently in western countries in this period greatly stimulated Japonisme. It has been pointed out that as early as the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, Japanese objects were displayed in the Chinese section.² However, it was the 1862 International Exhibition in London that made the first major impact on western audiences. At this exhibition, Japanese objects were displayed in their own Japanese section as distinct from other Asian countries (Fig. 1). Rutherford Alcock, the first British Minister in Japan, received an order from the British government to collect Japanese objects to be displayed at the exhibition. In response, he selected 614 objects as specimens to represent Japan at the exhibition. What he called 'works of art' such as 'carvings in ivory, wood, paintings, illustrated works, lithochrome prints' were exhibited along with 'specimens of lacquer ware', 'specimens of metallurgy and mineral products', 'manufactures of paper' and so on.³ The Japanese section thus represented created

¹ Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie: the Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977).

² Geneviève Lacambre, 'Chronologie' in *Japonisumuten*, ed. by National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, p.47, Tanita, *Yuibi Shugi to Japanizumu*, pp. 45-46.

³ Miyauchi Satoshi, 'Dainikai Rondon Kokusai Hakurankai to Nihon no Shuppinbutsu ni tsuite' [The Second International Exhibition in London and the Japanese Exhibits], *Journal of Kyushū Institute of Design*, 4 (May 1979) 41-108.

a sensation among an artistic circle in London. For example, William Burges, the Gothic Revivalist architect, was so much impressed by the Japanese objects on display that he went so far as to say, 'If, however, the visitor wishes to see the real Middle Ages, he must visit the Japanese Court, for at the present day the arts of the Middle Ages have deserted Europe, and are only to be found in the East'.⁴ Also, Christopher Dresser, the designer who was to be known as one of the most enthusiastic promoters of Japonisme in Britain, later recalled that it was at the 1862 exhibition when he came to have interest in Japan and began to collect Japanese objects.⁵ The Japanese exhibits which won such applause among artists and art critics in London, however, disappointed the Japanese witnesses of the exhibition. On the day before the exhibition opened, the diplomatic mission sent by the Tokugawa government arrived in London. A member of the mission, Fuchibe Tokuzō, seeing the Japanese objects at the exhibition, could not help but deplore, 'they are just odds and ends amassed as if at a junk shop and are so unbearable to see'.⁶ The exhibits which the British Minister selected to represent Japan did not look 'representative' of Japan to the eyes of the Japanese officials.

The 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris was the first exhibition in which the Japanese participated in order to represent themselves. At this exhibition, the Tokugawa government, which was soon to be overthrown in the same year, a Japanese merchant called Shimizu Usaburō and two clans of Saga and Satsuma exhibited. The objects displayed by these participants included various objects such as costumes, armour, books, paintings, musical instruments, lacquer wares, carvings,

⁴ William Burges, 'The International Exhibition', *Gentleman's Magazine*, July, 1862, p. 10.

⁵ Christopher Dresser, 'The Art Manufactures of Japan, from Personal Observation', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 1878, p. 169.

⁶ Yoshimi Shunya, *Hakurankai no Seijigaku: Manazashi no Kindai* [The Politics of Exhibitions: the Modernity of the Gaze] (Tokyo: Chūkō Shinsho, 1992), p. 112.

ceramics, metal wares, paper, food, farming implements, timber and even a tea house.⁷ Most of the handicrafts displayed at the exhibition are believed to have been contemporary or recent products.⁸ It is notable that among the objects displayed by the government were two albums of *ukiyo-e*.⁹ It was an unusually prestigious commission for *ukiyo-e* artists whose social status at that time in Japan was low. As Toshio Watanabe remarks, it is possible to ascribe one of the reasons for this unprecedented commission to the popularity of *ukiyo-e* among foreign visitors.¹⁰ The merchant, Shimizu Usaburō, also prepared eleven items of *ukiyo-e* prints, 500 editions for each.¹¹ It is also interesting to note that the feudal clan of Saga exhibited as many as 66,143 items of porcelain, which suggests that they were aware of the potential of porcelain as an export item.¹² The exhibits prepared by the Japanese in this way attracted much attention from the public. The South Kensington Museum bought 'a selection of Japanese lacquer work and pottery' directly from this exhibition.¹³ Japonisme, which had already shown its nascence at the 1862 London Exhibition, was to be propagated to wider range of people by

⁷ Teramoto Noriko, 'Furansu Shakai ni okeru, "Nihon Bunka" no Juyō: 1878 nen Pari Bankoku Hakurankai to Japonisumu' [The Reception of "Japanese Culture" in France: 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris and Japonisme] (unpublished master's thesis, Hitotsubashi University, 2003), pp. 19-21.

⁸ *Bankoku Hakurankai no Bijutsu* [Arts of East and West from World Expositions: 1855-1900: Paris, Vienna and Chicago], ed. by Tokyo National Museum (Tokyo: NHK, 2004), p. 18.

⁹ Kikuchi Hideo, 'Dai Nikai Pari Bankokuhaku Shuppin, *Ukiyo-e* Kankei Shiryō (1)-(3)' [Materials on the *Ukiyo-e* Exhibited at the Second International Exhibition in Paris (1)-(3)], *Museum*, no. 89 (1958), 25-28, no. 90 (1958), 29-33, no. 91 (1958), 28-30.

¹⁰ Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, p. 103.

¹¹ *Meijiki Bankoku Hakurankai Bijutsuhin Shuppin Mokuroku* [The List of Art Exhibits at International Exhibitions in the Meiji Period], ed. by National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, Department of Fine Arts (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1997), pp. 30-31.

¹² Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, pp. 104-105.

¹³ Rupert Faulkner and Anna Jackson, 'The Meiji Period in South Kensington: the Representation of Japan in the Victoria and Albert Museum' in *Treasures of Imperial Japan*, 5 vols., ed. by Oliver Impey, Malcolm Fairley and Joe Earle (London: The Kibō Foundation, 1995), I, pp. 152-194 (pp. 162, 166).

exhibits selected by the Japanese themselves in Paris in 1867.

The International Exhibition, Vienna, 1873

While they stimulated Japonisme in western countries, international exhibitions were also significant as sites where the Japanese participants could test the potential of Japanese objects as export items. In this respect, the Vienna Exhibition in 1873 played a crucial role. It was the first exhibition in which the Japanese government participated after the Meiji Restoration in 1867. The report on Japan's participation in the Vienna Exhibition edited by the Japanese government officials explained the five major objectives of its participation:

The First Objective: To enhance the prestige of our country by collecting and selecting the finest of our natural and manmade products, explaining about them with illustration where necessary, and showing our resourcefulness and ingenuity.

The Second Objective: To find a way for our country to develop its arts and sciences and to increase its production capacity by investigating the exhibits and their accompanying explanations by each country at the exhibition, examining the reviews about their exhibits, learning about the current products and the development of arts and sciences of each western country and mastering machine technologies.

The Third Objective: To prepare the basis for the establishment of museums and exhibitions in our country, which is essential for the development of arts and sciences, by utilising this good opportunity.

The Fourth Objective: To increase the export of our country by gaining good reputation of our finest products and creating demand for them in each

country.

The Fifth Objective: To gather useful information for our future trade by investigating major products and their prices as well as what are lacking and in demand in each country.¹⁴

It is obvious from the Fourth and Fifth Objectives that the Japanese government was conscious of the use of the exhibition as a place for finding a market for Japanese products. After the Meiji Restoration, the new government, which put up the slogan of *Fukoku Kyōhei* [national wealth and strong military], was eager to catch up with western powers by employing the policy of *Shokusan Kōgyō* [increase of production and promotion of industry]. In order to promote this policy, it was thought necessary to gain foreign currency by increasing exports. Therefore, participation at the Vienna Exhibition was seen as a good opportunity to research export items suitable for this goal.

Although Japan was represented by the Japanese government itself at the exhibition, it is notable that the government sought advice from one of the *oyatoi gaikokujin* [foreign employee], Gottfried Wagener, in selecting exhibits.¹⁵ Wagener, who knew the popularity of Japanese art in the West and had an interest in Japanese traditional culture and handicrafts himself, suggested that the Japanese exhibits should focus on arts and crafts as specimens to show the excellent

¹⁴ *Ōkoku Hakurankai Sandō Kiyō* [Report on the Participation in the Exhibition in Austria], ed. by Tanaka Yoshio and Hirayama Narinobu (Tokyo: Moriyama Shunyō, 1897), pp. 11-12.

¹⁵ Westerners who were employed by the Japanese government for introducing western technologies, sciences and arts to Japan in the late Edo and early Meiji Periods were generally called *oyatoi gaikokujin*. Gottfried Wagener, who studied mathematics and physics in Germany, was employed by the Japanese government from 1870. While he taught mathematics, natural history, physics and chemistry as a professor at Tokyo Imperial University, he was involved in the selection of Japanese exhibits for the Vienna Exhibition in 1873 and the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876. He is also known for his contribution to the development of the production of ceramics and cloisonné in Japan.

techniques of handiworks because Japan had not yet developed its machine industry.¹⁶ Adopting his advice, the government exhibited a number of handicrafts including metal works, ceramics and lacquer wares in addition to the shrine and garden built by the Japanese carpenters and gardeners, which stimulated the western taste for exoticism (Fig. 2).¹⁷ According to the report on the exhibition, the Japanese exhibits selected in this way were so popular that they lagged behind the demand from the audience.¹⁸ Furthermore, the Alexandra Palace Company, London, which was managed by Philip Cunliffe Owen, offered to purchase and send to England the buildings and garden in the Japanese section and to import the same kinds of arts and crafts as those displayed at the exhibition.¹⁹ A merchant from Vienna also offered to import Japanese goods.²⁰ In this way, the government's expectation for the potential of handicrafts as export items was confirmed by the actual popularity of the Japanese exhibits in Vienna. From then on, the government put efforts into the promotion of the export of handicrafts such as ceramics, lacquer wares, metal works and cloisonné to western countries.

Shokusan Kogyo and the export of handicrafts

The government's initiative for such promotion of the export of handicrafts was most clearly shown by the establishment of the trade company, Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha.²¹

¹⁶ Satō Dōshin, *Meiji Kokka to Kindai Bijutsu*, p. 97.

¹⁷ Yoshimi, *Hakurankai no Seijigaku*, pp. 116-117, National Research Institute, *Meijiki Bankoku Hakurankai*, pp. 34-201.

¹⁸ *Ōkoku Hakurankai Sandō Kiyō*, ed. by Tanaka and Hirayama, p. 2.

¹⁹ Philip Cunliffe Owen was to be appointed Director of the South Kensington Museum from 1874 to 1893.

²⁰ *Ōkoku Hakurankai Sandō Kiyō*, ed. by Tanaka and Hirayama, pp. 46-48

²¹ The company has often been called Kiritsu Kōshō Kaisha by researchers. However, it has recently been verified from the contemporary seals and documents of the company that it was called Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha. Segi Shinichi, 'Hayashi to Sannin no Jūyō Jinbutsu' [Three Influential Figures in the Life of Hayashi Tadamasu] in *Hayashi Tadamasu: Japonisumu to Bunka Kōryū* [Hayashi Tadamasu: Japonisme and Cultural Exchanges], ed. by the Committee of Hayashi Tadamasu

Receiving much financial aid from the government, it was founded in response to the above mentioned offers from western merchants and produced and exported handicrafts to western countries. It also opened branch shops in New York and Paris in 1876 and 1878 respectively.²² As to the design of its products, the company catered for the taste of westerners. For example, in negotiating with the company, Philip Cunliffe Owen requested that the handicrafts should have design proper to Japan and not imitate western design. Shioda Makoto, the government official who was in charge of the establishment of the company, gave an instruction to respond to the western demand by respecting such a request.²³ The company produced a number of handicrafts with motifs of plants and birds which were especially popular among western customers, employing the craftsmen who inherited traditional skills (Figs. 3-4).

Significantly, the chairman of the company, Matsuo Gisuke, argued in his lecture on the export of metal works in 1885:

We have this precious nugget (that is, arts and crafts). Is it not regrettable if we are deprived of possible profits by foreigners, not knowing how to melt and cast it (that is, to utilise it) and to coin the currency (that is, the kind of metal works which cater for the foreign taste)?²⁴

These words by Matsuo imply that the export handicrafts which were promoted by

Symposium (Tokyo: Brücke, 2007), pp. 116-117.

²² Hida Toyojirō, *Meiji no Yushutsu Kōgei Zuan: Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha Kōgei Shitazushū* [Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha: First Japanese Manufacturing and Trading Co.] (Kyoto: Kyoto Shoin, 1987), pp. 344-345, 347-356.

²³ Tsunoyama Yukihiko, 'Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha to Matsuo Gisuke' [Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha and Matsuo Gisuke], *Economic Review of Kansai University*, vol. 47, no. 2 (August 1997), 241-292 (pp. 270-271, 273).

²⁴ Matsuo Gisuke, 'Kinzo-kuki no Bōeki ni tsuite Ichigensu' [A Word on the Trade of Metal Work], *Ryūchikai Hōkoku*, no. 7, 1885, p. 19.

the government were not 'authentic' nor 'proper to Japan', as the western customers expected them to be, but hybrid products which were produced specially to fit into what was thought by the Japanese as the western taste. Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha was followed by a number of trade companies which were founded one after another in the 1870s and 1880s.

The government's commitment to the promotion of production of handicrafts for the western taste was also evident in its publication of *Onchi Zuroku*, the books of design for handicrafts to be exported or exhibited at international exhibitions (Figs. 5-6). The government department in charge of this publication stipulated that its function be to preserve traditional skills of craftsmen and to publish designs which would suit western demand by surveying fashion abroad. The books edited by government officials under such principles were distributed to craftsmen across the country from 1875 to 1881.²⁵ At the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876 and the Paris Exhibition in 1878, a number of handicrafts with designs from *Onchi Zuroku* were exhibited.²⁶

However, while the government was intent on increasing the export of handicrafts, *ukiyo-e* prints, which were also the major focus of interest in Japan among westerners in the same period, never received such official support from the government. As will be mentioned in Chapter 2, *ukiyo-e* prints were regarded only as humble commodities by most people in Japan at the time and their plebeian nature prevented the government from presenting them as objects to represent Japan on the international stage. After several examples of *ukiyo-e* prints were exhibited at the Vienna Exhibition in 1873, no *ukiyo-e* print was displayed at

²⁵ *Meiji Dezain no Tanjō: Chōsa Kenkyū Hōkokusho 'Onchi Zuroku'* [Report of Research on 'Onchizuroku': a Collection of Craft Design Sketches of the Meiji Era], ed. by Tokyo National Museum (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1997), pp. 20-21.

²⁶ *Bankoku Hakurankai no Bijutsu*, ed. by Tokyo National Museum, pp. 44-47.

international exhibitions in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries as far as is known from the records of exhibits which are available now.²⁷

The export of handicrafts was promoted forcefully by the government in the 1870s and 1880s. As Satō Dōshin remarks, the encouragement of the export of handicrafts was regarded as one of the essential undertakings to gain foreign currency as part of the policy of *Shokusan Kōgyō*. In undertaking this task, the government took advantage of the popularity of Japanese crafts in the West.²⁸

The establishment of 'Japanese art' and the 'history of Japanese art'

However, as Japan's industrialisation and modernisation progressed, the export of handicrafts came to have less significance for the government. Japan achieved industrialisation in light industries in the 1890s and heavy industries in the 1900s, which meant that Japan could now rely on the export of machine-made products. Accordingly, the government's commitment to the export of handicrafts diminished, as was most clearly epitomised by the liquidation of Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha due to the end of the financial aid from the government in 1891.

Instead, the focus of the government policies on art took another form. The aim was to present 'Japanese art' and 'history of Japanese art' as the embodiment of Japan's civilisation to the international audience. From the 1880s the establishment of the constitutional government based on the western models was achieved at a remarkable rate and Japan was to proclaim itself as a 'first-class' nation comparable to western powers. In this process, it was thought essential to

²⁷ *Meijiki Bankoku Hakurankai*, ed. by National Research Institute. This book contains the list of the Japanese art exhibits at the Paris Exhibition in 1867, the Vienna Exhibition in 1873, the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876, the Paris Exhibition in 1878, the Paris Exhibition in 1889, the Chicago Exhibition in 1893, the Paris Exhibition in 1900, the St. Louis Exhibition in 1904 and the Japan-British Exhibition in 1910.

²⁸ Satō Dōshin, *Meiji Kokka to Kindai Bijutsu*, pp. 76-112.

identify Japan's own cultural 'tradition' as each 'civilised' nation had its own 'tradition' distinct from each other. In this respect, the 'history of Japanese art' was deemed suitable to present Japan as a 'civilised' nation in possession of its own distinct 'tradition'.²⁹

As Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger show, many of the 'traditions' which are generally believed to have dated back to remote antiquity were actually 'invented' in the recent past in the age of nationalism and imperialism.³⁰ The 'history of Japanese art' was also an example of such 'invention'. First of all, the concepts and words regarding 'art' were created in the process of the westernisation of Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century. Before westernisation, the Japanese word *bijutsu*, whose primary meaning today is 'fine arts', did not exist. Instead, the word *kō*, which meant skills which required precision and accuracy and the people who possessed these skills, covered the fields not only of industry and craftwork but also of painting and sculpture. When Japan participated in the Vienna International Exhibition in 1873, the Japanese word *bijutsu* was coined as a mistranslation of a German word 'Kunstgewerbe' in order to select objects to be displayed at this exhibition. However, when it was coined, the word *bijutsu* meant 'the arts' including not only painting and sculpture but also music and poetry. From then on, the spheres of 'the arts' which the word *bijutsu* covered came to be restricted to visual arts such as painting, sculpture, calligraphy, architecture and crafts. Today, it means what might be called 'fine arts' such as painting and sculpture, though it still retains the secondary meaning of visual arts including architecture and crafts. Also, the words, *kaiga*, *chōkoku* and *kōgei*, which corresponded to 'painting', 'sculpture' and 'craft' in the western sense of the terms were established

²⁹ Takagi, 'Nihon Bijutsushi no Seiritu Shiron', p. 75.

³⁰ *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

through the introduction of western ideas by the 1890s.³¹

In the process of the formation of these concepts, the western hierarchy of arts which put 'crafts' under 'fine arts' such as 'painting' and 'sculpture' was also introduced. This process was evident in the categorisation of objects in the National Industrial Exhibitions held five times in Japan from 1877 to 1903. In the first and second of these exhibitions held in 1877 and 1881, the section called *Sho-ga* [*sho*=calligraphy, *ga*=picture] accommodated anything with some graphic representation drawn on it, such as vases and cabinets, side by side with paintings and works of calligraphy. However, from the Third National Industrial Exhibition in 1890 onwards, the section of *Bijutsu-kōgyō* or *Bijutsu-kōgei*, either of which was an equivalent term to *kōgei* in this period, was created to accommodate the objects which showed the application of artistic and precise techniques to articles of utility and did not belong to the categories of 'painting', 'sculpture', 'architecture' or 'gardening'. Even though distinctions were made between these categories, the way 'crafts' and 'paintings' were displayed together in *bijutsu-kan* [museum of fine arts] at the exhibition site was criticised by those who insisted that in western countries 'crafts' were never exhibited in museums of 'fine arts'. By the 1900s, the hierarchy between what are now called 'fine arts' and 'crafts' was established, which was reflected in the first government-led art exhibition called 'Bunten' in 1907, which exhibited only paintings and sculptures. Until 1927, crafts were not accepted at such government-led art exhibitions which were called 'Teiten' from 1919.³²

In the case of the 'print', it was established as a form of art even later than 'painting', 'sculpture' and 'craft'. The name for 'print' was never settled throughout the five National Industrial Exhibitions: it was called *kiketsu* at the first exhibition

³¹ Satō Dōshin, *Nihon Bijutsu' Tanjō*, pp. 34-66.

³² Kitazawa, *Me no Shinden*, pp. 295-298, *Kyōkai no Bijutsushi*, pp. 218-241.

(1877), *kankoku* at the second (1881), *han* at the third (1890) and the fourth (1895), and *seihan* at the fifth (1903). Furthermore, although a section for the 'print' was set alongside the sections of 'painting', 'sculpture', 'craft' and so on under the category of *bijutsu* from the first to the fourth exhibitions, it was just a subsection of 'craft' at the fifth exhibition. Also, prints with no practical use, which are most likely to be seen today as works of art solely for their aesthetic merit, and the mass-produced prints of utility (such as stamps, trademarks and share certificates) were displayed in the same section.³³ The word *hanga*, whose primary meaning today is 'print' as a form of art, was not established until the late 1900s. As various forms of western prints came to be widely known in Japan, some of the Japanese artists who were eager to introduce western aesthetic ideas aimed to define *hanga* as a form of art distinct from reproductive prints or prints produced solely for practical purposes. This was most clearly symbolised by the use of the phrase *hi-jitsuyoteki-naru bijutsuteki hanga* [non-functional and artistic print] by one of such artists, Yamamoto Kanae, in an article of 1905.³⁴ However, *hanga* was positioned low in the hierarchy of arts and, like *kōgei*, it was accepted at the prestigious 'Teiten' only as late as in 1927.

It should be noted here that in this process of the formation of the concepts and hierarchies regarding arts, the traditional hierarchy of arts which had existed before the westernisation was integrated into the newly imported western hierarchy. The hierarchy of arts in the Edo Period was based on the class system in which the

³³ Aoki Shigeru, "Suri-e" kara "Hanga" e' [From "Suri-e" to "Hanga"] in *Kindai Nihon Hanga no Shosō* [Aspects of Modern Japanese Prints], ed. by Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1998), pp. 3-29 (pp. 4-6).

³⁴ Koike Tomoko, 'Hanga to Iu Go: "Hanga" Gainen ni Tsuite no Ichi Kōsatsu: Meiji 30 Nendai Kōhan o Chūshin ni' [The Word *Hanga*: an Essay on the Concept of "Hanga": with Special Reference to the Late 30s of Meiji] in *Kindai Nihon Hanga no Shosō*, ed. by Machida City Museum, pp. 249-268 (pp. 249-254).

warrior class was positioned at the top, the farmer and craftsmen classes came the second and third respectively, and the merchant class was at the bottom. According to this class system, most of the craftsmen and sculptors belonged to the craftsmen class. Many of the painters were also included in the craftsmen class, but painters of Kanō School, who were patronised by the Shogunate, were given positions in the warrior class and were the most prestigious among artists, while *Ukiyo-e* School artists whose works were appreciated mainly by the merchant class were the least respected. Although the class system was abolished after the Meiji Restoration, such hierarchies of artists still lingered in the Meiji Period. As a result the 'fine arts', which were institutionalised by the Meiji government, were dominated by painters, many of whom were from the former warrior class, while craftsmen and *ukiyo-e* artists were marginalised.³⁵

At the same time, as the concepts and hierarchy of 'arts' were established, the 'history of Japanese art' was formed, led by the government initiative. Before the Meiji Period, books written about 'Japanese art' existed, but they were anthologies of artists or works of art rather than chronological descriptions of the development of arts. In the 1880s, in response to the criticism of the iconoclasm of Buddhist arts and the drain of works of art to western countries and the subsequent reappraisal of traditional 'Japanese art', the Japanese government organised a commission to survey the treasures in shrines and temples in the Kinai area including the ancient cities, Nara and Kyoto. The treasures in these shrines and temples were shown to the commissioners in order for them to record the data of each object such as subject, ownership, artist, period, size and materials. At the same time, the buildings and objects which were deemed to have considerable historical

³⁵ Satō Dōshin, *Nihon Bijutsu' Tanjō*, pp. 158-170, *Meiji Kokka to Kindai Bijutsu*, pp. 43-73.

merit and to deserve special protection by the government were registered as 'National Treasures'. In other words, the canonisation of the certain works of 'Japanese art' was carried out in the name of the selection of 'National Treasures'. Among the leading figures of this commission were Ernest F. Fenollosa, the *oyatoi gaikokujin* from the United States who played an important role in introducing the western concept of 'fine arts' into Japan with his famous lecture in Tokyo in 1882, *Bijutsu Shinsetsu* [True Theory of Fine Arts], and Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzō), the government official who led the establishment of art education in Japan and the revival of Japanese painting.³⁶

Based on the survey carried out by this commission, Okakura gave lectures on the 'history of Japanese art' at the Tokyo School of Art as its principal from 1890. In these lectures, Okakura treated the concept of *bijutsu* as something universal and did not mention its provenance. In other words, the concept of *bijutsu*, which was actually 'invented' through the introduction of western ideas, was assumed as *a priori* and incorporated into the 'history of art', the disciplinary framework which was itself imported from the West.³⁷ These lectures by Okakura were to become a model for the first official 'history of Japanese art', *Histoire de l'Art du Japon*, which was edited and published in French by the government in connection with the Paris International Exhibition in 1900. The fact that the first official book of the 'history of Japanese art' was written in a western language indicates that the 'history of Japanese art' was constructed first of all as a 'self-portrait' of Japan for an

³⁶ Takagi Hiroshi, 'Nihon Kindai no Bunkazai Hogo Gyōsei to Bijutsushi no Seiritsu' [The Administration for the Protection of Cultural Properties and the Formation of the History of Art in Modern Japan] in *Kataru Genzai Katarareru Kako*, ed. by National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, pp. 13-21, Murakata Akiko, 'Fenollosa no Hōmotsu Chōsa to Teikoku Hakubutsukan no Kōsō (1) (2): Hāvādo Daigaku Hōton Raiburari Zō Ikō o Chūshin ni' [Fenollosa's Survey of the Temple Art Treasures and Conception of Imperial Fine Arts Museum: with Special Reference to His Manuscripts at the Houghton Library, Harvard University: I, II], *Museum*, no. 347 (February 1980), 21-34, no. 348 (March 1980), 25-36.

³⁷ Kitazawa, *Me no Shinden*, pp. 278-280.

international audience.³⁸ The 'history of Japanese art' thus formed consisted of the prestigious arts of the former ruling classes or of artefacts linked to Buddhism including a number of 'National Treasures'. Not only 'fine arts' such as painting and sculpture but also crafts were included in its discourse, but only those related to the Imperial family, the former warrior class, the aristocracy and Buddhism were dealt with. On the other hand, *ukiyo-e* paintings and prints, the epitome of the plebeian art of Japan which was so much admired by western Japonists, were only briefly touched on.³⁹ Also, as if to correct the partial accounts of 'Japanese art' which had been written by westerners whose main interests focused on the Edo Period (1603-1867) or on the Muromachi Period (1392-1573), much emphasis was put on the ancient phase of 'Japanese art' from the Suiko Period to the Tenpyō Period (593-748).⁴⁰ The exhibits of 'Japanese art' at the Paris Exhibition in 1900 also reflected such discourse, with only six *ukiyo-e* paintings of Iwasa Matabei, the first artist of the *Ukiyo-e* School, being exhibited while a number of more 'prestigious' and older works of art dominating the exhibits.⁴¹

Histoire de l'Art du Japon, therefore, could be seen as the product of the government's efforts to present to the international community what the Japanese themselves regarded as the 'history of Japanese art' through objects and buildings they had recognised as 'canons' of 'Japanese art', as distinct from writing about

³⁸ Takagi, 'Nihon Bijutsushi no Seiritsu Shiron', p. 74.

³⁹ Satō Dōshin, '*Nihon Bijutsu Tanjō*', p. 65, Akiko Mabuchi, '1900 Nen Pari Bankoku Hakurankai to *Histoire de l'Art du Japon* o Megutte' [The Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900, and *Histoire de l'Art du Japon*] in *Kataru Genzai Katarareru Kako*, ed. by the National Research Institute, pp. 43-55 (p. 46).

⁴⁰ Inaga Shigemi, 'Meisaku to Kyoshō no Ninchi o Meguru Ninshiki no Sogo: 'Nihon Bijutsushi' Keiseiki (1870-1900) o Chūshin ni Gonsu *Nihon Bijutsu* (1883), Andāson *Nihon no Kaiga Geijutsu* (1886) oyobi *Kōhon Nihon Teikoku Bijutsu Ryakuki* (1900) o Megutte' [The Variance on the Recognition of Masterpieces and Masters: on the Formative Years of the 'History of Japanese Art' (1870-1900) with Special Reference to *L'Art Japonais* (1883) by Gonse, *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* (1886) by Anderson and *Histoire de l'Art du Japon* (1900)], *Bijutsu Forum* 21, 4 (2001), 22-27 (pp. 25-26).

⁴¹ Mabuchi, '1900 Nen Pari Bankoku Hakurankai', in *Kataru Genzai Katarareru Kako*, ed. by the National Research Institute, p. 50.

'Japanese art' by westerners in the fashion of Japonisme. As has been explained, the concept of 'Japanese art' and the 'history of Japanese art' were themselves hybrid products formed through the introduction of western ideas. Like the export handicrafts which were promoted by the government in the time of *Shokusan Kōgyō*, the 'Japanese art' thus represented was the 'currency' (that is, the 'Japanese art' intelligible to the western audience) which was created by 'melting and casting' (that is, incorporating the western concepts) the 'nuggets' (that is, what had been appreciated by the ruling classes in Japan without being called 'art'). However, concealing such provenances, the government discourse of the 'history of Japanese art' was constructed as an 'authentic' narrative on 'Japanese art'.

Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin

A number of publications on 'Japanese art' in a similar vein were also published by Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin, the two major art publishers in Japan at the time. *Kokka*, the art journal by Kokka-sha which is still regarded as the most authoritative journal of Japanese art, was launched by Okakura Tenshin and Takahashi Kenzō in 1889.⁴² The fact that it was started by Okakura, who established the basis for the first official 'history of Japanese art', and Takahashi, the journalist who had connections with the government as an ex-government official, implies that *Kokka* was published at first as the medium through which to convey the government discourse on 'Japanese art'. From 1905 to 1918, the English version of *Kokka* was also published. As was explained in the introduction to its first English edition, it aimed to present to the western readers the 'authentic' views on 'Japanese art' held by the Japanese themselves as distinct from interpretations by

⁴² For the history of Kokka-sha and *Kokka*, see Mizuo Hiroshi, *Kokka no Kiseki* [The History of *Kokka*] (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 2003).

westerners.

The majority of Western students of Japanese art have taken as their authorities the observations of their own country men, and these have often led them into glaring misconceptions. For this we are in a measure answerable, through our neglect to present authoritative views from a purely Japanese standpoint.⁴³

Shimbi Shoin also published books on 'Japanese art' with strong connections with the government.⁴⁴ It was established as a Buddhist society at first,⁴⁵ but its first publication, the series of books on 'Japanese art' entitled *Shimbi Taikan* [Selected Relics of Japanese Art] and published from 1899 to 1908, had prefaces by Kuki Ryūichi and Ernest F. Fenollosa, the leading figures in the government policies on 'Japanese art'. In its editorial notices, it was stated that the object of its publication was 'to introduce ancient Japanese art to the world at large and to supply materials for the study of the history of Japanese art and its development'.⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that ninety percent of the works of art in this series were paintings, which reflected the high importance attached to this branch of 'Japanese art'. When Shimbi Shoin was re-established as a joint-stock company in 1906, its shareholders consisted of a number of politicians and industrialists. Moreover, the second major series of books by Shimbi Shoin, *Tōyō Bijutsu Taikan* [Masterpieces

⁴³ 'Introduction to the New English Edition', *Kokka*, no. 182, 1905, p. 4.

⁴⁴ For the history of Shimbi Shoin and its publications, see Murakado Noriko, 'Shimbi Shoin no Bijutsu Zenshū ni Miru "Nihon Bijutsushi" no Keisei' [The Formation of "History of Japanese Art" Seen in the Series of Books on Art by Shimbi Shoin], *Kindai Gasesu*, 8 (1999), 33-51.

⁴⁵ From 1898 to 1903, it was called Nihon Bukkyō [Buddhism] Shimbi Kyōkai.

⁴⁶ Tajima Shiichi, 'Editorial Notices', *Shimbi Taikan* [Selected Relics of Japanese Art], ed. by Tajima Shiich, 20 vols. (Kyoto: Nihon Bukkyō Shimbi Kyōkai, 1899-1908), I (1899), n.p.

Selected from the Fine Arts of the Far East], which was published from 1908 to 1918, was praised by the then Imperial Household Minister, Tanaka Mitsuaki, as the achievement of the 'national undertaking' in its preface.⁴⁷ For the Japan-British Exhibition in 1910, Shimbi Shoin also published *Tokubetsu Hogo Kenzōbutsu Oyobi Kokuhō-chō* [Japanese Temples and Their Treasures], the second major publication of the 'history of Japanese art' compiled by the government. These publications and a number of other books on Japanese or Far Eastern art by Shimbi Shoin were published in English as well as in Japanese. As Satō Dōshin points out, such publications by Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin played major roles in reinforcing the government discourse on 'Japanese art'.⁴⁸ Also, the fact that most of their publications were published in English suggests that, like *Histoire de l'Art du Japon*, they were used as media to present 'Japanese art' to the international community.⁴⁹

As has been mentioned, the Japanese were eager to show to a western audience their 'authentic' views on 'Japanese art' as distinct from what had been envisaged by westerners as 'Japanese art'. In presenting such views on 'Japanese art' it was deemed important to show what they regarded as the 'canons' of 'Japanese art'. However, most of these 'canons' were not easily accessible to the general public, let alone those who never had the chance to visit Japan. In this respect, it is notable that both Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin reproduced such works of art in colour

⁴⁷ Preface by Tanaka Mitsuaki in *Tōyō Bijutsu Taikan* [Masterpieces Selected from the Fine Arts of the Far East], ed. by Shimbi Shoin, 15 vols. (Tokyo: Shimbi Shoin, 1908-1918), I (1908), n.p.

⁴⁸ Satō Dōshin, *Meiji Kokka to Kindai Bijutsu*, pp. 124-131, As Okakura and Takahashi detached themselves from *Kokka* and Taki Seiichi was appointed as its editor in chief from around 1900, *Kokka* was to become more scholarly oriented journal rather than the medium to convey the government discourse on 'Japanese art' as it had been in its early years. Yashiro Yukio, 'Kokka no Sekaiteki Sonzai' [The Position of *Kokka* in the World], *Kokka*, 600 (1940), 33-36 (p. 36), Mizuo, *Kokka no Kiseki*, p. 16.

⁴⁹ Shimbi Shoin also published an English catalogue of its publications probably around 1910. *A Catalogue of Valuable and Important Japanese Art Publications* (Tokyo: Shimbi Shoin, n.d).

woodcut and collotype in their publications to convey their exact images. While collotype was used for monochrome reproductions, Kokka-sha employed skilled craftsmen who inherited the traditional techniques of *ukiyo-e* printmaking to reproduce works of art, mainly paintings, in colour (Fig. 7). In utilising the tradition of *ukiyo-e* printmaking for such reproductions, Kokka-sha introduced some new features to the traditional techniques in order to produce exact facsimiles of the originals. For example, whereas thirty or forty blocks at most had been used for printing a picture in the past, more than a hundred blocks were employed for each reproduction in *Kokka*. In some cases, even three hundred blocks were used. Also, photographs were pasted onto blocks as guidelines for carving in order to express the strokes of brush in paintings more effectively. The method of printmaking employed by Kokka-sha was so labour-intensive that it sometimes took a few months to reproduce a painting.⁵⁰ Shimbi Shoin also employed similar methods of reproduction and competed with Kokka-sha in their techniques (Figs. 8-9).⁵¹ Through the woodcut printmaking developed by Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin, *ukiyo-e* printmaking techniques were preserved and passed on while traditional single-sheet *ukiyo-e* prints were replaced by prints which were produced by newly-introduced methods of printmaking such as lithography and photography.⁵² Also, as will be mentioned in the next sections, their elaborate reproductions in

⁵⁰ Taki Seiichi, 'Irozuri Mokuhanjutsu no Shinpo' [The Development of the Techniques of Woodcut Printmaking], *Waseda Bungaku*, January 1906, pp. 40-60, Tatsui Umekichi, 'Kokka Sōritsu no Jiji Tenshin Ryō Sensei to Tōji no Meikō o Shinobu' [A Memoir on Jiji and Tenshin, Who Started *Kokka*, and the Master Craftsmen], *Kokka*, 600 (1940), 41-42, 'Introduction to the New English Edition', *Kokka*, 182 (1905), 6.

⁵¹ Murakado, 'Shimbi Shoin no Bijutsu Zenshū ni Miru "Nihon Bijutsushi" no Keisei', p. 39, Takeda Michitarō, 'Kore Dake wa Sekai ni Hokoreru: *Kokka* Nanajū-nen no Fusetsu' [We Can Be Proud of It in the World: Hardships of *Kokka* in Its Seventy-year History], *Geijutsu Shinchō*, vol. 10, no. 3 (March 1959), 56-63 (p. 60).

⁵² Koike Makiko, 'Kindai Hanga to *Ukiyo-e*' [Modern Prints and *Ukiyo-e*] in *Nihon no Hanga I: 1900-1910: Han no Katachi Hyakusō* [Japanese Prints I: 1900-1910: Miscellaneous Forms of Prints], ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art (Chiba: Chiba City Museum of Art, 1997), pp. 18-23 (pp. 19-20).

colour woodcut were to be highly praised by the western audiences.

In this way, the Japanese government's policies on 'Japanese art' shifted in accordance with the economic, political and diplomatic circumstances from the 1860s to the 1900s. In the 1860s and 1870s, when *Shokusan Kōgyō* was the urgent task to achieve, the government enthusiastically promoted the export of handicrafts in response to the fashion for Japonisme in the West. However, as Japan achieved industrialisation and began to claim itself as a 'first-class' nation equipped with the political system and the military force based on the western models, 'Japanese art' was represented as the epitome of Japan's civilisation, comparable to those of western powers but distinct from theirs. With such intention, the government represented 'Japanese art' through what the Japanese themselves regarded as 'higher' and more 'prestigious' arts of Japan than those which had been preferred by western Japonists. Throughout these stages of the government's policies on 'Japanese art', *ukiyo-e* prints were virtually excluded from the official representation of 'Japanese art'. Instead, the techniques which had been employed for this plebeian branch of art were utilised to reproduce the 'canons' of 'Japanese art' which were deemed necessary to present to the western audience as a 'self-portrait' of Japan.⁵³

Such Japanese government's representation of 'Japanese art' has been

⁵³ The discourse on 'Japanese art' by the Japanese was not monolithic, of course, especially after the art criticism by individual critics and scholars developed outside the government discourse with the emergence of the art journalism from around 1900. However, the art journals which were established in this tendency were published for domestic readers and were hardly available abroad. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that the 'Japanese art' was expressed to the international audience mainly through the government discourse. Ōkuma Toshiyuki, 'Meiji Chūki Ikō no Bijutsu Hihyō Ron: Nihon Kindai Bijutsu Hihyōshi Kōchiku no Tameni' [The Art Criticism from the Middle of the Meiji Period: for the Construction of the History of Modern Japanese Art Criticism], *Annual Report of Sannōmaru Shōzōkan*, no. 3 (1996), 46-55, no. 4 (1997), 59-70.

thoroughly investigated by recent scholarship cited in this chapter. However, how this official representation of 'Japanese art' in the early twentieth century was actually perceived by western audiences has not been adequately considered. The next section will explore this issue by looking at the representation of 'Japanese art' at the Japan-British Exhibition, London, 1910. This was the first opportunity to display Japanese works of art on a major scale in Britain after the Japanese government's official representation of 'Japanese art' was established around the turn of the century. By examining the 'Japanese art' at this exhibition and the British reaction to it, the next section will reveal how this newly established representation of 'Japanese art', laden with the contemporary diplomatic concerns of the Japanese government, was perceived by the British audience in the early twentieth century.

1-2 The Japan-British Exhibition, London, 1910

The Japan-British Exhibition was held in London from 14 May to 29 October in 1910 and attracted 8,350,000 people.⁵⁴ Although Japan had already participated in a number of major international exhibitions from the mid-nineteenth century, this

⁵⁴ Most of the previous works on the Japan-British Exhibition have been done from social, political or economic points of view. Kawamura Kazuo, 'Meiji 43 Nen Kaisai no Nichiei Hakurankai ni Tsuite' [On the Japan-British Exhibition Held in the 43rd year of the Meiji Period], *Seiji Keizaishi Gaku*, no. 181 (June 1981), 28-38, no.186 (November 1981), 32-43, no.190 (March 1982), 18-26, Kuni Yūko, '1910 Nen Nichiei Hakurankai ni Tsuite' [On the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910], *Kanagawa Kenritsu Hakubutsukan Kenkyū Hōkoku*, 22 (1996), 65-80, Ayako Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Gateway to the Island Empire of the East* (Richmond: Japan Library, 1999), Angus Lockyer, Chapter Three "'The Note of Orientalism": London, 1910' in 'Japan at the Exhibition, 1867-1970', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stanford University, 2000), pp. 119-159. The only works which have dealt with this exhibition from an art historical perspective are those by Satō Michiko which focus on the contemporary paintings displayed at the Palace of Fine Arts and the iconography of the certificates and medals of the exhibition. Satō Michiko, 'Nichiei Hakurankai to Sono Hyōshō: Buritania to "Yamatohime"' [Japan-British Exhibition and Its Representations: Britannia and Yamatohime], *Geijutsugaku Kenkyū*, 2 (1998), 29-36, '1910 Nen Nichiei Hakurankai ni Tsuite' [On the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910], *Geijutsugaku Kenkyū*, 3 (1999), 63-66.

exhibition was the first bi-national exhibition it had taken part in and Japan was assigned unprecedented space in which to represent itself to an international audience.⁵⁵ By the time this exhibition was held, Japan had grown as an imperial power and its alliance concluded in 1902 with Britain, the greatest imperial power in the world at that time, symbolised this ascendancy. For Japan, this exhibition was the cultural consummation of the alliance with its most important ally, and the Japanese government aimed to show a complete picture of Japanese civilisation not only in its present state but also from historical perspectives.

Among a number of sections showing the fruits of Japanese civilisation, 'Japanese art' was deemed to be the most suitable for representing Japan as a civilised nation in possession of its own tradition and history, and the Japanese government made concerted efforts to organise the display of 'Japanese art' in the pavilion called the Palace of Fine Arts. In this pavilion, Japan was provided with the largest space to exhibit its art that had ever been offered to it in an international exhibition and the works of 'Japanese art' including a considerable number of 'National Treasures' were exhibited on an unprecedented scale to show a comprehensive 'history of Japanese art'.⁵⁶ In addition to the works of art which

⁵⁵ According to *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the floor spaces of the pavilions which were occupied by Japanese exhibits in the international exhibitions around the turn of the century were as follows. 1 'tsubo' is 3.306 square meters approximately.

1893	World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago	1,181 tsubo
1900	Exposition Universelle, Paris	1,226 tsubo
1904	Louisiana Purchase International Exposition, St. Louis	3,762 tsubo
1910	Japan-British Exhibition, London	6,741 tsubo

'Nichiei Hakurankai no Kibo [The Scale of the Japan-British Exhibition]', *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 16 April, 1909, p.1.

⁵⁶ The floor spaces of the areas in which Japanese works of art were displayed in the international exhibitions around the turn of the century were as follows.

1893	World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago	231 tsubo
1900	Exposition Universelle, Paris	94 tsubo
1904	Louisiana Purchase International Exposition, St. Louis	205 tsubo
1910	Japan-British Exhibition, London	795 tsubo

Nichiei Hakurankai Jimukyoku Jimu Hōkoku [Official Report of the Japanese Commission, the Japan-British Exhibition] (hereafter *Hōkoku*), 2 vols. (Tokyo: The Department of Agriculture and Commerce, 1912), I, p.182.

were exhibited at the Palace of Fine Arts, articles of Japanese handicrafts were displayed to be sold as export items or souvenirs in the Textile Palace and the Industrial Palace and from stalls scattered throughout the exhibition site. This section aims to analyse how such a display of 'Japanese art' at the exhibition embodied the government representation of 'Japanese art' discussed in the last section.

This section also examines how the British audience reacted to the 'Japanese art' thus represented by the Japanese at the exhibition. A number of reviews on the 'Japanese art' displayed at the exhibition were written for contemporary newspapers and magazines. Some of these reviews were written by art critics and artists who admired and studied 'Japanese art' or by those promoting or influenced by the modernist aesthetic, which had just begun to emerge in Britain. Therefore, these articles reveal how these reviewers, through the lenses of the aesthetic ideas which had been nurtured by their own studies of 'Japanese art' or by modernist ideas which were developing in Britain at that time, perceived the 'Japanese art' at the exhibition.

The motives for the Japan-British Exhibition

First of all, the Japan-British exhibition was regarded by the Japanese government as an opportunity to solve problems regarding Japan's diplomatic relations with western powers and its economic situation. After its victories in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Japan came to see itself as a 'first-class' nation taking rank with western imperial powers. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which was concluded in 1902 with the aim of securing the interests of Japan and Britain in China against the Russian invasion, was seen by Japanese authorities as strong evidence of its ascendancy to the height of western great powers.

Japan further pursued its imperialist policy by expanding into Manchuria after the Russo-Japanese War and annexing Korea in August 1910, at the very time the Japan-British Exhibition was being held, and came to see itself as the leader of Asia that could 'civilise' and 'modernise' other Asian countries. However, the ascendancy of Japan as an imperial power and its expansion in the Far East caused anxiety and anti-Japanese feeling among western countries.⁵⁷ The Japanese authorities, aware of this growing adverse attitude toward Japan, tried to make sure that Japan's policies in the Far East would be approved by western powers.

Japan's economic situation was also an issue of grave concern in this period. Japan underwent several recessions around the turn of the century and its trade deficit and the foreign loans were growing in the beginning of the twentieth century. Britain was the main provider of foreign loans to Japan and the country with which Japan had the largest deficit. Moreover, Japan's industrial development had been hindered by the tariff rates on western imports fixed by western countries since the so-called 'unequal treaties' were signed in 1858. These treaties, forced upon Japan by the west when Japan opened its ports for foreign trades, consisted of two terms: the extraterritorial rights of foreigners in Japan and tariff rates on western imports which were determined in favour of western trading countries. After the extraterritorial rights were removed in 1894, the achievement of complete tariff autonomy became Japan's most prioritised task and, among the western countries for the Japanese government to negotiate with, Britain was the first to be

⁵⁷ The anxiety held by the British about Japan's ascendancy as an industrialised and military nation was expressed in a number of articles and caricatures in contemporary British magazines and newspapers. Toda Masahiro, *Daiei Teikoku no Ajia Imēji* [The Images of Asia in the Era of the British Empire] (Kyoto: Minerva Shobō, 1996), *Zuzō no Naka no Chūgoku to Nihon: Vikutoriachō no Oriento Gensō* [China and Japan in Illustrations: Illusions of the Orient in the Victorian Period] (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1998).

approached.⁵⁸

Therefore, when the idea of holding a 'Japanese Exhibition' was proposed by Imre Kiralfy, a private exhibition organiser, to Komura Jutarō, the then ambassador to the United Kingdom, in July 1908, Komura regarded this exhibition as having a great potential to solve these issues.⁵⁹ Komura was recalled to Japan as a new Foreign Minister shortly after he agreed to this plan in London and proposed an 'Anglo-Japanese Exhibition' in the cabinet in October 1908,⁶⁰ stating that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was 'the backbone of the Japanese Empire's diplomacy' and that the proposed exhibition would promote the amity between Japan and Britain not only at government level but also at citizen level.⁶¹ With his experience as an ambassador in London, Komura was particularly concerned with Anglo-Japanese relationships⁶² and regarded it vital for Japan to reinforce the bond between Japan and Britain in order to prevent conflicts with western powers over Japan's imperialist policies in the Far East and to facilitate negotiations for the revision of the commercial tariff. To Komura, the 'Anglo-Japanese' Exhibition seemed to offer a

⁵⁸ Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*, pp.9-34.

⁵⁹ In 1906, Kiralfy proposed the same plan to Mutsu Hirokichi, the first secretary of the Japanese Embassy, but it was turned down at that time because the Japanese government was occupied in planning a Grand Japanese Exhibition, which was supposed to be held in Tokyo in 1912. This Tokyo exhibition having been postponed until 1917, the London exhibition became a real possibility. Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*, pp.41-43.

⁶⁰ While Kiralfy mentioned the exhibition as 'Japanese Exhibition', Komura interpreted it as 'Anglo-Japanese Exhibition' from the first and regarded it as a means to strengthen the bond between the two countries. Kuni, '1910 Nen Nichiei Hakurankai ni Tsuite', pp. 65-66.

⁶¹ DROMFAJ, *Eikyō London ni okeru Nichiei Hakurankai Kaisetsu Ikken* [Matters on Opening the Japan-British Exhibition in London, Capital of Britain] vol.1.

⁶² Shortly after he was appointed as Foreign Minister, Komura submitted to the cabinet a proposal regarding Japan's foreign policies in September 1908, in which he stated that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was 'the backbone of the Japanese Empire's diplomacy' in the very first sentence of the section entitled 'Japan's relation with other great powers'. As mentioned above, this phrase was repeated in his proposal of the exhibition in October. *Nihon Gaikō Nenpyō Narabini Shuyō Bunsho* [Chronologies and Important Documents Regarding Japan's Foreign Policies], ed. by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, vol.1, pp. 305-308, quoted in Kawamura, 'Meiji 43 Nen Kaisai no Nichiei Hakurankai ni Tsuite', 186, p.34.

perfect opportunity to smooth the way to achieve this task and the reinforcement of the bond between Japan and Britain became the recurring theme of the exhibition.

The increase of Japanese exports to Britain was also raised as an objective of the exhibition. The official report of the exhibition edited by the Japanese Commission described the unbalanced trade between Japan and Britain as one of the motives to hold this exhibition. According to this report, Japan's trade with Britain were extremely unbalanced and its exports were no more than 23% of its imports.⁶³ This issue was raised at the general meeting of the Budget Committee of the Diet in March 1909, where the sum of 1,800,000 yen, which was more than double that funded for the St. Louis Exhibition in 1904, was requested as a budget for Japan's participation in the Japan-British Exhibition. In his speech at the committee, Ōura Kanetake, the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, insisted that the Japan-British Exhibition would promote both trade and amity between Japan and Britain. He pointed out that the trade between Japan and Britain amounted to no more than 25,620,000 yen while the total sum of the British foreign trade amounted to 6,500,000,000 yen and attributed the cause of this small share of Japan to the fact that the British had not yet fully appreciated the true value of Japanese goods.⁶⁴ In this respect, the Japan-British Exhibition was expected to work effectively to balance the trades between Japan and Britain by advertising Japanese goods to Britain.

In this way, the Japanese authorities agreed to Kiralfy's proposal of the Japan-British Exhibition with the two objectives in their minds: to strengthen the bond between Japan and Britain as allied nations and to increase Japan's exports to Britain. In the official report, it was argued that the Franco-British Exhibition held

⁶³ *Hōkoku*, I, p.4.

⁶⁴ 'Yosan Iinkai Sōkai: Nichiei Hakurankai Keihi' [General Meeting of Budget Committee: Expenditure for the Japan-British Exhibition], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 5 March, 1909, p.2.

in 1908 proved that a bi-national exhibition would be more suitable for achieving these objectives than previous participation in world fairs and exposition universelles.⁶⁵ After the budget of 1,800,000 yen was sanctioned as requested with little objection from the members of the Diet, the Japanese Commission was set up with Ōura Kanetake appointed as its President, Matsudaira Masanao as its Vice-President, Prince Fushimi Sadanaru as its Honorary President and Wada Hikojirō as Commissioner-General.

The commitment of the Japanese government to the exhibition, however, was not matched by that of the British government. Although the Japanese authorities, believing in the importance of the bi-national nature of this exhibition as a symbol of the strong bond between Japan and Britain, continuously sought for official support from the British government equivalent to that promised by the Japanese government, the British authorities remained cool to the notion of Anglo-Japanese exhibition. The British government, considering that the proposed exhibition might be a mere commercial undertaking contrived for profit by a private entrepreneur, Kiralfy, and that it would encourage Japan's exports to Britain but not vice versa, only agreed to give moral countenance to the exhibition without promising any financial support.⁶⁶ The Japanese government had to reconcile itself to hold the exhibition jointly with Kiralfy's private company, not with the British government.

Moreover, in the process of the preparation, the Japanese commissioners

⁶⁵ *Hōkoku*, I, p.2.

⁶⁶ Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*, pp.51-53. The coming exhibitions in Brussels, Rome and Turin were another reason of the British government's reluctance to give official support to the exhibition. The Board of Trade expressed its concern that the involvement in the Japan-British Exhibition might affect the success of the British sections in these exhibitions. The National Archives of the United Kingdom, 'Anglo-Japanese Exhibition, 1910', FO 368-367, no.3328.

had to confront the discrepancy between their objectives and those of their British partner, Imre Kiralfy. Kiralfy, a Hungarian immigrant, had been producing spectacle plays and exhibitions since the 1890s. Most of his exhibitions had imperialistic themes and attracted the audience with their exotic elements such as the natives from India and Africa living in the villages constructed at the exhibition sites. To Kiralfy, the showman who knew the profitability of imperialism and exoticism as embellishment to his exhibitions, holding a Japanese exhibition in London meant another opportunity to fill the White City, the exhibition site built by him in Shepherd's Bush, with exotic objects, spectacles and attractions.⁶⁷

The White City had been already used as a venue for the Franco-British Exhibition in 1908 and the Imperial International Exhibition in 1909, and most of their facilities were reused at the 1910 exhibition. The site was divided into Japanese and British sections, the former occupying a larger space (Figs. 10). The Japanese government, although being frustrated by the British government's cool attitude to the exhibition and Kiralfy's commercialism, set out to prepare for the exhibition by filling and decorating this assigned space with choice specimens brought from Japan.

'Constructing a little Japan in London'

The Japanese government's enthusiasm for the exhibition was described in Kiralfy's edition of official report as follows:

It was resolved from the beginning that the national display should be of the most comprehensive character possible, and should offer a complete representation of the history, the national life, the industries, the natural

⁶⁷ Lockyer, 'Japan at the Exhibition', pp.139-141.

resources, and the art of Japan. The Imperial Government so united with the entire Japanese people to carry out this resolve, that the Japanese part in the Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush was in the fullest possible sense of the term a national undertaking.⁶⁸

An article in the Japan-British Exhibition special edition of *Taiyō* described this undertaking as 'constructing a little Japan in London'.⁶⁹ How, then, was the 'little Japan' constructed at the exhibition site?

The official report of the exhibition compiled by the Japanese Commission described the scheme of display of the Japanese sections as follows:

Since the Japan-British Exhibition will be held in order not only to promote commerce and trade between Japan and Britain but also to reinforce the existing amity between these two allied countries, the principles of this exhibition should necessarily be different from those we have followed in participating in the previous international exhibitions. Therefore, in addition to promoting commerce and trade by exhibiting the present state of our culture, resources and industries as at other exhibitions, we will aim to reveal the origins of the prosperity of our nation by showing the development of our education, art, industries, military system, and transport through historical displays at this exhibition.⁷⁰

As manifested in this statement, the Japanese commissioners intended to show

⁶⁸ *Official Report of the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910, at the Great White City, Shepherd's Bush, London* (London: Unwin Brothers, 1911), p.133.

⁶⁹ 'Nichiei Hakurankai Zenki' [Prologue to the Japan-British Exhibition], *Taiyō*, Japan-British Exhibition Special Edition, vol.16, no.9, 1910, p.10.

⁷⁰ *Hōkoku.*, I, p.123.

various aspects of Japanese civilisation not only in its present state but also from historical perspectives.

One of the motives which made the Japanese government so anxious to offer a complete representation of Japan can be ascribed to the prevailing concern held by the Japanese that the true picture of Japan was not yet fully understood in western countries, including its most important ally, Britain. An editor of *Yomiuri Shimbun* wrote that although as allied nations it was essential for Japan and Britain to know each other it was regrettable that the British people had only a negligible knowledge of Japan. He then concluded that the Japan-British Exhibition would be a perfect opportunity to let them fully understand Japan.⁷¹

This concern was also expressed in the preface of *Japan To-day*, the book which was edited as a souvenir volume of the exhibition by Mochizuki Kotarō, an ex-member of the Diet, journalist and correspondent of the exhibition. According to Mochizuki, the sudden rise of Japan, which became all the more conspicuous after its victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, appeared as 'a Sphinx-like riddle' in the eyes of westerners and its development was seen as an achievement of the last forty or fifty years, although 'the causes at the bottom of these developments reach back to remote antiquity'. He pointed out that 'the real Japan is not sufficiently known' and that it was an urgent task to show to the world not only the current state of Japan but also the origin of 'Japan today', that is, the history of Japanese civilisation, which paralleled European civilisations but had taken a different course of development.⁷² In order for Japan to be recognised as a 'first-class' nation eligible as an ally of

⁷¹ *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 17 January, 1909, p.2, *Yomiuri Shimbun* was one of the leading newspapers in Japan and widely read by intellectuals. Yamamoto Taketoshi, *Kindai Nihon no Shimbun Dokushasō* [Readership of Modern Japanese Newspapers] (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1981), pp.105-109.

⁷² *Japan To-day: a Souvenir of the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition Held in London, a Special Number of the "Japan Financial and Economic Monthly* ed. by Mochizuki Kotaro (Tokyo: Liberal News Agency, 1910), n. p.

western powers, it was thought necessary to enhance the prestige of Japan by showing that Japan had a civilisation comparable to that of the West and that Japan's recent ascendancy was a natural consequence of the development of this civilisation. Therefore, the Japanese commissioners resolved to make the most of the exhibition as an opportunity to show not only the modernity but also the history of Japan.

The Japanese government's discourse on the development of Japanese civilisation was clearly expressed in the display at the Japanese Historical Palace at the exhibition. Its display was arranged to make clear the peculiar nature of Japanese history, that is, assimilation and 'Japanisation' of the elements from foreign civilisations. This aspect of Japanese history was stressed so as to remove the suspicion held by westerners that Japan's recent ascendancy was merely a modern achievement acquired through the imitation of western civilisations in the last half century. Mochizuki, in the preface of *Japan To-day*, made a counter-argument against this suspicion.

It is frequently asserted that the Japanese excel in the art of imitation; but they are not contented with remaining as mere imitators. What they imitate at first they soon assimilate, what they have assimilated comes out in a thoroughly Japanized form. Thus it will be seen that for the space of 2,000 years, Japan absorbed oriental civilizations from China, India and elsewhere, but instead of being enslaved by them, the Japanese looked upon these foreign elements as nutriments and fertilizers for the growth of Japan's own native civilization. Even in the case of our recent history, we see that the Japanese in being brought into contact with the western civilization, never lost their independent assimilating spirit by which they

have nationalized these foreign elements.⁷³

The display at the Japanese Historical Palace in the exhibition site followed the same rhetoric. Twelve tableaux were provided to depict each phase of 2,500 years of the Japanese history with life-sized dolls in historical costumes and painted backdrops. The tableaux showed how the Japanese had assimilated elements of Chinese and Indian civilisations as most clearly seen in the Nara Period (710-784 AD) and then had converted these elements into new 'Japanised' forms to enrich Japanese native culture since the Heian Period(794-1192 AD). This narrative reached its climax at the last tableau entitled 'Japan To-day', in which the dolls resembling General Nogi and Admiral Tōgō, the heroic figures who led Japan to its victory at the Russo-Japanese War, were shaking hands with those who resembled a British naval officer and Claude MacDonald, the then British ambassador to Japan, in an international background of Hibiya Park in Tokyo, where people of all nationalities were strolling, with western-style buildings seen far behind (Fig. 11).⁷⁴ In this particular narrative of Japanese history, the Japanese commissioners attempted to show that Japan, by assimilating the essence of foreign civilisations, nurtured its native civilisation and reached the height where it could claim the partnership with the top western power on equal terms.

Similar discourse concerning the history and modernity of Japan was repeated in the displays outlining the development of Japanese industry, military and education in other pavilions. But the Palace of Fine Arts was deemed to epitomise the Japanese civilisation more than any other pavilion. In the official report of the exhibition, it was repeatedly mentioned that 'Japanese art' was the

⁷³ Mochizuki, *Japan To-day*, n.p.

⁷⁴ The intentions behind the tableaux in the Historical Palace were described in *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 10 June, p. 2, 11 June, p. 2, 12 June, p.2, 1910.

'*seika*' [crème de la crème] of Japanese civilisation.⁷⁵ Also, the Japanese commissioner, Mutsu Hirokichi, stated in his speech at the Royal Society of Arts that 'The Palace of Fine Arts would be the most important part of the Exhibition'.⁷⁶

The representation of 'Japanese art'

The Palace of Fine Arts was divided into a British section and a Japanese section (Fig. 12). In the Japanese section, about 1,400 exhibits were exhibited, and these exhibits were divided into two sections, the Retrospective Section and the Modern Section. Each of these sections was further divided into small groups as shown below:

Japanese Section (number of objects)

Retrospective Section (1138): Paintings (296), Sculptures (54); Models of old buildings (13), Metal works (577), Lacquer wares (126), Fabrics (72)

Modern section (263): Japanese Paintings (41), Western Paintings (19), Sculptures (41), Designs (19), Wood-cuts (14), Pottery (24), Cloisonné (22), Metal works (41), Dyed fabrics and embroideries (19), Lacquer wares (19), Inlaid and wood-works (4)

(1401 objects in total)

As is evident from this list, what might be called 'crafts' in the western sense of the term (fabrics, lacquer wares and works in metal, etc.) were displayed alongside paintings and sculptures in the Japanese section, while only paintings, drawings,

⁷⁵ *Hōkoku*, I, pp. 162, 182, 208, 331.

⁷⁶ *East Anglican Times*, January 20, 1910, in *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*, ed by Hirokichi Mutsu (London: The Imperial Japanese Commission, 1910; repr. Victoria, Australia: Melbourne Institute of Asian Language and Societies, The University of Melbourne, 2001), p. 26.

sculptures and architecture were displayed in the British section of the same building. It is not clearly stated in the official reports edited by the Japanese government why crafts were included in the exhibits of the Palace of Fine Arts. It is possible to presume that the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, which had played a central role in the promotion of export handicrafts in the nineteenth century and was in charge of the preparation for this exhibition, employed the same display scheme as that of the National Industrial Exhibitions, which it had also organised from 1877 to 1903. At the National Industrial Exhibitions, both crafts and paintings were displayed in *bijutsu-kan* [museum of fine arts], which was criticised by those who insisted that like in western countries a clear distinction should be made between 'fine arts' and 'applied arts' from 1890, as has been mentioned in the last section. From around 1900, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Imperial Household began to dominate the art administration in Japan and at the first government-led art exhibition in 1907, Buntensai, which was held by the Ministry of Education, only paintings and sculptures were exhibited. At international exhibitions, the display scheme of Japanese works of art was also dependent on the judgement by the exhibition organisers in hosting countries. The Japanese crafts were allowed to be exhibited in the department of 'fine arts' at the Chicago Exhibition in 1893 and at the St. Louis Exhibition in 1904, whereas they were excluded from the 'fine arts' exhibits at the Paris Exhibition in 1900.⁷⁷ Therefore, it is possible to see the display scheme of the Japanese section at the Palace of Fine Art at the Japan-British Exhibition as reflecting the unstable and somewhat confusing position of crafts.

⁷⁷ Itō Yoshiaki, Doi Kumiko and Ogawa Mikio, 'How to Look Beneath the Surface: Japanese Decorative Arts of the World Expositions' in *Bankoku Hakurankai no Bijutsu*, ed. by Tokyo National Museum, pp. 10-13 (pp. 12-13), Carol Ann Christ, "'The Sole Guardians of the Art Inheritance of Asia': Japan and China at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair', *Positions*, vol. 8, no. 3 (2000), 675-709 (p. 695).

Although Japan was provided with the largest space to exhibit its art that had hitherto been offered to it at an international exhibition, the number of exhibits was so large that not all of them could be shown in the space provided in the Palace of Fine Arts. Moreover, in order to prevent the works of art from being damaged by long-time exposure, the exhibits were changed every two weeks. Instead, the Japanese commissioners gave the audience a chance to see all the Japanese paintings at one time in the pavilion called the 'Garden Club' for three days from the 5th to the 7th in September.

As to the 'old Japanese art' to be displayed at the Retrospective Section(Fig. 13), the official report stated,

Nothing is more effective nor impressive than old works of art as specimens to show the *crème de la crème* of the civilisation of a country. Presenting the fact that Japan has preserved and inherited in perfect condition the antiques of more than a thousand years which must have been lost if they were elsewhere is the quickest way to let people in other countries know the peculiar character of our nation and to invoke respect in their minds. Therefore, although there has been growing concern about the protection of these antiques and opposition against bringing them abroad, the commissioners determined to lead the Japan-British Exhibition to a complete success by displaying them in the best possible way they could find.⁷⁸

It is notable that more than four fifths of the objects were assigned to the Retrospective Section. The Japanese commissioners tried to represent a

⁷⁸ *Hōkoku*, I, p. 331.

comprehensive 'history of Japanese art' by displaying the objects from various ages, some of which dated back to the seventh century. These exhibits were borrowed from the former feudal lords, historic temples and shrines, industrialists and the Imperial Museums under the pledge that they would never again leave Japan and they included thirty three objects which had been officially classified as 'National Treasures'. Indeed, such a considerable number of 'National Treasures' had never been exhibited at the same time even in Japan, not to mention abroad. The inclusion of these 'canons' of 'Japanese art' in the exhibits reflected the enthusiasm with which the Japanese commissioners tried to show what they regarded as 'authentic' 'Japanese art' to the British audience. Furthermore, the fact that the Japanese commissioners rejected the offer of loans from British collectors of Japanese art by explaining that 'they would only exhibit articles brought straight from Japan' implies the priority they put on the 'authenticity' of the 'Japanese art' they aimed to exhibit.⁷⁹ As mentioned earlier, the exhibits were divided into small groups according to the types of objects, but, in each of these groups, the exhibits were displayed in a chronological order. It is also notable that although a number of *ukiyo-e* paintings were exhibited no *ukiyo-e* print was included (Fig. 14). It reflected the reluctance of the Japanese authorities to esteem *ukiyo-e* prints, which had been highly valued by westerners, as a form of art.

The 'history of Japanese art' thus narrated through the display of these objects was further reinforced by *Japanese Temples and Their Treasures*, the three volumes of 'history of Japanese art' which were edited by the government and printed by Shimbi Shoin in connection with the exhibition. As the title of the Japanese version, *Tokubetsu Hogo Kenzōbutsu Oyobi Kokuhō-chō* [Album of Buildings under

⁷⁹ 'Treasures of Japan: Next Year's Great Fete and Exhibition in London', *Morning Leader*, 27 December, 1909, in the clipping file in Hammersmith and Fulham Archives and Local History Centre (HFALHC).

Special Protection and National Treasures], suggests, these volumes were based on the survey of National Treasures which had been carried out by Koshaji Hozon Kai [the Imperial Archaeological Commission] over ten years. 733 buildings and 1,990 objects were selected as National Treasures and, among them, 500 specimens of 'the more important and characteristic works of art' were selected for the inclusion in the volumes.⁸⁰ These volumes consisted of two parts, 'Japanese architecture' and 'Sculpture, painting and allied arts', and the development of each branch of art was narrated with detailed descriptions and images reproduced in woodcut in colour and collotype in monochrome, the techniques for which Shimbi Shoin was renowned (Figs. 15-16). Midway through the exhibition, the woodcuts and collotypes in these volumes were framed and exhibited along with descriptions of the objects illustrated in these reproductions. These reproductions served to convey images of the 'canons' of 'Japanese art' which were too old or fragile to be brought abroad and to show that the 'history of Japanese art' could be traced back to the remotest times.

The narrative of 'history of Japanese art' in these volumes was written and edited by scholars such as Okakura Tenshin, Itō Chūta and Sekino Tadasu, all of whom were leading figures in the establishment of Japanese art history, and followed the same rhetoric as that of the Historical Palace and other pavilions. It was insisted that the Japanese had developed their art by assimilating the essence of other Asian art, especially Chinese art, without losing its uniqueness, and the 'history of Japanese art' was narrated as this process of assimilation. The chapter of general outline of sculpture, painting and allied arts began as follows:

⁸⁰ Shiba Junrokurō, 'Preface' in *Japanese Temples and Their Treasures*, ed. by the Department of the Interior of the Japanese Government, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Shimbi Shoin, 1910), I, pp. i-ii, 'Naimushō Hensan Kokuhō-chō no Hakkan' [The Publication of Kokuhō-chō, Edited by the Department of the Interior], *Kaiga Sōshi*, no. 268, August 1909, p. 9.

Japan is no exception to the rule that island nations draw from the adjacent continents for inspiration and for actual teaching. It would be as impossible to study Japanese art without reference to China as it would be to study British art without reference to the continent of Europe. The wars and disruptions of China made our country a sanctuary for her exiles and repository of her art works, and we have deliberately sought her teachings by sending over our scholars from the very earliest times. Our harshest critics, however, can not say that we have been merely copyists, or that we have failed to assimilate what we have taken. There has never been any lack of lively national feeling, or ability to discriminate what suited our peculiarities and reject the dross.⁸¹

It is possible to see the 'Japanese art' represented at the 'Retrospective Section' embodied the official discourse on the 'history of Japanese art' which had been established in Japan by the turn of the century. As has been mentioned in the last section, the 'history of Japanese art' was constructed by the government as an 'authentic' view of 'Japanese art' by the Japanese themselves. It focused on what they regarded as the 'higher' and more 'prestigious' arts of Japan rather than those praised by westerners in the fashion of Japonisme and much emphasis was put on the ancient phase of 'Japanese art'. At the Japan-British Exhibition, this discourse on 'Japanese art' was presented with real objects and reproductions of antique treasures.

Moreover, by displaying contemporary works of art in the rooms succeeding those showing old masterpieces, the Japanese commissioners aimed to present these works as the latest achievement based on the development of 'Japanese art' as shown

⁸¹ The Department of the Interior, *Japanese Temples and Their Treasures*, I, p.75.

in the Retrospective Section(Fig. 17). In order to represent contemporary 'Japanese art', the Japanese government put out a call for the works of art from living artists to be judged and exhibited at the modern section of the Palace of Fine Art. On one occasion, 160 artists were summoned from all over Japan by the President of the Japanese Commission, Ōura, to encourage the production of works of art to be displayed at the exhibition. In his speech, Ōura gave the following statement:

The Commission aims to collect the old works of art as the origin of modern Japanese art and to display them from historical perspectives as one of the features of the exhibition. We also expect you to show your mettle by producing modern works of art, which will celebrate, together with the old works, the holy and noble essence of our art. We troubled you to come to this meeting today, as the success of the coming exhibition is largely dependent on your efforts. Therefore, we expect you to understand the seriousness of this matter and to fulfil the aim of this exhibition by producing works of highest quality.⁸²

The actual outputs from the artists, however, were not what the Japanese commissioners expected. About 1,500 objects were submitted to be refereed but only 178 of them were successful and the overall ratio of successful applications was lower than that of the St Louis Exhibition in 1904.⁸³ As the number of the successful works of art did not reach the proposed number of exhibits, the Japanese commissioners had to supplement the exhibits with the prize-winning works of art which were displayed at Bunten in the autumn of 1909 (Figs. 18-19).

⁸² *Hōkoku*, I, p. 163.

⁸³ *Hōkoku*, I, pp. 184-185.

Ishii Hakutei ascribed the reason for this outcome to the current state of 'Japanese art'.⁸⁴ According to him, traditional 'Japanese art' had lost its vitality and, although the Western art was being rapidly introduced to Japan, a new form of 'Japanese art' was yet to be created.⁸⁵ Another commentator in a Japanese art magazine also explained that the commissioners did not realise the fact that artists and craftsmen had ceased to follow the instructions of government officials.⁸⁶ When the production of art was closely connected with the government's policy of gaining foreign currency in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the government encouraged the artists and craftsmen to produce handicrafts for export to western countries or for display at international exhibitions. However, with the change of the Japanese government's policies on art in the 1890s, craftsmen began to pursue their career as individual artists without recourse to government support.⁸⁷ In this way, while the modern section of the Palace of Fine Arts was planned to represent the current state of 'Japanese art' to complete the 'history of Japanese art', ironically the actual exhibits reflected the unstable situation of the contemporary Japanese artists and craftsmen under the circumstances of westernisation and modernisation. It should also be mentioned that although no woodcuts, let alone *ukiyo-e* print, were included in the exhibits of the Retrospective Section, 'Two Albums of Reproduction of Old Masterpieces from Wood-blocks' by Shimbi Shoin and reproductions of paintings by individual wood-cutters such as Miyata Rokuzaemon and Sugisaki Shūmei were displayed in the Modern Section.

⁸⁴ Ishii Hakutei was a western-style painter, illustrator, book-designer, poet and art critic and was also active as a leading figure in various circles of artists and intellectuals in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century.

⁸⁵ Ishii Hakutei, 'Bijutsuka to Nichiei Hakurankai' [Artists and the Japan-British Exhibition], *Kaiga Sōshi*, no.273, January 1910, pp.9-10.

⁸⁶ 'Nichieihaku Bijutsu Shuppin Fushin no Kunkai' [Lessons Learned from the Unfavourable Outcome of the Exhibits of Art at the Japan-British Exhibition], 1 February, 1910, *Bijutsu Shimpō*, p. 1.

⁸⁷ Itō, Doi and Ogawa, 'How to Look Beneath the Surface' in *Bankoku Hakurankai no Bijutsu*, ed. by Tokyo National Museum, pp. 12-13.

The displays at the Palace of Fine Art were expected to fulfil one of the twin objectives of Japan's participation in the exhibition – to improve the understanding of the British about Japan and to reinforce the amity between Japan and Britain. Japan also tried to fulfil its commercial interests by using the exhibition site to advertise Japanese goods to the British. The Japanese government encouraged producers and manufacturers from all over Japan to exhibit their products at the exhibition. The enthusiasm with which the Japanese government tried to make the most of the exhibition as an opportunity to publicise Japanese goods and increase the exports to Britain was expressed in the instructions given to possible exhibitors all over Japan in 1909. To quote a few of them:

1. The exhibitors in each industry should cooperate to select and exhibit high quality products with firm resolution to test Japan's production capacity in the largest market in the world.
2. The exhibitors should not aim to seek quick profits or awards but to acquire benefits which will last permanently by displaying the products deemed to have potential for extending the market.
3. The exhibitors should display the products which suit the tastes and practical demands of the British.⁸⁸

Not only natural resources but also manufactured products of various industries were exhibited as possible export items to Britain. Among them were a considerable number of articles of Japanese handicrafts which were displayed by individual craftsmen, shops, firms and trade associations. The exhibition site was arranged so that visitors to the exhibition first encountered the small booths set up

⁸⁸ *Hōkoku*, I, p.154.

on the arcade which was extending from the main entrance. The Official Guide described these booths as follows:

The artistic booths — there are twelve on either hand — crowded with miscellaneous collections of ‘things Japanese’, make us wish that our purses were heavier and our banking accounts larger. There are many articles we should like to purchase — beautiful silks, brocades, fans, vases, and lacquer work. It is in this and the two adjoining palaces that goods from Japan can be purchased for immediate delivery.⁸⁹

More articles were waiting to be purchased by visitors in the Textile Palace and Industrial Palace(Fig. 20). While most of the articles were displayed under the names of trade associations, some of the firms which had already established an international reputation such as the textile companies, Kawashima Jinbei and Iida Shinshichi, the cloisonné company, Andō Jūbei, and the dealer of Oriental antiques, Yamanaka, built individual stalls to publicise their products. Shimbi Shoin and Kokka-sha also erected individual stalls and sold their publications, reproductions of paintings, postcards and calendars(Fig. 21).⁹⁰

‘Japanese art’ as perceived by the British

How, then, did the British audience react to the ‘Japanese art’ at an exhibition laden with such ambitions? First of all, as in the previous international exhibitions, the handicrafts in the Palace of Fine Arts were praised for their workmanship. A

⁸⁹ *Official Guide* (London: publisher unknown, 1910), pp.6-7.

⁹⁰ *Hōkoku*, I, pp. 465-466, 474, ‘Rondon ni Okeru Shimbi Shoin no Daiseikō’ [The Great Success of Shimbi Shoin in London], *Bijutsu no Nihon*, vol. 2, no. 7, July 1910, p. 27.

reviewer in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* said, 'Most people know that the Oriental nations generally excel in handicrafts, and that Japan is, to say the least of it, no whit behind her neighbours', going on to argue that 'What the man in the street has not realised in recent years, when Europe has been flooded with cheap goods from Japan, is that the Japanese have produced, and are still producing, not merely pretty little "fancy articles," but some of the finest artistic workmanship that has ever been known'.⁹¹

As to the paintings, the reviewer in *The Times* admitted, with some reservations, that Japan also had a tradition of paintings:

Now we know that the Japanese themselves think little of their colour prints, or, indeed, of the whole genre school of painting out of which the colour prints arose, compared with their more serious religious and landscape art. And we further know that this more serious art of theirs was mainly an imitation of a still greater Chinese art, of which Whistler and the earlier European admirers of Japanese design were ignorant.⁹²

He put Japanese paintings in a minor position to not only Chinese but also western paintings by saying 'We have seen no Japanese or Chinese picture that seems to us to express so much as Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" or Titian's last "Pieta" or Rembrandt's "Supper at Emmaus."' They are all poorer in content than these great works, as a single lyric is poorer than a great drama'.⁹³ He highly valued Chinese

⁹¹ 'Arts and Crafts (First Notice)', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, June 3, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 76.

⁹² 'Japanese Painting', *The Times*, September 10, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 161.

⁹³ 'Japanese Painting', *The Times*, September 10, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 162.

art in some respects, although not as comparable to masterpieces of western art, and praised the way the Japanese 'imitated' some admirable elements of Chinese art.

In all branches of their art the Chinese have shown a remarkable intellectual power of systematizing the means of expression without falling in to mere mechanical formulae. There is none of our random experiment or purposeless statement of fact in their landscape painting; none of our meaningless rhetoric or irrelevant realism in their religious works. And the Japanese have imitated them in this respect as successfully as they have imitated European nations in the art of war. They seem, indeed, to be a nation with a genius for imitation, imitating with the zest and force of originators, divining at once the innermost secret of their models and making it their own. Their early religious masterpieces appear to be entirely Chinese, yet they are quite free from the tameness and absurdity of the Italianizing painters of Northern Europe. There seems to be an original inspiration in each of them. One would suppose that the abstract grandeur, the almost narcotic tranquillity, of the great Chinese figures, was quite foreign to their bustling lively character.⁹⁴

It is particularly notable that in praising old Japanese paintings some reviewers compared Japanese master painters to early-Renaissance Italian painters. Among them was the art critic and painter who supported modernism, Roger Fry, who, referring to the Buddhist painting exhibited in the Palace of Fine Art (Fig. 22), wrote,

⁹⁴ 'Japanese Painting', *The Times*, September 10, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 162.

The subject is one so nearly akin to one of the favourite themes of Christian art, that its beauty seems almost familiar to Western eyes. What cannot fail to strike one, however, is the extraordinary power of this unknown Buddhist artist in harmonizing the expression of passionate and vivid human feeling with a rarefied and spiritual beauty. One thinks of Fra Angelico, but this is at once more agitated, more *mouvementé*, and not less aetherial'.⁹⁵

Fry was not alone in drawing analogies between old Japanese art and early-Renaissance Italian art. Laurence Binyon, the curator at the British Museum and the best-known expert on Japanese art in Britain at the time, often drew similar comparisons in his book, *The Paintings in the Far East*. For Binyon, Japanese art retained the qualities which western art had lost in the age of the high Renaissance.

I have sometimes thought that if our modern painting had developed continuously from the art of the Middle Ages, without the invasion of scientific conceptions which the Renaissance brought about, its course would appear to have run on very similar lines to that of the painting of the East, where the early religious art, so like in aim to that of the early Italian frescoes, flowered gradually into naturalism, always pervaded by a perfume of religious idealism.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Roger Fry, 'Some Specimens from the Japanese National Monuments', *Burlington Magazine*, 17 (1910), p.120.

⁹⁶ Laurence Binyon, *Painting in the Far East: an Introduction to the History of Pictorial Art in Asia, Especially China and Japan* (London: Edward Arnold, 1908), p. 24.

The same kind of comparison can be also seen in articles by Binyon's friend, Charles Ricketts:

A new wave of thought, a renaissance of Chinese culture, touches Japan in the Fifteenth Century. The masters of the late Sung and Mongol Dynasties influence a famous series of Japanese painters who are here represented almost to a man. Foremost in variety and historical importance must be ranked the two paintings by Cho Densu – 1351-1427; as a man this artist resembled Fra Angelico, I am not sure if he is not actually a 'beato', but in his attitude toward classical Chinese painting we are reminded of Mantegna and his worship of all things Roman.⁹⁷

He also likened the painter of the ninth century, Kose Kanaoka, to Giotto.⁹⁸

A reviewer in *The Times*, who also made comparison between Japanese painters and Renaissance Italian painters by quoting Binyon's words, explained as follows:

Our increasing knowledge and love of the more primitive Italian painting has prepared our minds for the beauty of Oriental art and for some understanding of the principles upon which it is based, and now Oriental art will give fresh authority to those principles which we are discovering in the primitive Italians.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Charles Ricketts, 'Japanese Painting and Sculpture – I: the Exhibits at Shepherd's Bush', *The Times*, 31 May, 1910, in the clipping file in HFALHC.

⁹⁸ Charles Ricketts, 'Japanese Painting at Shepherd's Bush', *The Morning Post*, 9 June, 1910, in the clipping file in HFALHC.

⁹⁹ 'Japanese Pictures at the Japan-British Exhibition', *The Times*, May 16, 1910, in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 60.

As implied in this statement, by 1910 some art critics and artists had already nurtured their aesthetic ideas through the appreciation of what they called 'primitive' Italian art, especially the works by Quattrocento artists such as Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca and Mantegna. It is interesting to note that only ten days after the Japan-British Exhibition closed, the first Post-Impressionist Exhibition opened, which was curated by Roger Fry. As Virginia Woolf later mentioned that in the year of this exhibition 'all human relations changed',¹⁰⁰ it was to be remembered as the landmark of the introduction of modernist aesthetic ideas to Britain. Although the Post-Impressionist exhibition caused huge controversy among the contemporary British critics, the key concepts to explain the new art displayed at this exhibition had already been formulated and expressed at several occasions in the preceding months. For example, in January of 1910, Roger Fry explained the works of Cézanne, who was to be considered as the pioneer of modern art, as the art 'in which the decorative elements preponderate at the expense of the representative'.¹⁰¹ 'Decorative elements' were to become one of the key concerns espoused by the modernists to counter the existing arts, especially Impressionist art, which aimed at the seemingly natural representation of objects. The word 'primitive' also appeared at many occasions in critical writings about modern art. Around 1910, the word 'primitive' was applied to both non-western art and early-Renaissance Italian art, and these 'primitive' arts were appreciated as more expressive than contemporary European art.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Virginia Woolf, *Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown* (London: L. & W. Woolf, 1924), quoted in S. K. Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism 1900-1920: Early Modernism and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Edwardian England* (London: Routledge 1988), p. 53.

¹⁰¹ Roger Fry, 'Introductory Note' to Maurice Denis, 'Cézanne—I', *Burlington Magazine*, 16 (January 1910), p. 207.

¹⁰² Jacqueline V. Falkenheim, *Roger Fry and the Beginning of Formalist Art Criticism*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1973), pp.10-24.

Binyon himself was cautious about the extreme formalist ideas which were promoted by Fry and his circle. However, he basically saw Post-Impressionism as 'a movement in the right direction'.¹⁰³ The oft-repeated keywords in Binyon's writings such as 'form', 'design' and 'rhythm' eased the way to the acceptance of modernism in Britain, although sometimes as 'an unwitting advocate of the new painting'.¹⁰⁴ So did the analogies between Oriental art and early-Renaissance Italian art in the writings by him and those by other critics quoting his words.¹⁰⁵

It is possible to argue that the reviewers of the 'Japanese art' at the Japan-British Exhibition, most of whom did not necessarily have a thorough knowledge about 'Japanese art', were forced to draw on the vocabulary of an art which was more familiar to them (such as Renaissance Italian art) in order to describe Japanese paintings. However, considering the emergence of modernist ideas which was just taking place at that time, it is also possible to presume that critics such as Fry were trying to find in 'Japanese art' what they needed in justifying their own aesthetic ideas developed by this time, that is, the 'primitive' nature of arts from the ages and places which were remote from contemporary Britain. The old 'Japanese art', like early-Renaissance Italian art, offered another source in which they could identify what they regarded as 'primitive' elements in order to develop their own aesthetic ideas.

¹⁰³ Laurence Binyon, 'Post-Impressionists', *Saturday Review*, 12 November, 1910. p. 609.

¹⁰⁴ John Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon: Poet, Scholar of East and West* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 145, Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism*, p. 98. It is pointed out that Binyon's writings also influenced Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis in developing their Vorticist ideas. David Peters Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art 1914-30* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 26-31.

¹⁰⁵ Bernard Berenson, the leading authority on Renaissance art, also drew an analogy between old Oriental Buddhist painting and early-Renaissance Italian painting in his article in 1903. It is possible to presume that his analogy was also borrowed by modernist critics to justify their aesthetic ideas. Gregory P. Levine, 'Rakan in America: Travels of the Daitokuji 500 Luohan' in *Moving Objects: Time, Space, and Context*, ed. by National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2004), pp. 96-109.

The decorative aspects and conventionalisation of Japanese paintings attracted particular attention from British reviewers as evidence of the 'primitive' nature of 'Japanese art'. According to the reviewer in *The Times*, while in European painting there had been efforts 'towards a more and more complete illusion', there had been none of this effort in Chinese and Japanese paintings and the Chinese and Japanese achieved realism in different ways, that is, by 'abstract design' and 'conventionalisation'. He pointed out that the 'power of producing illusion by an expressive convention' was clearly shown in the wave-screen by Ogata Kōrin displayed at the exhibition (Fig. 23). He also described the 'Crane and Pine Tree' by Kanō Motonobu as decorative because it was free from realistic disorder and strain.¹⁰⁶

The 'primitiveness' was lost, according to the reviewer in *The Times*, when it came to the later paintings such as those produced in the Edo Period. The reviewer, by quoting Binyon's words, referred to Ogata Kōrin as 'the most Japanese of all the artists of Japan' and 'the most purely decorative', and described his masterpiece screen displayed at the exhibition as embodying 'all our old ideas of Japanese art, the art which Whistler so much admired, thoroughly represented in a single work'. According to him, it had 'a pattern as conventional as any to be found in an early mosaic' and there was 'all the force and rhythm and flash of the waves in these repeated forms'. However, he also criticised the way Kōrin conventionalised the nature as 'too systematic' and pointed it out as 'the weakness of most of the later Japanese painting'. He went on to say, 'The complexity of nature is suggested, if not represented, in the diffident and straining beauty of primitive art; but the later Japanese painters are far from primitive. There is nothing diffident or straining

¹⁰⁶ 'Japanese Pictures at the Japan-British Exhibition', *Times*, May 16, 1910, in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, pp. 60-61.

about their methods'.¹⁰⁷

However, to the eyes of British reviewers, the 'Japanese art' in the Edo Period still had peculiar characteristics which were an attraction for them and which they saw as accruing from the nature of the Japanese artists whose state of mind they believed was completely different from theirs. For example, the painting by Mori Sosen which was displayed at the exhibition was described as follows:

A European artist could not even paint monkeys as Sosen painted them; he could not pretend to the same easy familiarity with them, nor could he be so content to represent them just as they are. To us the monkey is either a figure of fun or man's poor relation. To Sosen it was, like a flower, an object out of which he could make a picture, one of those objects which he chose out of the whole complexity of reality and upon which he specialized. Our painters cannot specialize in this way; they are too conscious of the relation between all objects and phenomena. Their eyes are too much affected by their minds. They try to represent more than they can master, because every object they see is intellectually, if not emotionally, connected with other objects and phenomena. The Japanese eye sees more singly, because the Japanese mind can isolate its interest in particular things.¹⁰⁸

The nature not only of Japanese artists but also of Japanese people in general was referred to when explaining the qualities of 'Japanese art'. A reviewer in *The Times*, who called *ukiyo-e* paintings 'genre pictures', argued that the vulgarity

¹⁰⁷ 'Japanese Painting', *Times*, September 10, 1910, in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 163.

¹⁰⁸ 'Japanese Painting', *Times*, September 10, 1910, in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 163.

of *ukiyo-e* derived from the innocence of the Japanese people.

In fact, when one sees all these genre pictures, and when one remembers that they were held cheap in their own time and produced for a public supposed to be vulgar, one cannot but wonder at the delicacy and innocence of Japanese taste. The people for whom these pictures were painted must have been utterly unaware even of the possibilities of vulgarity. Aesthetically they lived before the fall of man. They had not eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge. They did not know that there was such a thing as bad art in the world.¹⁰⁹

Although they did not use the term 'primitive' or make comparison with 'primitive' Italian art as they did in describing the 'Japanese art' of earlier periods, the British reviewers saw the art of the Edo Period as something produced by the people who they believed were able to see things as they used to do in the remote past. For them, the Japanese people in the Edo Period were, in a sense, 'noble savages' who could produce the kind of art which westerners, who had already learned to look at things 'intellectually', could no longer produce.

Elisa Evett points out that the European critical writings in the late nineteenth century envisaged 'Japanese art' as the product of the simplicity and innocence of the Japanese people who, they believed, still lived in the primitive world as if they were Adams and Eves in the Garden of Eden. She also remarks that an analogy was made between the Impressionist and the primitive man, that is, Japanese artist.¹¹⁰ As is clear from the above analysis of the reviews of the

¹⁰⁹ 'Japanese Pictures at the Exhibition III Genre and Modern Works', *Times*, June 25, 1910, in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 96.

¹¹⁰ Elisa Evett, 'The Late Nineteenth Century European Critical Response to

Retrospective Section at the Palace of Fine Arts, still in the early twentieth century 'Japanese art' was regarded with similar primitivist longing and, in accordance with the change of aesthetic ideas, the same primitivist discourse was appropriated, this time, to support Post-Impressionism. It has been pointed out in the context of Japonisme in the nineteenth century that 'Japanese art' served as the expression of the radical aesthetic ideas which had been already nurtured in western countries. For instance, French Impressionism opened the way to an actual appreciation of certain aspects of 'Japanese art'.¹¹¹ The British response to the old 'Japanese art' at the Japan-British Exhibition also reveals that 'Japanese art' was similarly perceived through the lens of the aesthetic ideas which had already been formulated, in this case, British modernist aesthetics. Therefore, it is possible to see the old 'Japanese art' perceived by the British at the Japan-British Exhibition as an example of the elasticity of the western discourse on 'Japanese art', which had been constantly reformulated to fit changing aesthetic ideas in the West.

How, then, did the critics react to the Modern Section of the same building? The same reviewer who wrote about the vulgarity of '*ukiyo-e*' and the 'innocent' taste of Japanese people in the Edo Period went on to write as follows:

But now that the Japanese are eating of the fruit of that tree, now that they are becoming aware of European art, with all its heights and depths, what is the result likely to be? For an answer to that question one must consult the modern Japanese pictures, and the answer they give is doubtful. Some of the pictures in this Exhibition are simply imitations of European painting and interesting only as proof of the wonderful power of imitation which the

Japanese Art: Primitivist Leanings', *Art History*, vol.6, no.1 (1983 March), 82-106.

¹¹¹ Takashina Shūji, 'Japonisumu no Shomondai' [Issues of Japonisme] in *Japonisumuten*, ed. by National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, pp. 12- 16 (p. 15).

Japanese possess.¹¹²

The British reviewers welcomed 'Japanese art' as long as it remained art from a remote world. However, once the Japanese started to adopt western art and to join the world of western artists as competitors on equal terms, 'Japanese art' was dismissed as only 'imitation' of western art. A reviewer of *The Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* criticised the current state of 'Japanese art'.

There is, of course no difficulty in understanding how tempting it must be for a progressive Eastern nation, coming in contact with Western art, to seek rather to outrival the West on its own ground than to go on working on the traditional lines. It is, moreover, only right that a country should be ready to learn from other countries and that one people should influence another. But it seems a little bit as though the well-known capacity and love of the Japanese for imitation were leading them at times rather astray.¹¹³

The disparaging tone filled almost every comment on the 'modern Japanese art' at the exhibition. A reviewer in *Westminster Gazette*, referring to the modern works of pottery, cloisonné, metal-work, textile and embroidery (Fig. 24), wrote:

they displayed a serious falling-off in two matters – colour and design. The old vigour and harmony of the former, the breadth and daring of the latter,

¹¹² 'Japanese Pictures at the Exhibition III Genre and Modern Works', *Times*, June 25, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 96.

¹¹³ 'Arts and Crafts (First Notice)', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, June 3, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 77.

were sadly to seek. Some of the needlework, amazing in execution, seemed rather to aim at the tame realism of a photograph than at those bold and splendid generalizations which adorned the products of earlier ages.¹¹⁴

Furthermore, 'the painting gave rise to greater sorrow', according to the same reviewer. He stated that the western-style paintings were nothing but 'a weak reflection of the teaching of Düsseldorf, of Munich, of Paris, of London even' and went on to say,

The drawing is good; the composition meritorious, in an academical sense; the colour generally tame, and the handling timid – as one would expect from those practising a new and strange art, the principles of which have only been learned by rote and not assimilated. Japan must learn that her artists cannot acquire formulae for fine art, as her mechanics master those for making armour-plate.¹¹⁵

It was also pointed out by a reviewer in *The Times* that there had been a strong calligraphic tendency in Japanese paintings and that design was made by pattern rather than by mass. However, according to him, 'In some of these modern pictures there is an attempt to combine the pattern design with a modelling that suggests mass, and this attempt always results in some incongruity'.¹¹⁶ Japan's 'genius for imitation' was highly valued as long as it learned from Chinese art. However, once

¹¹⁴ 'Japanese Art Old and New', *Westminster Gazette*, November 26, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 189.

¹¹⁵ 'Japanese Art Old and New', *Westminster Gazette*, November 26, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 189.

¹¹⁶ 'Japanese Pictures at the Exhibition III Genre and Modern Works', *Times*, June 25, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 97.

Japan started to exercise this talent in the domain of western art, its adoption was dismissed only as a failed attempt to outrival the still greater western art.

It is difficult to assess how successful were the shops and firms which exhibited their products as possible export items outside the Palace of Fine Arts. *The Daily Express* reported before the opening of the exhibition that there was a growing interest in Japanese goods among the British public¹¹⁷ and the official report stated that in department stores in London such as Harrods and Whiteley's sales of Japanese goods increased as an effect of the exhibition.¹¹⁸ However, it was also reported by *Yomiuri Shimbun* after the close of the exhibition that at the exhibition site only cheap catchpennies sold and 696 boxes of goods had to return to Japan unsold.¹¹⁹ Tajima Shiichi also stated that 'in general the shops at the exhibition site did not do well at all'.¹²⁰

The dialogue on 'Japanese art' that was expected to take place between the two countries at the Japan-British exhibition was not necessarily reciprocal. As Angus Lockyer remarks, the exhibition 'provided a space in which multiple interests could make of Japan what they would'.¹²¹ In the case of the representation of 'Japanese art' at the exhibition, despite the efforts by the Japanese government to present it as the epitome of Japan's civilisation, the British reviewers tended to pick up certain aspects that satisfied their longing for arts from remote places and ages. While the antiquity of 'Japanese art' was acknowledged as long as it offered the qualities that fitted into the primitivist discourse, the modernity of 'Japanese art'

¹¹⁷ 'Japanising London: Exhibition Creates a Demand for Oriental Goods: A Glossary'

Daily Express, 11 February, 1910 in the clipping file in HFALHC.

¹¹⁸ *Hōkoku*, II, pp. 987-992.

¹¹⁹ 'Hakurankai Ihō Nichieihaku Tsumimodoshi Nisū' [Report on the Exhibition: the Number of Return Shipments from the Japan-British Exhibition], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 6 January, 1911, p. 2.

¹²⁰ Tajima Shiichi, *Ōshu ni Okeru Shimbi Shoin Tenrankai no Gaihō* [Report on the Exhibitions of Shimbi Shoin in Europe] (Tokyo: Shimbi Shoin, 1911), p. 1.

¹²¹ Lockyer, 'Japan at the Exhibition', p. 159.

was dismissed as only 'imitation' of the still greater western art. Even the old Japanese painting that attracted attention around the time of the exhibition was soon to disappear from the modernist discourse as attention shifted to 'more primitive' kind of art, such as African art.

The representation of 'Japanese art' by the British, on the other hand, was not welcomed by the Japanese audience. Kiralfy proposed to build a 'Japanese village' at the exhibition in which Japanese craftsmen and entertainers could demonstrate their arts. The Japanese government, having been troubled by similar 'Japanese villages' abroad, persistently rejected his proposal. In the end, 235 Japanese craftsmen and entertainers were sent to London under the direct contract with Kiralfy's exhibition company without the Japanese government's involvement and the village called 'Fair Japan' was constructed (Fig. 25).¹²² The official guide of the exhibition edited by Kiralfy's company described the village as follows:

Fair Japan (Japan in Essence)

Of the many purely Japanese attractions at the Great White City, Fair Japan will be found to be one of the most charming, giving as it does the truly inside life of a marvellous people. Here, amid proper scenic settings, may be viewed Japan at work and Japan at play. Artisans at their various crafts are seen creating the most exquisite articles and art treasures under exactly the same conditions as in their own land. There are ivory carvers, cloisonné workers, jewellers, potters, workers in bamboo, tailors, confectioners, artificial flower-makers, artists, embroiderers, carpenters, coopers, and a lady artist. A fascinating place is Fair Japan, with its many booths and quaint open workshops, native houses, sacred shrines and places

¹²² Lockyer, 'Japan at the Exhibition', pp. 144-146, *Hōkoku*, II, pp. 866-875.

of entertainment. From morning to night it is full of life – the life of the East – and to those who have not had an opportunity of visiting Japan itself, this will provide the very atmosphere of that lovely country.¹²³

The village was, however, 'so offensive that the Japanese visitors cannot bear to see it', according to the Japanese journalist, [Hasegawa] Nyozeikan.¹²⁴ He also gave the following report.

The section of the exhibition into which the British exhibition company put the strongest efforts was the Japanese village called 'Fair Japan'. Although it is only half-finished and there are not so many visitors yet, shops of lanterns, bamboo baskets, woodcuts, artificial flowers, inlaid ivories, Shibayama wares, wood carvings, lacquer wares, porcelains, inlaid silver wares, Nikkō wood carvings, rice crackers, sweets, etc. are already opened. The sight of the place where not so exemplary Japanese people work uncomfortably in weird Japanese houses is, to the eyes of the Japanese, far from representative of Japan of either today or last century. In short, such a Japan does not exist anywhere in the world except at the Japan-British Exhibition.¹²⁵

Despite the Japanese government's effort to dispel the image of Japan that had been represented only by 'bric-a-bracs, scenic views, meticulous handicrafts and

¹²³ *Official Guide*, p. 85.

¹²⁴ Nyozeikan, 'Nichiei Hakurankai (5)' [The Japan-British Exhibition (5)], *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, 13 June, 1910, p. 1.

¹²⁵ Nyozeikan, 'Nichieihaku Dayori (3)' [News about the Japan-British Exhibition (3)], *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, 5 July, 1910, p. 3.

Yoshiwara',¹²⁶ the same old image still lingered in the British representation of Japan.

Nor did the more serious representation of and studies of 'Japanese art' satisfy the Japanese critics. At the same time as the Japan-British Exhibition, an exhibition of Japanese and Chinese paintings was arranged by Sidney Colvin and Laurence Binyon at the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum.¹²⁷ Tajima Shiichi saw the exhibition and expressed his disappointment at the quality of the exhibits by writing, 'hardly any of the exhibits convey to the audience the true essence of Oriental painting, and, moreover, the authenticity of many of these exhibits is quite doubtful'.¹²⁸ By 1910, several British experts on Japanese art had written about Japanese paintings, based on the information gleaned from the publications of Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin. These writings, however, were not received by Japanese critics as works comparable to more 'authentic' studies by Japanese scholars.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Nyozeikan, 'Nichieihaku Dayori (2)' [News about the Japan-British Exhibition (2)], *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, 4 July, 1910, p. 3.

¹²⁷ British Museum. Department of Prints and Drawings, *Guide to An Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings (Fourth to Nineteenth Century A.D.) in the Print and Drawing Gallery* (London: Printed by order of the Trustees, 1910).

¹²⁸ Tajima Shiichi, 'Eikoku ni Okeru Tōyō Bijutsu' [Eastern Art in Britain], *Bijutsu no Nihon*, vol. 2, no. 8, August, 1910, p. 28.

¹²⁹ In reviewing C. J. Holmes' article, 'The Use of Japanese Art to Europe', *Burlington Magazine*, 8 (1905), 3-10, Taki Setsuan (Seiichi), one of the major authorities on Japanese art in Japan at the time, wrote that although it was more effective explanation on Japanese painting than those by preceding writers such as William Anderson and Mortimer Menpes some of his remarks were beside the point. Taki Setsuan, 'Eijin C. J. Holmes Shi no Nihonga Kan ni tsuite' [On the views about Japanese Painting by the Englishman, C. J. Holmes], *Bijutsu Shimpō*, 20 April 1906, p. 2, 5 May 1906, p. 2, 20 May 1906, p. 2, 5 June 1906, p. 2, 20 June 1906, p. 3. Kuroita Katsumi, referring to Binyon's *Painting in the Far East*, wrote that the details of his comparison between western and eastern paintings were not approvable and ascribed its shortcomings to the fact that he did not see enough original paintings and only referenced *Kokka* and *Shimbi Taikan*. Kuroita Katsumi, 'Ōshu ni okeru Tōyō Bijutsu' [Oriental Art in Europe], *Nihon Bijutsu*, 138 (August 1910), 38-40. Even Yashiro Yukio, who mentioned Binyon as one of the 'benefactors of Japanese art', the westerners who introduced Japanese art to wide audiences in the West, admitted that his *Painting in the Far East* had been criticised for its lack of stylistic analysis and historical evidence. Yashiro Yukio, *Nihon Bijutsu no Onjin*

As Laurence Binyon explained in his review of the *ukiyo-e* paintings displayed at the Palace of Fine Arts, 'but most people, I think, will find their painting of less charm than their woodcuts',¹³⁰ it was *ukiyo-e* prints, the branch of 'Japanese art' which was *not* represented by the Japanese government at the Japan-British Exhibition, that still kept its popularity in Britain even after the end of the general craze for things Japanese. The Japanese Consulate in London stated in the official report of the exhibition that antique works of art were the fourth largest export item to Britain and that among them *ukiyo-e* prints in particular were sold for high prices.¹³¹ The Japanese techniques of colour woodcut printing inherited from *ukiyo-e* printmaking as shown in the reproduction of masterpieces by Shimbi Shoin and Kokka-sha were also highly praised by the British. As to the publication of Shimbi Shoin, *Japanese Temples and Their Treasures*, an article in *The Times* wrote,

The book, however, is most valuable by reason of the coloured wood-cuts, which are masterpieces of the art of reproduction...it is impossible in words to give any idea of the beauty of these reproductions. In Oriental painting the greatest artists have always been content to copy the works of their predecessors, and have managed to fill these copies with their own original genius. This strange power seems to be manifested even in reproductions that in Europe would be mechanical. In fact, the reproductions in this book are themselves independent works of art, and deserve to be treasured as much as the colour prints which have long been fashionable among us.¹³²

Tachi [The Benefactors of Japanese Art] (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū Shinsha, 1961), p. 65.

¹³⁰ Laurence Binyon, 'Japanese Masterpieces in London', *Saturday Review*, May 28, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, p. 73.

¹³¹ *Hōkoku*, II, p. 979.

¹³² 'The Arts of Japan', *The Times*, October 25, 1910 in *The British Press*, ed. by Mutsu, pp. 173-174. It was also reported that the prints the Shimbi Shoin sold at

Furthermore, it was in the field of *ukiyo-e* prints that western scholarship was highly valued by the Japanese scholars who, stimulated by preceding western works, began to take up the studies on the subject.

The next chapter will consider how Japanese prints, the branch of art which had been neglected in the Japanese government's discourse on 'Japanese art', was perceived, collected and studied in Britain in the same period. The examination of this issue will reveal not only the aspects of Anglo-Japanese interaction which took place outside the official representation of 'Japanese art' but also the new phase of Japonisme in Britain in the early twentieth century.

its shop in the exhibition site, such as postcards with *ukiyo-e* illustrations, calendars and shingle sheet prints sold out quickly. 'Rondon ni Okeru Shimbi Shoin no Daiseikō' [The Great Success of Shimbi Shoin in London], *Bijutsu no Nihon*, vol. 2, no. 7, July 1910, p. 27.

Chapter 2

Japanese prints in Britain

2-1 Popularity of Japanese prints, commercial exchange and prevalence of *ukiyo-e* images

Japanese prints come to Britain

Before the arrival of the American naval force led by Commodore Perry in Japan in 1853, Japanese prints came to the West on sporadic occasions through Holland, the only western country that had been allowed to trade with Japan for more than two centuries, while ceramics and lacquer wares were exported in a substantial number as trade commodities.¹ For example, the following employees of the Dutch East India Company are known to have brought Japanese prints to Europe during Japan's national seclusion: a German physician, Englebert Kaempfer (1651-1710), a Swedish botanist, Carl Thunberg (1743-1824), a Dutch surgeon, Isaac Titsingh (1744?-1812) and a German physician, Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866). However, they acquired Japanese prints mainly for botanical and ethnographical interest, not necessarily for their aesthetic value.²

A new phase of the reception of Japanese prints began with the opening up

¹ Oliver Impey, 'Japanese Export Art of the Edo Period and Its Influence on European Art', *Modern Asian Studies*, 18, no. 4 (October 1984), 685-697.

² Lawrence Smith, 'The Appreciation and Collecting of Ukiyoe in Europe, Britain and the British Museum', in *Ukiyoe: Images of Unknown Japan*, ed. by Lawrence Smith (London: British Museum Publications, 1988), pp. 19-21.

of Japan to all the major western powers. Not only diplomats and officials but also merchants and globe trotters thronged to Japan from various countries and brought back a number of Japanese objects including prints. Accordingly, Japanese prints became available to far more people than ever before in the West. Among such people were those who were attracted to the aesthetic qualities of Japanese prints: the compositional devices, subjects, motifs, techniques of drawing, use of colours and so on. Much has been written on the 'discovery' of *ukiyo-e* prints by French artists and art critics, symbolised by the episode of the Japanese prints, 'Hokusai Manga', used as packing material for export porcelain from Japan and found in 1856 by Félix Bracquemond, the French etcher who was to use some motifs from these prints for ceramic decoration.³ In England, one of the earliest examples of borrowing of motifs from Japanese prints can be seen in the design for the roller-printed chintz, 'Japanese Figures and Parrots', which was produced by Daniel Lee & Co., Manchester, in 1858.⁴ Also, *ukiyo-e* prints were reproduced as illustrations in the earliest books written about Japan in English from the 1850s, some being reproduced as chromo-lithographs.⁵ The images from *ukiyo-e* prints in these books, which were circulated in great numbers among English readers, may well have

³ Martin Eidelberg, 'Bracquemond, Delâtre and the Discovery of Japanese Prints', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 123, no. 937 (April 1981), 220-227, Gabriel P. Weisberg, 'Félix Bracquemond and Japanese Influence in Ceramic Decoration', *Art Bulletin*, vol. 51, no. 3 (September 1969), 277-280, Ikegami Chūji, "'Hokusai Manga" to "Sakana Zukushi" toni yoru Ferikkusu Burakkumon no Dōhanga' [Félix Bracquemond's Etchings Based on "Hokusai Manga" and "Sakana Zukushi"], *Kenkyū*, Kōbe University, 43 (1969), 30-62.

⁴ Elizabeth Aslin, 'E. W. Godwin and the Japanese Taste', *Apollo*, New series, 76 (December 1962), 779-784 (pp. 781-782).

⁵ These books included *Japan: An Account, Geographical and Historical* by Charles MacFarlane (1852), *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan, Performed in the Years 1852, 1853 and 1854, under the Command of Commodore M. C. Perry* by F. L. Hawks (1856), *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the Years 1857, '58, '59* by L. Oliphant (1859), *Japanese Fragments, with Facsimiles of Illustrations by Artists of Yeddo* by Captain Sherard Osborn (1861) and *The Capital of Tycoon: A Narrative of Three Years' Residence in Japan* by R. Alcock (1862). Tanita, *Yuibi Shugi to Japanizumu*, pp. 57-63.

become a source of inspiration for artists.⁶

The 1862 International Exhibition in London, the first major instigation for Japonisme in Britain, also had a certain number of Japanese prints on display. As has been mentioned in Chapter 1-1, Rutherford Alcock, the first British Minister in Japan, selected 614 objects to be displayed at the Japanese section of the exhibition in response to the order from the British government. In the preface to the catalogue of the Japanese collection at the exhibition he wrote, 'The works of Industry and Art in which the Japanese most excel, are of great variety; and many of these will not only bear comparison with the best workmanship of Europe, but, in some particulars, cannot be rivalled'.⁷ In this period, the design reform was promoted by the government officials and design theorists who saw international exhibitions as opportunities for the British manufacturers and designers to learn from examples of 'good' design shown in the exhibits gathered from across the world. The Japanese objects from the Alcock collection were also shown as such specimens of foreign design.⁸

Although most of Alcock's descriptions of the items in the catalogue are too short, vague or inaccurate, it is possible to gather that the following items were

⁶ Kawamura Jōichirō traced the design source of some of the drawings by Aubrey Beardsley to the illustrations from Japanese prints reproduced in contemporary books on Japan. Kawamura, 'Igisu no Naka no Nihon', pp. 38-63.

⁷ Rutherford Alcock, *Catalogue of Works of Industry and Art, Sent from Japan* (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1862) quoted in Miyauchi, 'Dainikai Rondon Kokusai Hakurankai to Nihon no Shuppinbutsu ni tsuite', p. 54.

⁸ Alcock himself expressed his expectation for the effects which these exhibits might have on British manufactures. 'How valuable the influence of such examples of refinement in taste, perfection of workmanship, and originality of design was likely to prove, in England more especially perhaps, and in our manufacturing districts, soon became obvious. I was so impressed with this, that during a temporary absence from the East, in 1863, I willingly accepted an invitation from the Philosophical Society at Leeds, as soon as the International Exhibition enabled me to remove some of the articles in the Japan Court, to give a lecture in that busy town drawing attention to the instruction to be derived from the study of Japanese Art and its application to industrial purposes'. Rutherford Alcock, *Art and Art Industries in Japan* (London: Virtue, 1878; repr. Bristol: Ganesha Publishing; Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 1999), p. 4.

prints with some illustrations.

- 559. Eight books – specimens of maps, illustrated works, &c.
- 559A. Twenty-four volumes of ditto.
- 561. Book of fire-brigades in Yedo, with the crests and insignia, detail of city wards, &c.
- 567. Specimens of Japanese lithochrome.
- 568. Printing of old date; representing a pilgrimage to Fushiyama, the new foreign settlement at Yokohama.
- 571. Further specimens of lithochrome illustrations (200) of the manners, costume, and architecture of the Japanese.⁹

These items were all listed in the section 'G. – Works of Art – Carvings in ivory, wood and bamboo – Paintings – Illustrated works – Lithochrome – Prints – Models'. Judging from the fact that the first work of lithography in Japan, the eleventh volume of *Bankoku Shinbunshi* [International Newspaper], was published in 1868,¹⁰ it is reasonable to think that the items described as 'lithochrome' actually referred to woodcut colour printing, which was the most common method of colour printing in Japan at the time. It is also probable that the prints 'representing a pilgrimage to Fushiyama, the new settlement at Yokohama' (item number 568) were the prints by Hokusai or Hiroshige which depicted Mt. Fuji¹¹ and those called *Yokohama-e* which

⁹ Rutherford Alcock, *Catalogue of Works of Industry and Art, Sent from Japan*, quoted in Miyauchi, 'Dainikai Rondon Kokusai Hakurankai to Nihon no Shuppinbutsu ni tsuite', pp. 73-74.

¹⁰ Masuno Keiko, 'Nihon ni Okeru Sekihanjutsu Juyō no Shomondai' [Issues on the Reception of Lithography in Japan], in *Kindai Nihon Hanga no Shosō*, ed. by Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts, pp. 165-211 (pp. 166-175).

¹¹ In the Edo Period, a cult for Mt. Fuji emerged and a number of 'Fuji kō', pilgrim groups to the mountain, were formed. The prints depicting Mt. Fuji such as the famous series by Hokusai, 'Fugaku Sanjūrokkei' [36 Views of Mt. Fuji] (1831), were

began to be produced in order to satisfy people's curiosity about foreigners resident in Yokohama after the opening of its port to foreign ships in 1859. In addition, as Alcock reproduced many of the illustrations from 'Hokusai Manga' (1814-1878) in his books, *The Capital of Tycoon* (1862) and *Art and Art Industries in Japan* (1878), it is possible to assume that item 571 referred to some volumes of 'Hokusai Manga'. Alcock is said to have bought *ukiyo-e* prints in the neighbourhood of the consular offices in Edo, Myōjin-chō, Shiba, where there were a number of publishers and retailers of prints.¹² Some of the Japanese prints which were displayed at the exhibition might have been purchased there.

The Japanese objects thus collected and shown by Alcock at the exhibition in 1862 aroused keen interest in various branches of Japanese art among artists in Britain, Japanese prints being no exception. A year after the exhibition, John Leighton, the artist and book cover designer, gave a lecture on Japanese art at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, which was published as an article in *Journal of the Society of Arts*. The novelty of Japanese prints made him state as follows:

As engravers upon wood and metal, the Chinese are known to have been skilled long before civilisation had dawned upon England, or even Europe had dreamed of tomes in black letter; but few, a year ago, would have ventured, I think, to claim the priority of colour-printing for Japan, yet this may be the case, for in no instance do their specimens bear evidence of having been copied from anything done in the western world, being hand proofs, worked in flat tints, without a press, secondaries or tertiaries in very

produced in the fashion for such pilgrimages.

¹² Higuchi Hiroshi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi* [History of Distribution, Collection, Studies and Publication of *Ukiyo-e*] (Tokyo: Mitō Shoya, 1972), p. 10.

few instances being produced by working colour upon colour, as with us, who use no outline to indicate form.¹³

The transcript of the lecture was also printed as a leaflet and published privately in fifty copies only, into which *ukiyo-e* prints were pasted as frontispieces (Fig. 26).¹⁴

Leighton was not alone in enthusing about Japanese prints around 1862. According to Edward F. Strange, Dante Gabriel Rossetti was 'one of the first artists in England to acquire Japanese colour-prints'. After his death, Strange had a chance to inspect the remaining collection of Japanese prints formerly owned by Rossetti and reported,

They were collected by him about the years 1862 and 1863; and are mainly 3-sheet battle-pieces, or illustrations of folk-tales, by Kuniyoshi and his pupils... There were also a few landscapes by Hiroshige II., which, it is interesting to note, must have found their way to this country almost directly after their publication in Japan; and one or two of Hokusai's best illustrated books.¹⁵

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's brother, William Michael, was even more enthusiastic about Japanese art. He sent to John Ruskin a Japanese illustrated book which he had recently bought. Ruskin, who was to be disturbed by some of his friends'

¹³ John Leighton, 'On Japanese Art', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, July 1863, pp. 598-599.

¹⁴ A Kunisada print is pasted into the copy in the National Art Library and Eisen prints into those owned by the British Museum and Jack Hillier. John Leighton, *On Japanese Art: a Discourse Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, May 1, 1863* (London: privately printed, 1863), Satō and Watanabe, *Japan and Britain*, p. 104, Jack Hillier, 'The Western Taste for Japanese Prints', *Storia dell'arte*, 27 (1976), 113-120 (p. 114).

¹⁵ Edward F. Strange, *The Colour-prints of Japan: an Appreciation and History* (London: A. Siegle, 1904), pp. 74-75.

enthusiasm for Japanese art later, wrote back to him in a letter on 15 June 1863, 'The book is delightful, and thank you much for sending it. I should like to go and live in Japan...I return *Japan* by book-post. The seas and clouds are delicious, the mountains very good'.¹⁶

The early English admirers of Japanese art including the Rossetti brothers bought Japanese objects, especially prints, in curio shops in Paris, such as Madame Desoye's shop, which opened around 1862.¹⁷ William Michael Rossetti often mentioned shopping at Madame Desoye's shop in his diary. For example, he wrote on 18 June 1864, 'Went to Dessoye's, the Japanese shop in the Rue de Rivoli, and bought books etc. to the amount of 40 Francs. They are cheaper here than in the Rue Lepelletier. There is to be a new consignment in October, especially of books of birds and flowers'.¹⁸ On 24 June 1865, he wrote, 'Went to the Japanese shop, 7 Boulevard des Capucines, and bought a fair number of the small engravings on crape of which Whistler had a selection, but some of his best were not now to be had. The shopkeeper, who seems passably well-informed on the subject, says that a European, even were he to go to Japan, could not learn the process of colour-printing etc. etc'.¹⁹

As is evident from this description in the diary, James McNeil Whistler, who had been resident in London from 1859, was another avid collector of Japanese objects. His passion for Japanese objects can be seen in his painting, *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen* (1864), in which eight *ukiyo-e* prints were depicted along with a Japanese screen, porcelain and *kimono* (Fig. 27). Strange, who had a chance to see the prints purchased by Whistler in Paris, mentioned that

¹⁶ *Rossetti Papers 1862 to 1870*, ed. by William Michael Rossetti (London: Sands, 1903), pp. 25-26, Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, pp. 202, 207-208.

¹⁷ Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁸ Rossetti, *Rossetti Papers*, p. 55.

¹⁹ Rossetti, *Rossetti Papers*, p. 130.

'They were nearly all the work of Kiyonaga'.²⁰ It is certain that he also owned Japanese illustrated books in colour as the catalogue of the auction of his household in 1880 listed the item 'Eighteen Japanese Picture Books, Sketches of landscapes and figures, *some coloured*; and 14 loose Drawings'.²¹ Also, architects such as William Burges and Edward William Godwin are known to have collected Japanese prints. Elizabeth Aslin wrote that Burges owned 'the first Japanese prints to be collected in England and all dating from the 1850s'.²² These prints, many of which were *omocha-e* [toy prints], can be seen in his scrap book, now in the possession of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 28). As to Godwin, his biography described the interior decoration of his house in Bristol to which he moved in 1862 as follows:

His scheme consisted in painting the walls of his rooms in plain colours, hanging thereon a few Japanese prints – then a rarity in England – laying some Persian rugs on the bare floors and completing the decoration with carefully selected furniture. Save for the oriental woodcuts it was a reversion to the taste of the eighteenth century in keeping with the building.²³

The enthusiasm for Japanese prints did not remain confined to a small circle of artists and art critics like them and was soon to spread to a wider range of people.

²⁰ Edward F. Strange, 'Toyokuni I. And His Theatrical Colour Prints' (a paper read on 11 December, 1907), *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society, London*, vol. 8, 1910, p. 24.

²¹ *The 'White House', Tite Street, Chelsea, a Catalogue of the Remaining Household of Furniture, Baker & Sons, London, Thursday, 18th September, 1879*, reprinted in Ono, *Japonisme in Britain*, Appendix A, p. 152.

²² Elizabeth Aslin, *The Aesthetic Movement: Prelude to Art Nouveau* (London: Elek, 1969), pp. 80-81.

²³ Dudley Harbron, *The Conscious Stone: the Life of Edward William Godwin* (London: Latimer House, 1949), p. 33, quoted in Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, p. 188.

Still in the early-twentieth century, *ukiyo-e* prints were ubiquitous on walls in British houses. Noguchi Yonejirō, the Japanese poet and father of Isamu Noguchi, lived in the United States from 1893 to 1902 and in England from 1902 to 1904 and published English poems under the name of Yone Noguchi. When he first went abroad, he, like most of the Japanese at that time, did not realise *ukiyo-e* prints were highly valued by westerners. When Noguchi was taken by Laurence Binyon to the evening party held at Thomas Sturge Moore's house in 1903, he saw for the first time the now highly renowned print by Hokusai, 'Gaifū Kaisei' [South Wind, Clear Weather or Red Fuji].²⁴

I noticed a picture seen from between the heads of two women standing in front of the fireplace. It was Hokusai's 'Gaifu Kaisei'...It looked as if the proud Red Fuji were staring defiantly at the westerners who were gathering in the room. It was embarrassing that I knew nothing about Hokusai at that time. I could not give any satisfactory answer to Moore's question...I returned to the boarding house late that night, feeling the greatest shame of my life.²⁵

He was to encounter the sight of *ukiyo-e* prints decorating walls in houses of many other British artists and intellectuals such as William Michael Rossetti, Robert Bridges, Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, who asked him keenly about *ukiyo-e*. The sight of *ukiyo-e* prints at almost every evening party he went to during his stay in London impressed him so much that he wrote a poem about this

²⁴ This print achieved the record price of 288,500 pounds at the auction held by Christie's, London, on 8 November 2007.

²⁵ Noguchi Yonejirō, *Utamaro Hokusai Hiroshige Ron* [Essays on Utamaro, Hokusai and Hiroshige] (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1926), pp. 86-87.

experience, 'Yoru no Resepushon' [Evening Reception].²⁶

Trade of Japanese prints

There was enough flow of Japanese prints into the West to satisfy this enormous interest. The Japanese merchants who realised the value of prints as export item began to sell large numbers of prints to westerners. In the mid-nineteenth century, except in few cases, *ukiyo-e* prints were seen by most Japanese people as ephemera, not as works of art as they are seen today.²⁷ From the end of the Edo Period to the Meiji Period, *ukiyo-e* prints came to have an increasingly journalistic nature, giving information about major political incidents, novel things and customs from the West and new technical inventions functioning as the equivalent of newspapers. However, such contemporary *ukiyo-e* prints were rapidly replaced by prints which were produced by the newly-introduced methods of printmaking such as lithography and photography.²⁸ Many of old Japanese prints were collected by ragmen, second-hand bookshops and pawnshops and were sold in job lots at street stalls.²⁹

²⁶ Embarrassed by his own ignorance, he began to collect and study *ukiyo-e* prints avidly after he went back to Japan. He was to publish a number of books and articles about *ukiyo-e* not only in Japanese but also in English from the 1920s. Wada Keiko, 'Noguchi Yonejirō no Rondon (4): Rozetti to no Kōyū' [Yone Noguchi in London (4): with W. M. Rossetti], 'Noguchi Yonejirō no Rondon: Daiei Hakubutsukan no Nakamatachi (5)' [Yone Noguchi in London (5): Friends in the British Museum], 'Noguchi Yonejirō no Rondon (6): Japonisumu no Arashi' [Yone Noguchi in London (6): the Storm of Japonisme], 'Noguchi Yonejirō no Rondon (11): Ukiyo-e eno Omāju' [Yone Noguchi in London (11): His Homage to Ukiyo-e], *Osaka Gakuin University Foreign Linguistic and Literary Studies*, no. 36 (September 1997), 1-23, no. 37 (March 1998), 108-129, no. 39 (March 1999), 41-60, no. 44 (September 2001), 61-81.

²⁷ Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 7.

²⁸ Under such severe circumstances, only Taiheidō and Kokkeidō had survived by 1909 as publishers which continued to produce *ukiyo-e* prints as non-journalistic medium. Iwakiri Shinichirō, '1900-1910 no Hanga: Han Hyōgen no Kei' [Prints from 1900 to 1910: Changes in Expression of Prints], Koike Makiko, 'Kindai Hanga to Ukiyo-e' [Modern Prints and Ukiyo-e] in *Nihon no Hanga I*, ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art, pp.13-14, 18-19, Nagata Seiji, *Shiryō ni yoru Kindai Ukiyo-e Jijō* [Reading Contexts of Modern Ukiyo-e from Documents] (Tokyo: Sansaisha, 1992), pp. 26-30, 52-68.

²⁹ Nagata, *Shiryō ni yoru Kindai Ukiyo-e Jijō*, pp. 18-21.

However, some merchants began to notice the keen interest held by foreigners in *ukiyo-e* prints. For example, in his memoir in 1933, Takeda Yasujirō told a story about his uncle, who was one of such merchants.

In 1878, my uncle's business in bronze was not running well as the aftermath of Seinan War affected the economy in Tokyo badly. He had been a big book lover since childhood and had a lot of old books and *ukiyo-e* prints. So, he carried all of these books and prints to Ningyō-chō, Nihonbashi, and began to sell them at a night stall from the summer of that year... One night, a foreigner dropped in at his stall. From a heap of prints, he picked up about fifty, all of which were *bijin-e* [portraits of beautiful women] by Utamaro and asked in faltering Japanese, 'How much?' My uncle, who could not speak English, showed his one finger and said, 'per one print'. The foreigner, then, counted fifty prints and paid five yen [equivalent of 500 sen or approximately one pound on the exchange rate of 1878].³⁰ My uncle was amazed at how much he paid. He meant one sen by a finger... But the foreigner mistook it for ten sen. A few days later, the same foreigner came back and bought prints by Utamaro for ten sen per print, again. As he became a regular customer, it came to be known that he was called 'Benkei' and was from Yokohama.³¹ He, who would buy hundreds and thousands of prints as long as they were by Utamaro, told my uncle to bring whatever

³⁰ *Meiji Ikō Honpō Shuyō Keizai Tōkei* [Hundred-year Statistics of the Japanese Economy], ed. by the Statistics Department, the Bank of Japan (Tokyo: The Statistics Department, the Bank of Japan, 1966) p. 318.

³¹ Judging from other documents that told the same story, his real name seems to have been Brinkley. It is most likely that his name sounded 'Benkei' to the Japanese who did not know English. He was a British export merchant in Yokohama. *Watanabe Shōzaburō*, ed. by Watanabe Tadasu (Tokyo: Watanabe Mokuhana Bijutsu Gahō, 1974), pp. 103-104, Okuyama Gihachirō, *Nihon no Mokuhanga* [Woodblock Prints of Japan] (Tokyo: Keiyūsha, 1977), p. 77.

Utamaro prints he could find to Yokohama.³²

This uncle, Yoshida Kinbei, was to become one of the major export agents of *ukiyo-e* prints. In the 1870s and 1880s, *ukiyo-e* prints were exported mainly through foreign export merchants, 'Benkei' being one of them, and Japanese booksellers and antique dealers sold prints to them. However, by the mid-1890s, a number of Japanese exporters of *ukiyo-e* prints which traded directly with foreign countries were founded.³³

The demand from abroad was mainly for antique prints by artists such as Utamaro, Hokusai and Sharaku, not for contemporary prints depicting current affairs as the equivalent of newspapers.³⁴ Also, *ukiyo-e* prints, not paintings, were preferred by foreigners whereas *ukiyo-e* paintings were mainly sold to domestic collectors.³⁵ In order to meet the huge demand for antique prints from abroad, a network of buyers of *ukiyo-e* prints was established throughout the country. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of prints were still kept by ordinary people in their houses, unaware of their value, not only in Tokyo but also in remotest parts of Japan, and local merchants sought antique prints from the houses in their own areas. Many of the prints bought by such merchants were brought to big cities like Tokyo and sold to the major exporters of *ukiyo-e* prints.³⁶ A memoir by a person with the pseudonym '*Ukiyo-e shi*' in *Ukiyo-e* in 1916 told vividly how enthusiastic Japanese merchants were about such treasure hunts.

³² Yasujirō Takeda, 'Gankodō Ukiyo-e Mandan' [Chats on *Ukiyo-e* by Gankodō], *Ukiyo-e Geijutsu*, November 1933, p. 240.

³³ *Tokyo Kōshō Kumiai Gojūnenishi* [Fifty Years of Tokyo Association of Antiquarian Booksellers] (Tokyo: Tokyoto Koshoseki Syōgyō Kyōkai Kumiai, 1974), p. 41.

³⁴ Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 25.

³⁵ *Tokyo Koshō Kumiai Gojūnenishi*, p. 42.

³⁶ Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 18.

Nishiki-e prints became popular and came to be sold for high prices from 1883 or 1884. In 1892, a *nishiki-e* print by Harunobu was sold for about ten yen. Accordingly, merchants with a quick eye for profit scrambled to hunt for prints. Now that Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto have been cleared of saleable prints, they forage for whatever remains in rural areas, issuing advertisements all over the country. The way they hunt for prints is quite persistent. They visit every house of a village and show reproductions of prints by Utamaro, Hokusai, Hiroshige and so on as samples, asking, 'Do you have any print like these? If so, we will buy it at a high price'. If there is a find, they frequent the house patiently until they finally get it...The *nishiki-e* prints gathered in this way are sold to *nishiki-e* merchants in Tokyo...The prints sold to merchants in Tokyo are then sent to their customers abroad or sold to westerners resident in Tokyo or foreigners staying in hotels.³⁷

One of the biggest exporters of antique prints in Tokyo, Yoshizawa, also collected prints by using such networks of merchants in rural areas. Yoshizawa distributed manuals for buying antique prints to merchants all over Japan. It also sent advertisements directly to old families who might possess valuable prints. The following is one example of these advertisements. It was entitled 'You Will Earn Money If You Read This Advertisement' and published in 1888.

Old *nishiki-e* prints – *edo-e* or *e-gami* – we buy high quality ones for up to 150 yen per 100 prints. The older, the more expensive. New ones are only

³⁷ Ukiyo-e shi, 'Nishiki-e no Kaiatsume to Sono Kushin' [Buying Nishiki-e Prints and Its Pains], *Ukiyo-e*, 1916, no. 21, quoted in Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, pp. 16-17.

20 to 30 sen per 100 prints.

Old picture books – we buy a book with illustrations printed in colour except *kusa-zōshi* for up to five yen.

Surimono prints – the ones with beautiful illustrations are more valuable.

Pictures by Katsushika Hokusai – we also buy hanging scrolls, hand scrolls, portfolios, screens, pictures in frames, unmounted drawings, designs by Hokusai at a high price.

Ukiyo-e prints and paintings: hanging scrolls, hand scrolls and portfolios of pictures depicting beautiful women or old customs are more valuable if they are beautiful and in good condition.

Old postage stamps and postcards: from 3 sen to 155 yen per 100 sheets.

We buy prints of the kind mentioned above, which are popular abroad at the moment. Please hurry to bring any to us while they are still popular there. Your prints will get cheaper as more prints go abroad. When the fashion for Japanese prints becomes obsolete there, they will become valueless, as they have been in Japan.³⁸

It is clear from this advertisement that exporters like Yoshizawa tried to make profits quite shrewdly, responding to the popularity of Japanese prints in the West. By 1906, Yoshizawa was to have a number of agencies in western countries, including the ones in London and Glasgow.³⁹

³⁸ 'Yomu to Kane no Mōkaru Kōkoku' [You Will Earn Money If You Read This Advertisement], 1888, quoted in Nagata, *Shiryō ni Yoru Kindai Ukiyo-e Jijō*, pp. 92-93.

³⁹ The other agencies abroad were in the United States (New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Atlantic City, St. Louis, St. Paul, San Francisco, Milwaukee), France (Paris) and Italy (Rome). Nagata, *Shiryō ni Yoru Kindai Ukiyo-e Jijō*, p. 92.

Among major exporters of *ukiyo-e* prints to the West in the second half of the nineteenth century, Hayashi Tadamasa should not be overlooked. At the age of 25, he went to Paris as an employee of Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha and as a translator at the International Exhibition in 1878. He remained in Paris thereafter and worked for the Paris branch of Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha. After leaving Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha in 1882, he started his own business as an art dealer. He exported significant quantities of Japanese works of art to his shop in Paris and it is very likely that many of the objects thus sent to Paris by him were brought to Britain as well. According to Shibui Kiyoshi, he exported 156,487 *ukiyo-e* prints and 9,708 illustrated books between 1890 and 1901.⁴⁰ He bought prints for 2 or 3 yen per sheet in Japan and sold them for more than 100 franc (equivalent of 40 yen) per sheet in France.⁴¹ Even at his death in 1906, a vast number of *ukiyo-e* prints were about to be exported, which were eventually sold in Japan at auctions from 1907 to 1912 and were to become one of the bases of *ukiyo-e* collections in Japan which developed belatedly.⁴²

With the increase in demand in the West from the mid-nineteenth century, the price of Japanese prints rose at an incredible rate. Before prints began to be exported abroad in massive quantity, *ukiyo-e* prints were bought by ordinary people in Japan at quite reasonable prices. For example, around 1850, a single high quality print cost less than a tenth of the average daily allowance of a craftsman.⁴³ Around the mid-1870s, a print by Utamaro or Harunobu was sold for 10 to 20. Ten years later, they rose by more than ten times, 2 to 3 yen,⁴⁴ while the personal consumption expenditure per month increased by only 39 sen, from 7 yen 3 sen in

⁴⁰ Shibui Kiyoshi, 'Ukiyo-e no Yushutsu', [The Export of Ukiyo-e], *Mita Bungaku*, February 1939, p. 92.

⁴¹ Segi Shinichi, *Nihonbijutsu no Ryūshutsu* [Out Flow of Japanese Art] (Tokyo: Shinshindō, 1985), pp. 177-178.

⁴² Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, pp. 40-41.

⁴³ Segi, *Nihonbijutsu no Ryūshutsu*, p. 176.

⁴⁴ Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 25.

1875 to 7 yen 42 sen in 1885.⁴⁵ In 1908, Yoshizawa's advertisement indicated that the prices it paid for highest quality prints by Sharaku ranged from 10 to 30 yen, and those by Utamaro from 5 to 30 yen. The prices for which they were sold must have got even higher than these, which means that the prices of Utamaro prints increased more than ten times in twenty years. In 1916, the prices which Yoshizawa paid for prints by Sharaku were from 30 to 800 yen, and those by Utamaro were from 50 to 300 yen.⁴⁶ Compared to the fact that the personal consumption expenditures per month in 1905 and 1915 were 9 yen 58 sen and 11 yen 3 sen respectively, the increase rate of the prices of antique prints was enormous.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the top prices at the auction held by Sotheby's in London on 2 December, 1910, 'A choice collection of Japanese colour prints', included 230 pounds for an Utamaro print, 100 pounds for a Hokusai print and 300 pounds for a Harunobu print.⁴⁸ Considering that one pound was about ten yen at the time,⁴⁹ it is obvious that still in the 1910s Japanese antique prints were sold at far higher prices in Britain than in Japan. Even in the late 1920s, a print was rarely sold for more than 1,000 yen in Japan.⁵⁰

From the mid-1880s, some merchants even began to produce forgeries of *ukiyo-e* prints and exported them as authentic antique prints by popular *ukiyo-e* artists such as Utamaro and Sharaku.⁵¹ Some of them were made to look antique by being sooted, steamed or damaged.⁵² Also, in the case of badly conserved antique

⁴⁵ Iwasaki Jirō, *Bukka no Sesō 100 nen* [100 Years of the Social Conditions Seen from Prices of Things] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1982), pp. 22, 27.

⁴⁶ Segi, *Nihonbijutsu no Ryūshutsu*, p. 179.

⁴⁷ Iwasaki, *Bukka no Sesō 100 nen*, pp. 37, 45.

⁴⁸ *A Choice Collection of Japanese Colour Prints. 1910 Dec. 2., Sotheby's London* with annotations in Auctioneers' Archival Sets in the British Library.

⁴⁹ The Statistics Department, the Bank of Japan, *Meiji Ikō Honpō Shuyō Keizai Tōkei*, p. 318.

⁵⁰ Segi, *Nihonbijutsu no Ryūshutsu*, p. 182.

⁵¹ Nagata, *Shiryō ni Yoru Kindai Ukiyo-e Jijō*, p. 73.

⁵² Suzuki Juzō, 'Ukiyo-e Hanga no Gansaku to Hukusei' [Forgeries and Reproductions of Ukiyo-e Prints], *Dokusho Shunjū*, vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1953), 16-17 (p. 16).

prints, colours except black outlines and soot were removed with chemicals and new colours were added so that the reprinted ones would look like prints conserved under good conditions.⁵³ Some of them were made so elaborately that the collectors abroad who bought them never realised they were forgeries.⁵⁴

Ukiyo-e prints were exported on such a massive scale that it was feared by some Japanese that no print would remain in Japan in the near future.⁵⁵ Despite such anxiety, Japanese merchants continued to sell prints to foreign customers as Japanese prints kept their popularity in the West throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and on to the early twentieth century. In 1923, a Japanese merchant in London gave the following account:

I have been living in London for eighteen years and have always dealt with works of art for customers in various European countries. Nishiki-e prints have always been praised the most here. I also deal with tea utensils and other kinds of Japanese antiques, but, the Japanese and foreigners have different tastes. For example, it is often the case that the objects which would be estimated at 100,000 yen in Japan could not sell here even for 100 yen. *Nishiki-e* prints, on the other hand, are appreciated by both painters and craftsmen and generally praised.⁵⁶

It is also said that, still in the 1910s and 1920s, about seventy percent of *ukiyo-e*

⁵³ Watanabe Shōzaburō, 'Ukiyo-e Hanga no Saihan to Gisaku' [Reprint and Forgery of Ukiyo-e Prints], *Ukiyo-e Geijutsu*, November 1933, p. 238.

⁵⁴ For example, it is now known that in the frontispiece of the first comprehensive book on Sharaku by Julius Kurth in 1910 a forgery of a Sharaku print was reproduced. Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 30.

⁵⁵ Segi, *Nihonbijutsu no Ryūshutsu*, p. 109.

⁵⁶ Shimizu Kasaburō, 'Ōshū wa Izen Nishiki-e Zensei' [*Nishiki-e* Prints Are Still at the Height of Their Popularity in Europe], *Bijutsu no Nihon*, vol. 15, no. 6, 1923, p. 26.

prints dealt with by Japanese merchants were exported abroad.⁵⁷

Not only single sheets of *ukiyo-e* prints but also various forms of colour woodcut made especially to suit western demands, such as Christmas cards, calendars, picture books in western languages, and paper napkins were exported. The publisher, Hasegawa Takejirō, explained that books of Japanese folk stories printed on crepe paper became one of the most popular export items for a while.⁵⁸ He also published calendars in English and Christmas cards with illustrations which would satisfy the western interest in exotic motifs, such as *samurai*, *geisha*, rickshaw, *kimono*, Mt. Fuji, shrines and temples (Fig. 29). They became so popular that he was once 'bewildered at the huge amount of orders from abroad'.⁵⁹ According to the manager of the paper company, Isetatsu, napkins made of handmade paper and printed in woodcut in colour also became immensely popular in Europe. In the late 1860s, Isetatsu received orders from abroad and began to produce paper napkins, although he did not know what napkins were at first. He employed *ukiyo-e* artists such as Kawanabe Kyōsai and Hasagawa Chikuyō to design illustrations on napkins. Although napkins produced in such a labour-intensive manner were not so cheap, two yen fifty sen to five yen per 1,000 sheets, they became such a popular export item that Isetatsu was followed by seven other companies. The total amount of production of paper napkins by these companies in Tokyo once reached 5,000,000 sheets per year and they were exported mainly to Europe.⁶⁰ These popular forms of

⁵⁷ Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 87.

⁵⁸ Hasegawa Takejirō, 'Mokuhanga no Yushutsu' [The Export of Woodcut Prints], *Bijutsu Shinpō*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1 January, 1914, p. 120. A number of books of Japanese fairy tales were translated into English by British writers, Basil Hall Chamberlain and Lafcadio Hearn, and printed in colour woodcut on crepe paper. Satō and Watanabe, *Japan and Britain*, p. 125.

⁵⁹ Hasegawa, 'Mokuhanga no Yushutsu', Sakai, 'Yushutsu Muki no Mokuhanga ni tsuite' [On Woodcut Prints Suitable for Export], *Bijutsu Shinpō*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1 January, 1914, pp. 120-124.

⁶⁰ 'Isetatsu Shujin Dan, Kami Napukin no Yushutsu Sōgyō Jidai' [The Memoir on the Beginning of the Export of Paper Napkins Given by the Manager of Isetatsu], *Meiji*

colour woodcuts must have made the art of Japanese prints familiar to a wide range of people in the West.

Ukiyo-e images abound

With the influx of an enormous amount of Japanese prints from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, artists in various media in Britain began to produce works employing certain elements of *ukiyo-e*. James McNeil Whistler is well known for his adoption of compositional devices of *ukiyo-e* prints in his paintings, one of the most evident examples being *Nocturne: Blue and Gold – Old Battersea Bridge* (c.1872-1875), which shared many elements with the prints by Utagawa Hiroshige (Figs. 30, 31).⁶¹ E. W. Godwin, the architect and designer, used motifs and colour schemes in Japanese prints for his furniture and interior design, and even pasted actual prints on his furniture.⁶² Although he did not have a chapter on woodblock prints in his book, *Japan: Its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures*, Christopher Dresser, the first British designer to visit Japan in 1876, not only used a number of images from Japanese prints in the book but also produced a design of a vase for Linthorpe Art Pottery around 1880, whose form seems to have been inspired by the famous print by Hokusai, *Kanagawa-oki Nami Ura* [The Great Wave off Kanagawa]

Taishō Shidan, vol. 10, December 1937, pp. 19-21.

⁶¹ Satō and Watanabe, *Japan and Britain*, pp. 106-107.

⁶² The bell-shaped windows of Godwin's 'Four Seasons Cabinet' (c. 1877) in the Victoria and Albert Museum derived from the image in the fifth volume of *Hokusai Manga*. Godwin himself showed the images from *Hokusai Manga* in his article, 'Japanese Wood Construction', part 6 of 'Woodwork', *Building News and Engineering Journal*, no. 28, 19 February, 1875, pp. 200-201, 214. Also, the ebonised sideboard now in the possession of Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery had actual *ukiyo-e* prints pasted on its upper left-hand door. Susan Weber Soros points out the similarity of the colour scheme of Japanese prints and that of his design for the fabric used for the interior decoration of Dromore Castle, County Limerick, Ireland, ca. 1869-70. Tanita, *Yuibi Shugi to Japanizumu*, pp. 66-69, Nancy B. Wilkinson, 'E. W. Godwin and Japonisme in England', Susan Weber Soros, 'E. W. Godwin and Interior Design', in *E. W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer*, ed. by Susan Weber Soros (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 71-91 (pp. 85-86), pp. 185-223 (pp. 192-193).

(Figs. 32, 33).⁶³ Illustrators such as Walter Crane and Aubrey Beardsley also incorporated some motifs and stylistic elements of *ukiyo-e* prints into their works.⁶⁴ Crane wrote about the influence of *ukiyo-e* prints on him as follows:

I found no little helpful and suggestive stimulus in the study of certain Japanese colour prints, which a lieutenant in the Navy I met at Rode Hall, who had recently visited Japan in his ship, presented me with....Their treatment in definite black outline and flat brilliant as well as delicate colours, vivid dramatic and decorative feeling struck me at once, and I endeavoured to apply these methods to the modern fanciful and humorous subjects of children's toy-books and to the methods of wood-engraving and machine-printing.⁶⁵

The wood engravings by William Nicholson and the poster designs produced jointly by him and his brother-in-law, James Pryde, under the pseudonym of 'The Beggarstuffs', are said to have incorporated stylistic elements of *ukiyo-e* prints, whether Nicholson himself was conscious of it or not (Fig. 34).⁶⁶ As Gleeson White wrote in 1898:

although his designs betray scarce a trace of Japanese convention, and are

⁶³ Christopher Dresser, *Japan: Its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co. ; New York : Scribner and Welford, 1882), *Kurisuotofā Doressā to Nihon*, ed. by Kōriyama City Museum of Art, p. 97.

⁶⁴ Satō and Watanabe, *Japan and Britain*, pp. 129-130, pp. 149-150.

⁶⁵ Walter Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences* (London: Methuen, 1907), p. 107, quoted in Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, pp. 208-209.

⁶⁶ Nicholson himself called his prints 'woodcut' because of their broad, simple style, which looked as if it had been obtained by the method of wood-cutting. However, as he used gravers on hard end-grain of boxwood, his work was technically wood-engraving. Colin Campbell, 'Nicholson's Graphic Work' in *The Art of William Nicholson*, ed. by Colin Campbell and others (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2004), pp. 43-51 (p. 44).

unconcerned with the subtleties of transparent pigment, and eschew intricate pattern-making, in spirit they are in many ways closer rivals of the Japanese prints than are any previous attempts of Western art. It is scarce overstating the fact to declare that, so far as his technique is concerned, Mr. Nicholson might never have seen a Japanese print. In every detail his work is conceived differently. For his colour, his arrangement of masses, and his choice of subjects, are entirely Western. Yet in the unerring selection of essentials, and his lucid expression of the truth and nothing but the truth of his subject as he sees it, he is at one with the great Oriental draughtsman that Europe – tardily it may be – has at last named among the masters; not greater nor less, but co-equal in the hierarchy of artists.⁶⁷

Colin Campbell notes that Nicholson's prints were inspired by the woodcuts in the English chapbooks and early nineteenth century broadsheets, not by Japanese prints.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the impact of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, who enthusiastically adopted elements of *ukiyo-e* prints to his poster design, should not be ignored. When asked by Ranger Gull for his article in *Figaro* magazine in 1897 'whom they thought the greater artist in their own particular line', "Lautrec!" they [Nicholson and Pryde] shouted at me [Gull] in perfect time and with the precision of a pistol shot, "Lautrec!"⁶⁹ The impact of *ukiyo-e* prints on Nicholson might have been indirect, transmitted through his introduction of stylistic elements from Lautrec's poster design. However, it means that by the end of the nineteenth

⁶⁷ Gleeson White, 'The Coloured Prints of Mr. W. P. Nicholson', *The Studio*, vol.12, 1898, p. 177.

⁶⁸ Campbell, 'Nicholson's Graphic Work' in *The Art of William Nicholson*, ed. by Campbell, p. 44.

⁶⁹ Quoted in *William Nicholson, Painter: Paintings, Woodcuts, Writings, Photographs*, ed. by Andrew Nicholson (London: Giles de la Mare, 1996), p. 52.

century elements from *ukiyo-e* prints were so prevalent in various media that artists could not help being influenced by them, whether consciously or unconsciously.

2-2 Collecting and Studying Japanese Prints and Printmaking in Britain

Early writers on Japanese prints

The increasing availability of Japanese prints also prompted writings and studies on them. It has been pointed out that prints by Hokusai became a particular focus of attention for early French Japonists, such as Philippe Burty, Théodore Duret, Louis Gonse, Edmund de Goncourt and Ernest Chesneau, who hailed him as the greatest master of Japanese art.⁷⁰ In this respect, it is notable that in England William Michael Rossetti wrote an article on Hokusai, paying attention to the artistic qualities of his work, as early as in 1863. This article, which is believed to have been the earliest writing on Hokusai in the West and to have described the illustrated book by Hokusai, *Wakan Ehon Kai*,⁷¹ was published in the journal, *The Reader*.⁷² *Wakan Ehon Kai* was produced by Hokusai as a textbook on drawing heroes and warriors (Fig. 35), but Rossetti, who could not read Japanese, mistook it for a 'popular heroic legend of ancient time' like 'the deeds of some Japanese Theseus of Roland embalmed in the popular heart and memory'.⁷³ After describing various characteristics of the illustrations, such as 'extraordinary dignity and power of line', 'decisive, masterly vigour of stroke', and 'most varied, original and audacious grouping', he wrote, 'In fact, spite of all obstructing influences, this Japanese

⁷⁰ Ōshima, *Japonismu*, Inaga, 'Meisaku to Kyoshō no Ninchi o Meguru Ninshiki no Sogo', p. 23.

⁷¹ Tanita, *Yuibi Shugi to Japanizumu*, pp. 77-78.

⁷² William Michael Rossetti, 'Japanese Woodcuts', *The Reader*, 31 October, 1863, pp. 501-538. The article was revised and republished as a chapter in Michael William Rossetti, *Fine Art: Chiefly Contemporary* (London: Macmillan, 1867), pp. 363-387. The name of Hokusai did not appear in the article in 1863, but, was mentioned as 'Hoxai' in 1867.

⁷³ Rossetti, 'Japanese Woodcuts', *The Reader*, 31 October, 1863, p. 501.

designer of the nineteenth century bears a very observable resemblance to that Albert Dürer of the sixteenth whom Europe is proud to acknowledge as, to this day, one of the greatest artists she has produced'.⁷⁴ Rossetti might have had woodcuts of biblical and mythical subjects by Dürer in mind (Fig. 36).

Ernest F. Fenollosa, the American expert on Japanese art who regarded paintings by Sesshū in the Muromachi Period as the most accomplished of Japanese art, was critical about the enthusiasm for Hokusai among French Japonists. In response to Louis Gonse's book published in 1883, *L'Art Japonais*, in which a whole chapter was devoted to Hokusai, Fenollosa severely criticised Gonse's views on Japanese art in his review in *The Japan Weekly Mail*.⁷⁵ As an *oyatoi-gaikokujin* who had resided in Japan from 1878 and was beginning to play an important role in the revaluation and conceptualisation of 'Japanese art' with Okakura Tenshin, Fenollosa expressed his views on Hokusai 'according to the opinion of all Japanese critics'.⁷⁶ He implied that Gonse was 'biased by the extraordinary over-estimates prevailing among other foreign writers, due to the fact that, in their ignorance of all else, they look at everything Japanese, and especially Japanese art, only through the eyes of Hokusai'⁷⁷ and went on to state as follows:

'It is only since Europeans have placed Hokusai at the head of all native artists, that the Japanese have universally come to recognize him as one of their great men', says M. Gonse, quoting M. Duret. This is also a misconception. The class of Japanese who are willing to rate Hokusai as a

⁷⁴ Rossetti, 'Japanese Woodcuts', *The Reader*, 31 October, 1863, p. 538.

⁷⁵ Ernest F. Fenollosa, 'Review of the Chapter on Painting, in *L'Art Japonais* by L. Gonse', *Japan Weekly Mail*, 12 July, 1884, pp. 37-46.

⁷⁶ Fenollosa, 'Review of the Chapter on Painting', *Japan Weekly Mail*, 12 July, 1884, p. 44.

⁷⁷ Fenollosa, 'Review of the Chapter on Painting', *Japan Weekly Mail*, 12 July, 1884, p. 44.

great artist to-day, are the same devoted followers only, who had always recognized him as leader. Hardly a Japanese of culture has been really converted to the foreign view. Critics here regard with amazement or amusement European estimates. It is hardly to be expected, to be sure, that those genial Japanese gentlemen, who make a business of selling Hokusais, and other Ukiyo-e, in the capitals of Europe, should take great pains to oppose the opinions of enthusiasts who pay them such high prices; but their real tastes are shown by what they buy for their own keeping.⁷⁸

By 'those genial Japanese gentlemen', Fenollosa must have meant the Japanese antique dealers who helped Gonse write his book, *Hayashi Tadamasu and Wakai Kanezaburō*. Fenollosa was quite aware of how Japanese prints were sold by Japanese merchants at an enormous profit by catering to the foreign taste. He wrote:

The Ukiyo-e that get into the Tokio market come out of old hiding places, in a most forlorn condition, where they have been relegated, much as we stow away in dusty closets old numbers of newspapers; and they are sold at a very low price. The Tokio dealers buy them up, and sell them at a profit of about one thousand per cent to the few merchants who make it a business to send such things to Paris.⁷⁹

He also wrote articles entitled 'Ukiyo-e Shi Ko' [Essays on the History of *Ukiyo-e*] in

⁷⁸ Fenollosa, 'Review of the Chapter on Painting', *Japan Weekly Mail*, 12 July, 1884, p. 45.

⁷⁹ Fenollosa, 'Review of the Chapter on Painting', *Japan Weekly Mail*, 12 July, 1884, p. 45.

the journal *Kokka* with the aim of letting the Japanese readers realise how biased western views on *ukiyo-e* were.⁸⁰

Although Fenollosa was to soften his criticism on Hokusai later, those whom he valued highly among *ukiyo-e* artists were the earliest masters such as Iwasa Matabei (1578-1650) and Miyagawa Chōshun (1682-1752).⁸¹ It is notable that both Matabei and Chōshun produced *ukiyo-e* paintings but did not design prints.⁸² In his articles in *Kokka*, Fenollosa insisted that the origin of *ukiyo-e* could be traced back to genre painting of Tosa School in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and that Matabei revived this tradition by mixing with it elements from painting of Kanō School.⁸³ It is possible to see that Fenollosa's views mirrored the then emerging views on 'Japanese art' held by the Japanese authorities who emphasised the antiquity of 'Japanese art' and put painting at the top of the hierarchy of arts. After returning to America, Fenollosa curated the exhibition, 'Hokusai and His School', at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1893, but its exhibits consisted mainly of paintings by Hokusai.⁸⁴

William Anderson was a British surgeon and lived in Japan as an

⁸⁰ Kamei Shino, 'Fenollosa to "Ukiyo-e Shi Kō"' [Fenollosa and "Essays on the History of *Ukiyo-e*"], *Kindai Gasetu*, 9 (2000), 129-147 (p. 129).

⁸¹ Ernest F. Fenollosa, 'Ukiyo-e Shi Kō' [Essays on the History of *Ukiyo-e*], *Kokka*, no. 1, October 1890, pp. 5-9, no. 2, November 1890, pp. 4-7, no. 4, no.4, January, 1891, pp. 1-5, no. 6, March 1891, pp. 17-22, no. 8, May 1891, pp. 14-15, Yamaguchi Seiichi, 'Fenollosa Ukiyo-e Ron no Suii (2) *Kokka* Keisai no "Ukiyo-e Shi Kō"' [The Changes of Fenollosa's Arguments on *Ukiyo-e* (2) "Essays on the History of *Ukiyo-e*" in *Kokka*], *Ukiyo-e Art*, 67 (1980), 3-10.

⁸² Matabei died before *ukiyo-e* produced in prints became popular in the latter half of the seventeenth century and Chōshun, although active when *ukiyo-e* prints were designed by other contemporary artists, specialised solely in *ukiyo-e* painting.

⁸³ Ernest F. Fenollosa, 'Ukiyo-e Shi Kō', *Kokka*, no. 1, October 1890, pp. 7-9, no. 2, November 1890, pp. 4-7, no. 4, January, 1891, pp. 1-5, Yamaguchi, 'Fenollosa Ukiyo-e Ron no Suii (2)', *Ukiyo-e Art*, no. 67, 1980, pp. 5-8.

⁸⁴ *Department of Japanese Art. Special Exhibition of the Pictorial Art of Japan and China. I. Hokusai and His School. Catalogue* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1893), Yamaguchi Seiichi, 'Fenollosa Ukiyo-e Ron no Suii (3) Bosuton Bijutsukan ni Okeru "Hokusai to Sono Ryūha" Ten' [The Changes of Fenollosa's Arguments on *Ukiyo-e* (3) The Exhibition "Hokusai and His School" at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston], *Ukiyo-e Art*, 69 (1981), 14-18.

oyatoi-gaikokujin from 1873 to 1880, teaching medicine to the Japanese Navy. He is known for his collection of, and writings on, Japanese paintings,⁸⁵ but he also collected a number of Japanese prints and illustrated books. In 1888, he exhibited his collection of prints at the Burlington Fine Arts Club and wrote *Catalogue of Prints and Books Illustrating the History of Engraving in Japan* to accompany the exhibition.⁸⁶ Seven years later, he also wrote *Japanese Wood Engravings: Their History, Technique and Characteristics*.⁸⁷ He pointed out that the technique of woodcut printing was introduced from China but also stated that Japan exceeded its originator in developing it as a form of art.

It has been explained that JAPAN is indebted for her knowledge of the process of wood engraving to her great continental neighbour; but while there are few Chinese specimens that have any special artistic value, the collector of Japanese 'single sheet' woodcuts and illustrated books may enrich himself with a host of works that exemplify almost every good quality within the range of xylographic art, and at the same time present a picture of country and people, of customs and traditions, such as no written record can ever supply.⁸⁸

Like Fenollosa, Anderson valued highly the relatively early *ukiyo-e* artists,

⁸⁵ William Anderson, *The Pictorial Arts of Japan: with a Brief Historical Sketch of the Associated Arts, and Some Remarks upon the Pictorial Art of the Chinese and Koreans* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1886), *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* (London: Longmans & Co., 1886).

⁸⁶ William Anderson, *Catalogue of Prints and Books Illustrating the History of Engraving in Japan* (London: Printed for the Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1888, repr. Tokyo: Synapse, 1999).

⁸⁷ William Anderson, *Japanese Wood Engravings: Their History, Technique and Characteristics* (London: Seeley, 1895; repr. Tokyo: Synapse, 1999).

⁸⁸ Anderson, *Catalogue of Prints and Books*, p. ix.

and also wrote that the 'artistic chromoxylography' went into the phase of 'decadence' with the death of Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-1825).⁸⁹ The artists he listed as the 'seven leaders in the development of Japanese wood engraving' were Hishikawa Moronobu (?-1694), Torii Kiyonobu (1664-1729), Tachibana Morikuni (1679-1748), Nishikawa Sukenobu (1671-1750), Katsukawa Shunshō (1729-1792), Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-1825) and Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849).⁹⁰ Also, as to Utamaro (?-1806), on whom the French author, Edmund de Goncourt, wrote a book in 1891, Anderson stated that his broadside representation of women 'have remarkable charm of line, pose, and composition, but the effect is marred by the ungraceful mannerisms perverting the drawing of the faces and limbs' and in colour 'they rank next to those of Harunobu, Kiyonaga, and Kioden'.⁹¹

However, it should be remarked that he included Hokusai in his list of the seven leaders of Japanese prints. In fact, Anderson insisted on the importance of Hokusai in not only the history of *ukiyo-e* but also the whole history of Japanese art. At the lecture he gave in 1879 in Japan, 'A History of Japanese Art', he talked of Hokusai as the representative of *Ukiyo-e* artists when commenting on the contemporary Chinese works of art as follows:

It is certain, however, that the modern productions which reach Europe and America through ordinary channels are immeasurably inferior to those of past centuries, and are altogether unworthy of comparison with the work of young Japan. In purely decorative art it is probable that the Chinese have for many years been distanced by their insular neighbours, owing to the

⁸⁹ Anderson, *Japanese Wood Engravings*, p. 38.

⁹⁰ Anderson, *Japanese Wood Engravings*, p. 78.

⁹¹ Anderson, *Japanese Wood Engravings*, p. 36.

creation in Japan of the educated artisan-artist by the Hokusai Ukiyo-we.⁹²

Moreover, in the same lecture, he explained the history of Japanese art as a process of developing itself by imitating elements of Chinese art but finally attaining its national character with the advent of Hokusai and he criticised the Japanese connoisseurs who had not appreciated *ukiyo-e* owing to its plebeian nature.

at last the commencement of the nineteenth century gave Japan, in the new Ukiyo-we of Katsushika Hokusai, the right to boast a truly national art, which, although adapted from the old models, the only ones available, and still tainted with many antiquated errors, abounded in novelty and character, and showed unlimited capabilities of development. But the Chiya-zhin, [masters of tea ceremony] the men who led the educated world in matters of literary and artistic taste, were all *laudatores temporis acti*, and closed their ears when the plebeian draughtsmen were spoken of, for to the critic painting was essentially an occupation appertaining to gentle birth and classical culture...But the Ukiyo-we became an established fact in spite of the contemptuous neglect of those who should have been its patrons, and its outcome, the *artisan artist*, has given to the world at large not only the wealth of strange ideas and manual skill so long imprisoned by the pride of seclusion, but has added to it no small portion of the sum of originality to which it can lay claim.⁹³

⁹² William Anderson, 'A History of Japanese Art' (Read June 24th, 1879), *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. 7, p. 365.

⁹³ Anderson, 'A History of Japanese Art', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. 7, pp. 369-370.

Ironically enough, the Japanese talent of 'assimilation' and 'Japanisation' of foreign elements which the Japanese government was eager to stress (as has been seen in Chapter 1-2) was most highly appreciated by Anderson in the branch of Japanese art which was neglected in the government discourse on 'Japanese art'. It is also notable that he described *ukiyo-e* artists as a kind of 'artisan artist' as seen in the passages quoted above.

The contrast between the estimation of Hokusai by Anderson and that by Fenollosa will be made clearer if one reads the following passage by Fenollosa in which he implicitly criticised Anderson as well as Gonse in his review on Gonse's book.

Our author [Gonse] seems to endorse the mistake of others in supposing that Hokusai's influence brought to the highest perfection the whole series of the decorative arts. The artisan artist, so much spoken of by Anderson and Jarves, was indeed an interesting sociological phenomenon. But we deny that the artistic character of sculpture and decoration was, as a whole, bettered by having its foundation in Hokusai's design. Rather it is clear to us that the prevailing vulgarity of the latter decidedly lowered the tone of the former.⁹⁴

It has been considered that both American and British experts on Japanese art such as Fenollosa and Anderson derided the French enthusiasm for Hokusai.⁹⁵ However, as has been shown in the above analysis of their discourse, they diverged on the estimation of Hokusai, although there were similarities in some of their views

⁹⁴ Fenollosa, 'Review of the Chapter on Painting', *Japan Weekly Mail*, 12 July, 1884, p. 44.

⁹⁵ Inaga, 'Meisaku to Kyoshō no Ninchi o Meguru Ninshiki no Sogo', p. 23.

on other aspects of *ukiyo-e*. In addition, Anderson was instrumental in widening the knowledge about *ukiyo-e* artists among the French art critics. Théodore Duret got to know Anderson in London around 1880 and later acknowledged that he could write an article on prints by Hokusai published in *Gazette des Beaux-arts* thanks to Anderson, who let Duret examine his collection of the works of and documents about this artist. Duret also mentioned that he came to know earlier masters of *ukiyo-e* such as Torii Kiyonaga and Hishikawa Moronobu, about whom no one in Paris knew at the time, by being shown the prints which Ernest Satow, a British diplomat in Japan, sent to Anderson.⁹⁶ In the bibliography of Hokusai chronologically arranged by Anderson in *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society, London*, he proudly listed his lecture in 1879 as the earliest work on Hokusai.⁹⁷ Such debates about the estimation of particular *ukiyo-e* artists could be seen as an example of the nationalistic rivalry among western countries over the knowledge about Japan - which has been analysed by Anna Jackson.⁹⁸

Laurence Binyon and Edward F. Strange

A number of British writers on Japanese prints followed Anderson. Among them, Laurence Binyon and Edward F. Strange wrote the most extensive works on the subject from the 1890s to the 1920s. They were curators at the British Museum and at the South Kensington Museum (renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899) respectively and both museums began to form substantial collections of

⁹⁶ Ōshima, *Japonismu*, pp. 197-198, 201-202.

⁹⁷ It is not certain whether he was unaware of the article on Hokusai by Rossetti in 1863 or just ignored it. William Anderson, 'Bibliography of Hokusai Chronologically Arranged by William Anderson' *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, vol. 5, 1898-1901, pp. 112-113.

⁹⁸ Jackson argues about such rivalry by looking at the acquisition of Japanese exhibits at the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876 by the South Kensington Museum. Jackson, 'Imagining Japan', pp. 245-256.

Japanese prints from the 1880s onwards through major purchases and donations.⁹⁹

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the British Museum had acquired Japanese prints that had occasionally trickled into Britain through the Dutch East India Company.¹⁰⁰ Anderson sold his collection of a few thousand Japanese paintings for 3,000 pounds to the British Museum in 1881 and that of 311 illustrated books for 360 pounds in 1882, but his collection of single sheet prints were not purchased by the museum and were dispersed through auctions.¹⁰¹ It was not until after Laurence Binyon joined the Department of Prints and Drawing in 1895 that the museum began the systematic accumulation of *ukiyo-e*.

Binyon was a regular member of the gatherings in London which were frequented by intellectuals and creators from various fields – Roger Fry, Ezra Pound and Frank Bronwyn, to name but a few. With his wide acquaintance, he had useful connections with major collectors of Japanese art. It is also through these intellectual and artistic circles that he made himself familiar with the tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement and nurtured his interest in the prints as an artistic medium, which were to tinge his views on Japanese prints. In this respect, it is notable that as early as in his years in Oxford as an undergraduate he got to know Arthur Mackmurdo, Herbert Horne and Selwyn Image, all of whom were founding members of the Century Guild, the first of the Arts and Crafts guilds. He attended the Hobby Horse Evenings in London, which were organised by them, and contributed articles on literature and poems to the journal, *Century Guild Hobby*

⁹⁹ Unless otherwise footnoted, the following information on the acquisition of Japanese prints by the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum is derived from the articles in the volumes of *Hizō Ukiyo-e Taikan* [*Ukiyo-e Masterpieces in European Collections*], 12 vols., ed. by Narasaki Muneshige (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1987-88).

¹⁰⁰ Smith, 'The Appreciation and Collecting of Ukiyoe in Europe, Britain and the British Museum', in *Ukiyoe*, ed. by Smith, pp. 19-21.

¹⁰¹ Endō Nozomi, 'Daiei Hakubutsukan Shozō Andāson Korekushon Chōsa Hōkoku' [A Report on the Investigation of Anderson Collection in the British Museum], *Society for the Study of Japonisme Report*, 12 (1992), 11-45 (pp. 15-19).

Horse, as a young poet.¹⁰² Also, he was taught wood engraving by his friends, Image and William Strang, which gave him practical knowledge about the techniques of printmaking.¹⁰³ He was to become a spokesman for the original printmakers working in various methods such as wood engraving, etching and lithography and edited the magazine, *The Artist Engraver* in 1904.¹⁰⁴ The magazine was edited as a series of portfolios of prints by 'artist[s] who [are their] own interpreter[s]',¹⁰⁵ that is, artists who exercised craftsmanship by engraving their own designs. The artists represented were diverse, including Strang, Charles Shannon, Lucien Pissarro, Thomas Sturge Moore, and William Nicholson. He appreciated their works as the embodiment of 'truth to materials', the concept which had been repeatedly insisted on in the Arts and Crafts Movement. For example, in the preface of the catalogue of the first exhibition of the Society of Twelve in 1904, many of whose participating artists were also represented in *Artist Engraver*,¹⁰⁶ Binyon wrote, 'In every case the design exists for its own sake, is not a transference to metal, wood or stone of a pre-existing design, but a conception thought out in terms of these materials'.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, Binyon was naturally drawn to the fascination of the world of *ukiyo-e* through his friendship with Rothenstein, Charles Holmes, Mackmurdo, Charles Ricketts, Shannon, Edmund Dulac and Sturge Moore,

¹⁰² Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, pp. 24-27.

¹⁰³ Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, pp. 47, 70. In a letter to Binyon dated January 3, 1893, Image wrote, 'How is the wood-engraving? When do you return to us? I hope I shall be able to resist the temptation of plaguing you consumedly, when you become established as my neighbour in the Print Room of that famous Institution hard by. I am sure you are extremely wise to try and learn by practice the technique of engraving in some measure: how much less vanity would the critics talk, if they had undergone a few years' practical work?', BLMD, Loan 103 Laurence Binyon Archive, vol. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, pp. 47, 70-71.

¹⁰⁵ 'Note by Laurence Binyon', *Artist Engraver*, no. 1, January, 1904, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ The members of the Society were George Clausen, Gordon Craig, William Nicholson, William Strang, Sturge Moore, Will Rothenstein, Charles Ricketts, D. Y. Cameron, C. H. Shannon, A. E. John, Charles Conder, and Muirhead Bone.

¹⁰⁷ Laurence Binyon, 'Preface' in *The Society of Twelve: the First Exhibition, 1904*, Messrs. Obach & co., (London: Obach, 1904), n. p.

all of whom shared his interest in this branch of Japanese art.¹⁰⁸ Taking into account his involvement in the artistic revival of printmaking, it is possible to think that Binyon viewed Japanese prints in terms of their relevance to the contemporary situation of British printmaking.

Binyon's interest in *ukiyo-e* led the British Museum to obtain the collection of a few hundred Japanese prints of the late Ernest Hart in 1902, which was the first major acquisition of Japanese prints by the museum. Moreover, his acquaintance with the author, Arthur Morrison, helped the museum purchase 1,851 prints from him for 4,500 pounds in 1906.¹⁰⁹ It is the largest collection of Japanese prints that has ever entered the museum and covers almost all major periods and genres of *ukiyo-e* prints. The museum's collection of Japanese prints was further enriched by the acquisitions that followed, such as the collection of Samuel Tuke, which included prints of importance as documentary material,¹¹⁰ that of Ernest Satow, who is known to have owned one of the biggest collections of prints by Sharaku in the world and that of Robert N. Shaw consisting of the prints by early masters of *ukiyo-e*.¹¹¹ According to Lawrence Smith, the British Museum was especially concerned to build up the collection of prints from the 'classic' period of *ukiyo-e*, that is, the period up to the death of Utagawa Toyokuni in 1825. In this respect, Binyon might have been influenced by Anderson, who saw the period after Toyokuni as 'decadence'. In *A catalogue of Japanese & Chinese Woodcuts Preserved in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, which was compiled by Binyon,

¹⁰⁸ Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, pp. 68-70.

¹⁰⁹ Timothy Clark, 'Anderson to Morrison' [Anderson and Morrison], in *Daiei Hakubutsukan 2* [The British Museum 2], ed. by Hirayama Ikuo and Kobayashi Tadashi, *Hizō Nihon Bijutsu Taikan* [Japanese art: The Great European Collections], 12 vols. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1992-1994), II (1992) p. 16.

¹¹⁰ Basil Gray, 'Japanese Prints from the Tuke Collection. The KO Signature', *British Museum Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 3, June 1938, pp. 96-99.

¹¹¹ Laurence Binyon, 'Japanese Prints: R. N. Shaw Gift', *British Museum Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1931, pp. 44-45.

the prints produced in Meiji Period were all excluded.¹¹²

The South Kensington Museum, on the other hand, has been collecting Japanese prints probably since 1866,¹¹³ but the first major acquisition was made in 1886. In this year, the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education purchased 300 portfolios of Japanese prints for 325 pounds from the London art dealer, S. M. Franck.¹¹⁴ The collection was divided between the South Kensington Museum and the National Museum of Scotland but the majority of it was acquired by the former, which amounted to more than 12,000 prints. The second large acquisition occurred in 1916, when three daughters of the late William C. Alexander, the banker patron of Whistler, offered to donate to the museum the Japanese objects which had been collected by their father.¹¹⁵ The collection included about 6,000 prints, which were in better condition than those acquired in 1886.

The Japanese prints thus collected were preserved in the National Art Library of the museum at first. In 1893, the catalogue of Japanese books and colour prints in the library was compiled by Edward F. Strange¹¹⁶ and was published in order to render the collection 'more easily accessible to Artists, Designers, and Students'. Strange explained that for cataloguing the prints 'a subject classification has been adopted, which is based solely on the character of the illustrations' such as 'Animals and Plants', 'Textile Fabrics and Embroidery', 'Pottery and Porcelain' and so

¹¹² Laurence Binyon, *A Catalogue of Japanese & Chinese Woodcuts Preserved in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (London: Printed by Order of the Trustees, 1916).

¹¹³ Catherine David, 'Ukiyo-e at the Victoria and Albert Museum' in *Hatsukōkai Ukiyo-e Meihin Ten: Vikutoria Ando Arubāto Bijutsukan Shozō* [Masterpieces of Ukiyo-e from the Victoria and Albert Museum], ed. by Ōta Memorial Museum of Art (Tokyo: Ōta Memorial Museum of Art, 2007), pp. 13-15 (p. 13).

¹¹⁴ VAA, MA/1/F1203 'S. M. Franck'.

¹¹⁵ VAA, MA/1/A317 'The Misses Alexander'.

¹¹⁶ Strange joined the Science and Art Department in 1894 and worked for the museum until 1925. VAA, MA/1/S3472 'E. F. Strange'.

on.¹¹⁷ The catalogue was part of the series of 'Library Lists of Works on Special Subjects', whose other titles included, for example, *A List of Works on Costume in the National Art Library* and *A List of Books and Photographs in the National Art Library Illustrating Metal Work*. That the Japanese prints were catalogued in such a way as to be treated merely as design source books was a natural outcome of the original aim of the museum. In the mid-nineteenth century, when design reform was promoted enthusiastically by Henry Cole and his circle in order to overcome the notoriety of the 'bad' taste in British products, it was established by the government as a place where the public could learn what were 'good' or 'bad' designs through the objects collected from across the world and designers could get inspiration from these objects.¹¹⁸ Therefore, it is possible to presume that Japanese prints were collected and shown to the public as part of such an agenda which was still dominant in the late-nineteenth century.

At the lecture about the collection given for the Japan Society, Strange, after admitting that 'the National Art Library contains few examples which would be prized by the average collector', explained that the first consideration of the museum in purchasing a Japanese print was 'its utility to the student or designer'.¹¹⁹ Strange also excused himself for the dominance of prints produced in the period which had been considered by Anderson as that of 'decadence' in the museum's collection:

¹¹⁷ Edward F. Strange, *Japanese art. 1, Japanese Books and Albums of Prints in Colour in the National Art Library, South Kensington* (London: Printed for H.M.S.O., by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1893), n.p.

¹¹⁸ Suga Yasuko, 'Vikutoria Chō ni okeru Shumi no Seijigaku: Sōshoku Bijutsukan no "Senritsu no Ma"' [The Victorian Politics of Taste: The "Chamber of Horrors" in the Museum of Ornamental Art], *Hitotsubashi Review*, vol. 125, no. 3 (March 2001), 262-279.

¹¹⁹ Strange, 'The Japanese Collections in the National Art Library, South Kensington Museum', *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, 4 (1900), p. 3.

examples of the period of decline – of Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, and their fellows – are often of more practical value than the simpler, more refined, and less highly coloured productions of the 18th century. This brings us to the consideration of the first quality of merit which they possess – that of good and practicable pattern.¹²⁰

He reported that ‘these books, I say, are in almost daily use in our reading-room by students in search for material for elementary design exercises’.¹²¹

Based on the collections of these museums, Binyon and Strange developed their studies of Japanese prints. Until the 1910s, the way Japanese prints were collected and classified in their museums reflected the ‘taxonomic obsession’, that is, the general tendency among the British connoisseurs of Japanese art to draw a comprehensive map of a particular branch of art, to which a self-contained system of classification was applied, based exclusively on the western academic inheritance and sources of supply without reference to Japanese aesthetic values.¹²² The classification of Japanese prints at the South Kensington Museum, in particular, epitomised this obsession as they were classified solely in terms of the subjects and motifs depicted in each print. It is possible to see in this approach to Japanese prints the inheritance of the Victorian design reformist passion for compiling design source books which comprised examples of ornaments from around the world, deprived of their original contexts and arranged solely as variations of forms and

¹²⁰ Strange, ‘The Japanese Collections in the National Art Library, South Kensington Museum’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, 4 (1900), p. 7.

¹²¹ Strange, ‘The Japanese Collections in the National Art Library, South Kensington Museum’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, 4 (1900), p. 10.

¹²² Joe Earle, ‘The Taxonomic Obsession: British Collectors and Japanese Objects, 1852-1986’, *Burlington Magazine*, 128 (December 1986), 864-73.

patterns, as can be seen in Owen Jones' *The Grammar of Ornament*.¹²³ With a similar passion, Strange tried 'to fill up the most unsatisfactory gaps in the collection' so that the museum could show to students and designers 'a fairly complete collection, illustrative of various methods of working of Japanese artists, of their many beauties of design and composition and of their surpassing excellence of colour'.¹²⁴ The encyclopaedic catalogue of the prints preserved in the British Museum in which prints were classified neatly with detailed annotations could also be seen as the product of Binyon's taxonomic effort 'to fill up gaps and strengthen weak places in the collection'.¹²⁵ The writings by these two curators published before around 1920 drew mainly on western studies on Japanese prints.

However, it must have been also true that there were few studies of Japanese prints by Japanese scholars that were available as sources of reference. Strange complained of the scarcity of literature on Japanese prints due to the general prejudice held by the Japanese who looked down on this branch of art for its plebeian nature.¹²⁶ He explained that if Japanese scholars ever wrote about *ukiyo-e* artists they only mentioned their paintings, not prints.¹²⁷ In his book in 1925, Strange mentioned the remark by Katō Takaaki, now the Prime Minister of Japan, cited at the beginning of the Introduction of this thesis, to show how much Japanese prints were neglected by the Japanese thirty years earlier.¹²⁸

From around the 1910s, however, the study of Japanese prints gradually

¹²³ Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament: Illustrated by Examples from Various Styles of Ornament* (London: Day and Son, 1856).

¹²⁴ Strange, 'The Japanese Collections in the National Art Library, South Kensington Museum', *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, 4 (1900), pp. 3-4.

¹²⁵ Binyon, *A Catalogue of Japanese & Chinese Woodcuts*, p. vi.

¹²⁶ Edward F. Strange, *Japanese Illustration: a History of the Arts of Wood-cutting and Colour Printing in Japan* (London: G. Bell and sons, 1897), pp. xx, 59.

¹²⁷ Edward F. Strange, *Japanese Colour Prints* (London: Printed for H.M. Stationery Off., by Wyman and Sons, 1904), p. 4.

¹²⁸ Edward F. Strange, *The Colour-prints of Hiroshige* (London: Cassell, 1925), p. 30.

began to develop in Japan, stimulated by the earlier western studies on the subject. As Inaga Shigemi points out, in spite of Fenollosa's insistence, the French evaluation of Hokusai influenced the Japanese views as exemplified by the book by Iijima Kyoshin (Hanjūrō), *Katsushika Hokusai Den* (1893), in whose afterword Kobayashi Bunshichi quoted Philippe Burty's praise for Hokusai.¹²⁹ Higuchi Hiroshi remarks that full-fledged studies on *ukiyo-e* in Japan developed in the Taishō Period (1912-1926).¹³⁰ It is interesting to note that *The Colour-prints of Japan* by Strange was translated into Japanese in the book published in Japan in 1914, *Seijin no Mitaru Nihon Ukiyo-e* [Japanese *Ukiyo-e* as Seen by Westerners].¹³¹ Also, to the book entitled *Hanga Raisan* [In Praise for Prints], Nakada Katsunosuke contributed a bibliography of 'classic' literature on *ukiyo-e* in the West. He compiled this bibliography, based on the bibliographical information in Binyon's *A Catalogue of Japanese & Chinese Woodcuts*, which he described as 'Quite methodical. Nothing like this has appeared in our country yet. I can claim without hesitation that this work is indispensable for anyone who studies the history of prints of our country'.¹³² In the preface to the bibliography, Nakada wrote,

Due to the recent reimport of the collection of Henri Vever by Mr. Matsukata, it is becoming easier to see original *ukiyo-e* prints of good quality in our country.¹³³ Yet, it is still necessary that anyone who wishes to do

¹²⁹ Inaga, 'Meisaku to Kyoshō no Ninchi o Meguru Ninshiki no Sogo', p. 23.

¹²⁹ Tanita, *Yuibi Shugi to Japanizumu*, p. 23.

¹³⁰ Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 52.

¹³¹ *Seijin no Mitaru Nihon Ukiyo-e* [Japanese *Ukiyo-e* as Seen by Westerners], ed. by Hirata Tokuboku (Tokyo: Akagi Shōzō, 1914).

¹³² Nakada Katsunosuke, 'Ōshū Ukiyo-e Shoshi' [Bibliography of Literature on *Ukiyo-e* in Europe], in *Hanga Raisan* [In Praise for Prints], ed. by Kisho Fukuseikai (Tokyo: Shunyōdō, 1925), pp. 305-315, (pp. 313-314).

¹³³ Henri Vever, a jewellery dealer, was one of the most enthusiastic japonists in Paris and collected a huge number of *ukiyo-e* prints, some of which were bought from Hayashi Tadamasa. During the First World War, he sold about 8,000 prints from

fundamental studies on *ukiyo-e* should go to the West, as the majority of the existing *ukiyo-e* prints have drained abroad. Unlike any other branch of Japanese art, *ukiyo-e* cannot be studied sufficiently by drawing only on the researches done in our country. It is necessary for us to reference the works of the researchers abroad who have been pursuing their studies with great zeal and energy in spite of numerous difficulties. Any study without reference to such works abroad is partial, at least, and cannot produce satisfactory results. Is it not our duty to know how much work has been done by foreigners?¹³⁴

In 1929, Binyon visited Japan for the first time, welcomed by Japanese academics.¹³⁵

his collection to Matsukata Kōjirō, the Japanese industrialist who was in London at the time. The prints arrived in Japan in 1920 and were eventually donated to the Imperial Museum in 1943. At the auction of his collection by Sotheby's, London, in 1975, it was revealed that Vever had not sold all of his prints to Matsukata, retaining those of top quality with him until his death. Oka Yasumasa, 'Matsukata Korekusion to Ukiyo-e' [Matsukata Collection and Ukiyo-e], in *Matsukata Korekusion Ten: Ima Yomigaeru Yumeno Hakubutsukan* [The Old Matsukata Collection], ed. by the Kobe City Museum (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Sha, 2000), pp. 133-137.

¹³⁴ Nakada, 'Ōshu Ukiyo-e Shoshi', in *Hanga Raisan*, ed. by Kisho Fukusei Kai, p. 305.

¹³⁵ Among the academics who welcomed Binyon were Yashiro Yukio and Taki Seiichi. Yashiro studied under Bernard G. Berenson in Europe and gained international reputation with his book, *Sandro Botticelli* (London; Boston: The Medici Society, 1925). Yashiro made friends with Binyon while he was in England, and his letters to Binyon were filled with warm thanks for Binyon's hospitality and kindness. After returning to Japan, he laid the foundation of the discipline of western art history and, at the same time, introduced Japanese art abroad. Taki was a scholar of Japanese art history, the editor in chief of *Kokka* and Dean of the Faculty of Letters at the Tokyo Imperial University. In order to fund and co-ordinate Binyon's visit to Japan, the Binyon Reception Committee was organised. During his stay in Japan, Binyon gave a lecture entitled 'Landscapes in English Art and Poetry' at the Tokyo Imperial University, in which he insisted on the universality of certain insights into the nature. The lecture was accompanied by the Exhibition of Loan Collection of English Water-Colour Drawings, which was mounted by Yashiro at the Institute of Art Research, of which he was the Director. Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, pp. 243-251, Letters from Yukio Yashiro to Laurence Binyon, BLMD, Loan 103 Laurence Binyon Archive, vol. 11, *Catalogue of the Loan Collection of English Water-colour Drawings Held at the Institute of Art Research, Ueno, Tokyo, October 10-24th, 1929* (Tokyo: Kenkyūsha Press for the Binyon Reception Committee, 1929).

Also, in the book entitled *Nihon Bijutsu no Onjin Tachi* [The Benefactors of Japanese Art] he was written about as one of the 'benefactors' by Yashiro Yukio.¹³⁶

In accordance with the development of studies on *ukiyo-e* in Japan, Binyon and Strange began to show the interaction between British and Japanese researchers of *ukiyo-e* in the 1920s. In *Japanese Colour Prints*, published in 1923, Binyon referenced a considerable amount of Japanese literature including the journals of *ukiyo-e* such as *Kono Hana*, *Ukiyo-e*, and *Ukiyo-e no Kenkyū*, which had been founded in the last decade or so.¹³⁷ Strange also benefited from the useful exchange of information with researchers in Japan when he wrote *The Colour-prints of Hiroshige*. He wrote in its preface that John Stewart Happer, who was resident in Japan, not only offered him all the information about Hiroshige that was available at the time but also assisted him 'by prosecuting researches among his expert friends in Japan, and by procuring and editing translations of matter not obtainable elsewhere'. He also acknowledged his indebtedness to Watanabe Shōzaburō, who had mounted the Hiroshige Memorial Exhibition in Tokyo in 1918, as well as to the Japanese experts on Hiroshige, Uchida Minoru and Nakai Sōtarō, for their assistance.¹³⁸ In other words, he could now draw on works by leading experts on the

¹³⁶ Yashiro, *Nihon Bijutsu no Onjin Tachi*, pp. 63-77.

¹³⁷ The first numbers of *Kono Hana*, *Ukiyo-e*, and *Ukiyo-e no Kenkyū* were issued in 1910, 1915 and 1921 respectively. In the first few years of its publication, the subscribers to *Kono Hana* in Japan numbered only seventy to eighty. Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 40, Laurence Binyon and J. J. O'Brien Sexton, *Japanese Colour Prints* (London: London, E. Benn, limited, 1923).

¹³⁸ John Stewart Happer, an American, lived in Japan as a manager of the Standard Oil Company and collected a number of *ukiyo-e* prints. He moved to London in 1904 and his collection of Japanese prints was sold at the auction by Sotheby's in 1909. The section of Hiroshige in the catalogue of the auction written by Happer was regarded as pioneering work on this hitherto neglected artist in comparison to Hokusai. After the auction, he returned to Japan and lived there until his death in 1936. In Japan, where he lived for forty-six years in total, he was renowned as the authority on Hiroshige and nicknamed 'Hiroshige Happer'. His tomb was erected next to Hiroshige's in Tōgakuji Temple in Tokyo. Watanabe Shozaburō was a publisher of prints in Tokyo. He organised a research group of *ukiyo-e* with one of the pioneering scholars of *ukiyo-e*, Fujikake Shizuya, in the 1910s. Among its members, Uchida Minoru and Nakai Sōtarō undertook the research on Hiroshige.

subject in Japan, which had not been available thirty years earlier. Moreover, he concluded this book with an article written by Nakai Sōtarō as it appeared to him 'to define the position of the great artist, in terms which a Western critic could hardly expect to have at his command'.¹³⁹ In this way, the development of the study of *ukiyo-e* by the curators of the two largest collections of Japanese prints in Britain show the shift of authoritative knowledge concerning *ukiyo-e* and academic interaction between western and Japanese researchers.

The examination of the details of their texts also reveals several characteristics of their views on *ukiyo-e* prints. First, they inherited the praise for Hokusai from Anderson and French Japonists. Strange always devoted a whole chapter to Hokusai in his books on the general history of Japanese prints and also wrote a whole book on this artist in 1906.¹⁴⁰ In his writings on Hokusai, he drew on the studies not only by western writers such as Anderson, Edmund de Goncourt, Michel Revon, Louis Gonse and Samuel Bing but also the Japanese dealer in Paris, Hayashi Tadamasa. He gave Hokusai the highest praise by writing,

Among the whole of the artisan-painters of the colour-print school, one man only was possessed of intellect, courage, and capability enough to break away entirely from its traditions and establish himself as a leader. While

When a number of forgeries of antique prints appeared on the market, certificates issued by Happer and Watanabe were regarded as the most certain guarantee of the authenticity by those who sought for antique prints. Strange, *The Colour-prints of Hiroshige*, pp. ix-x, Segi, *Nihonbijutsu no Ryūshutsu*, pp. 157-158, Iwakiri Shinichirō, 'Watanabe Shin-hanga no Keisei: Kenkyū Hukkoku Sōsaku Jigyō Ni Tsuite' [The Formation of Watanabe Shin-hanga: The Projects of Research, Reproduction and Creation of Original Prints] *Ukiyo-e Art*, 153 (2007), 12-26, Watanabe Tadasu, *Watanabe Shōzaburō*, Higuchi, *Ukiyo-e no Ryūtsū Shūshū Kenkyū Happyō no Rekishi*, p. 52.

¹³⁹ Strange, *The Colour-prints of Hiroshige*, pp. 130-134.

¹⁴⁰ 'Chapter 5: Hokusai and His Pupils' in *Japanese Illustration*, pp. 59-75, 'Chapter 6: Hokusai' in *The Colour-prints of Japan*, pp. 36-43, 'Chapter 5: Hokusai' in *Japanese Colour Prints*, pp. 59-74, *Hokusai: the Old Man Mad with Painting* (London: Siegle, Hill & co., 1906).

the others were content to follow precedent, both in subject and treatment of it, exercising their skill only within the limitations already imposed by tradition; Hokusai alone looked out upon life with an unfettered eye, and sought to render faithfully what he saw therein. He is the true embodiment of his school, so fitly entitled by the Japanese *Ukiyoye* – Mirror of the Passing World!¹⁴¹

Secondly, Binyon expressed his opposition to certain aspects of Fenollosa's view on *ukiyo-e*. By 1896, when he edited a catalogue for the exhibition, 'The Masters of Ukiyoe: Japanese Paintings and Color Prints' in New York, Fenollosa slightly modified his opinions on *ukiyo-e* artists and counted Hokusai among those whom he listed as the artists of first rank together with Iwasa Matabei (1578-1650), Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764), Suzuki Harunobu (1725-1770) and Torii Kiyonaga (1752-1815). Of these artists, Fenollosa gave the highest praise to Kiyonaga, as he wrote, 'On the whole we are inclined to award the palm to Kiyonaga, in that he is the central and culminating figure, with ripest mastery over all the technical points of the art of color-designing for prints'. Kitagawa Utamaro and Utagawa Hiroshige, on the other hand, were assigned the second and third ranks.¹⁴² As to such ranking by Fenollosa, Binyon wrote, 'Fenollosa was curiously unjust to Utamaro in his desire to exalt Kiyonaga, and reads in him all sorts of symptoms of "decadence" for which there is no justification. He most oddly accuses him of "naturalism" as opposed to Kiyonaga's "idealism." The terms, so applied, seem to have no meaning

¹⁴¹ Strange, *The Colour-prints of Japan*, p. 36.

¹⁴² Ernest F. Fenollosa, *The Masters of Ukiyoe: a Complete Historical Description of Japanese Paintings and Color Prints of the Genre School as Shown in Exhibition at the Fine Arts Building, 215 West 57th Street, New York, January, 1896* by W.H. Ketcham (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Knickerbocker Press, 1896), p. 115.

whatever'.¹⁴³ Fenollosa saw the history of art as closely tied to the social condition and power structure of each period and narrated the history of *ukiyo-e* from this point of view.¹⁴⁴ Binyon also criticised such a view of *ukiyo-e* and, at the same time, exalted Utamaro and Hokusai as representing the apex of *ukiyo-e*.

as the full, spontaneous, vivid expression of the moods of a people—or rather a certain section of a people—Ukiyo-ye has a singular interest. Regarded in this light we may well conceive of it as rising gradually to a culmination in Temmei period and declining gradually through the 19th century. But too great an insistence on the sociological aspect will deflect aesthetic judgment and give too little room to the significance of individual genius. In the limited number of Kiyonaga's central masterpieces we do, indeed, find a bloom as of perfect ripeness, which does not come again. Yet if we think of the chief masters of the colour-print in relation, not to the society which produced them and for which they worked, but to the art of the world, we are led to the conclusion that, in spite of the general decline of taste which began in Kwansei period, it is in Utamaro and in Hokusai that Ukiyo-ye finds its summits, the one supreme in figure-design, the other in landscape.

Thirdly, the statements that seem to endorse the tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement appeared ubiquitously in their writings. The Arts and Crafts Movement emerged from around 1860, inspired by the writings by John Ruskin, and grew as a major-scale movement by the turn of the century led by William Morris and his followers with the production of textile, wallpaper, furniture, stained glass,

¹⁴³ Binyon and Sexton, *Japanese Colour Prints*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁴ Kamei, 'Fenorosa to "Ukiyo-e Shi Kō"', pp. 129-132.

metal work and book illustration produced by their firms of decorators and by workshops and guilds of craftsmen. The organisations such as the Art Workers' Guild (founded in 1886) and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (founded in 1888) also worked as central forces of the movement. The movement's influence was not confined to its originating country, Britain, but also extended abroad. Especially in Britain, it was a reaction against the industrialisation and mass-production which, in the eyes of its supporters, deprived workmen of their pride and pleasure in labour. Deploring the outcomes of industrialisation and modernisation, they saw in the medieval society the ideal work environment and tried to regain it – beautiful objects were produced by ordinary men who were masters of their own works as artists-craftsmen and found joy in getting the artistic results they desired through their craftsmanship and skill, and their works were appreciated by the public as art for the people. The supporters of the Arts and Crafts Movement also insisted on the importance of simplicity in design and of bringing the beauty of materials to its utmost effect in the final products, the ideal which was often described as 'truth to materials'. The movement gained a considerable number of supporters, and works in various forms of art were produced in order to achieve the above mentioned ideals – although they were just ideals and were not necessarily realised.¹⁴⁵ It is very likely that both Binyon and Strange (especially Binyon as he was friendly with some of the leading figures of the movement such as Arthur Mackmurdo, Herbert Horne and Selwyn Image) saw *ukiyo-e* prints in relation to the tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which was at its height from the 1890 to around 1910, when they came to be involved in the collection and study of *ukiyo-e* prints.

In their writings, it was repeatedly mentioned that in Japan both the

¹⁴⁵ *The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America: Design for the Modern World*, ed. by Wendy Kaplan (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), *International Arts and Crafts*, ed. by Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry (London: V&A Publications, 2005).

artist-designers and craftsmen who produced *ukiyo-e* prints and those who purchased prints were from the lower orders in the social scale and that prints were produced for modest earnings and purchased at cheap prices. It was also stressed that the artists of *ukiyo-e* were proud to be artisans. Binyon wrote, 'A host of designers arose, and all through the eighteenth century and far into the nineteenth, among this artisan class there never failed an abundant talent devoted to the production of prints which, cheaply sold and despised by the *samurai*, seem to us marvels of distinction and fine taste'.¹⁴⁶ Strange also stressed the democratic nature of *ukiyo-e* prints when he discussed Hishikawa Moronobu, one of the earliest artists to develop *ukiyo-e* in the form of woodcut prints, stating 'The prints were made for the working classes; and it is to Moronobu alone that we must ascribe the beginning of the highest form of a purely democratic art that the world has ever seen'.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, the following remark by Binyon in his lecture on Japanese colour prints is suggestive of the kind of utopia which was dreamed of by John Ruskin and William Morris.¹⁴⁸

Our artists may long to create such conditions, but in what country will he find a public to support him? In this popular art of Japan the artist was very much a part of the life around him. The support he received from his public was just the kind of support which the medieval painters & sculptors, shaping and adoring things of use, received from theirs. The strict

¹⁴⁶ Laurence Binyon, *Guide to An Exhibition of Japanese Colour-prints (From the End of the 17th Century to 1858)* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1920), p. i.

¹⁴⁷ Strange, *The Colour-prints of Japan*, p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Both Ruskin and Morris idealised the artisans of the Middle Ages who were proud of producing beautiful things and whose works were appreciated by the public, in contrast with the contemporary workers. Such longing for the medieval artisans was reflected in Ruskin's teaching philosophies at the Working Man's College. Ray Haslam, 'Looking, Drawing and Learning with John Ruskin at the Working Men's College', *Journal of Arts and Design Education*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Spring 1988), 65-79.

conventions of his art were consented to without question, as things of course and nature. In the colour-prints of Ukiyoe we feel the rounded harmony of a life complete in itself.¹⁴⁹

Through his analysis of various aspects of Japanese prints, Strange also envisaged a similar society of the 'proud plebeianism' by borrowing Yone Noguchi's phrase.

We are now traversing a period of uncertainty and difficulty, in which commercialism is a potent factor. Perhaps we may dare to look forward, in our more healthy moods of optimism, to a time when our own democracy shall develop and generously maintain its graphic arts, as did what Noguchi finely calls the "proud plebeianism" of old Japan, which counted Hiroshige in its ranks, perhaps, even in his own day, not without some honour.¹⁵⁰

Arts and Crafts ideas also emerge when, for example, Binyon wrote, 'The woodcuts were not the only productions of the school [*Ukiyo-e* School]. But they are its best, and they form a combination of the arts of designing, engraving and printing such as has never been equalled elsewhere'.¹⁵¹ He also noted 'the immense difference between woodcuts which are the final expression of the artist's thought, designed in terms of the material, and woodcuts which are merely the transcription of a drawing made for the drawing's sake and with no thought of anything further'¹⁵² and regarded the *ukiyo-e* prints developed by Moronobu and his successors as belonging to the former – 'Moronobu's great contribution to Ukiyo-ye was, first, his

¹⁴⁹ BLMD, Laurence Binyon Archive, vol.30, Manuscripts of Lectures and Speeches given by Laurence Binyon, 'Lecture 6: Popular Art', handwritten manuscripts, p. 25.

¹⁵⁰ Strange, *The Colour-prints of Hiroshige*, p. 129.

¹⁵¹ Binyon, *Guide to An Exhibition of Japanese Colour-prints*, p. vi.

¹⁵² Binyon and Sexton, *Japanese Colour Prints*, p. 6.

discovery of the possibilities of the woodcut, and then, through his perfect understanding of the medium, the broad and firm foundation of design which he laid for future generations to build on'.¹⁵³ The ideas that appeared to be embodied in *ukiyo-e* printmaking such as truth to materials and unity between design and craftsmanship must have been particularly appealing to Binyon, who was in close contact with the British printmakers who were trying to revive printmaking as a form of artistic expression under the impact of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

However, the merits of *ukiyo-e* prints, they thought, began to be lost from around the mid-nineteenth century with 'a gradual deterioration in the quality of the printing; a mosaic of many and bright colours taking the place of the carefully wrought gradation of fewer tints which is so fine in older examples'.¹⁵⁴ For the deterioration of the quality of colour, the use of European pigments, especially aniline colours, was blamed.¹⁵⁵ Binyon also wrote about the effect of 'Western contagion' on Japanese colour prints as follows:

there is no longer the old conception of design, in which the drawing was controlled by the fundamental idea of adaptability to the woodcut line. The contours are meagre and accidental, no longer firm and sweeping; pigments are of a coarser and cheaper quality. The wood-cutters have become perhaps too accomplished; they can reproduce any kind of painting; and the designers, no longer needing to consider them, forget to think out their

¹⁵³ Binyon and Sexton, *Japanese Colour Prints*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵⁴ Strange, *The Colour-prints of Japan*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁵ Strange, *The Colour-prints of Japan*, p. 48, *Japanese Colour Prints*, pp. 130-132, Laurence Binyon, 'The Art of Yoshijiro Urushibara', in *Ten Woodcuts, Cut and Printed by Yoshijiro Urushibara after Designs by Frank Brangwyn, R.A.* (London: John Lane, 1924), n. p. Binyon, for example, wrote, 'As all students know, the art of the colour-print, which had been so exquisite in its perfection in the second half of the eighteenth century, declined during the nineteenth century, and about 1861, when aniline colours were introduced from Europe, collapsed in a final phase of violent ugliness'.

designs in terms of woodcut.¹⁵⁶

Binyon might have had in mind the situation of Japanese woodcut printmaking from the 1890s to the 1900s in which *ukiyo-e* artists and craftsmen, losing commissions for traditional *ukiyo-e* prints, had to earn their living by producing woodcut illustrations for contemporary magazines and books.¹⁵⁷ Such a lament for the loss of truth to materials and mutual understanding between designers and craftsmen in Japanese printmaking sounds curiously parallel to the way William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones accused the situation of wood engraving industry in Britain, which will be considered in the next chapter.

Lastly, it is notable that Strange repeatedly insisted that the method of *ukiyo-e* printmaking originated in that of chiaroscuro which had been practised in Italy and Germany since the sixteenth century. Whereas Anderson and Binyon doubted a connection between Japanese colour prints and chiaroscuro prints,¹⁵⁸ Strange believed that the accidental sight of one of the chiaroscuro prints which might have been brought to Japan through the Jesuit missionaries or the Japanese embassy of 1582-85 to Rome could have suggested the process to the Japanese.¹⁵⁹ At the exhibition of Japanese colour prints loaned from R. Leicester Harmsworth

¹⁵⁶ Binyon and Sexton, *Japanese Colour Prints*, p. 189.

¹⁵⁷ In the traditional *ukiyo-e* printmaking, the designers offered drawings in monochrome with only some notes about colours, and carvers and printers produced prints based on the drawings, exercising their own ingenuity. However, in the booming industry of woodcut illustrations, designers offered paintings in colour and the task of carvers and printers was just to reproduce the paintings as faithfully as possible. Nishimura Junko, 'Watanabe Shōzaburō no Yume: "Shin Hanga" no Seiritsu ni tsuite' [Watanabe Shozaburō's Dream: The Establishment of "New Prints"], in *Ukiyo-e Modan: Shinsui, Goyō, Hasui: Dentō Mokuhanga no Ryūsei* [*Ukiyo-e Modern: Shinsui, Goyō, Hasui: The Rise of Traditional Woodcut Prints*], ed. by Takizawa Kyōji (Tokyo: Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts, 2005), pp. 73-80 (p. 74).

¹⁵⁸ Anderson, *Catalogue of Prints and Books*, p. xvii, Binyon and Sexton, *Japanese Colour Prints*, p. liii.

¹⁵⁹ Strange, *Japanese Colour Prints*, pp. 9-10.

held in the Victoria and Albert Museum from 1913 to 1914, Strange displayed European chiaroscuro prints beside Japanese prints in the eighteenth century as if to prove this theory.¹⁶⁰ The fact that a similar theory was propounded at an exhibition in Paris in 1903, where chiaroscuro prints were displayed alongside *ukiyo-e* prints, suggests that this idea was prevalent to a certain degree in some parts of Europe.¹⁶¹

Such views on Japanese prints as constructed by Strange and Binyon were to encourage the development of printmaking by the Japanese method in Britain from the 1890s. In more practical respects, Strange and Binyon also contributed to the dissemination of Japanese printmaking techniques in different ways – Strange by the collection of tools and materials of Japanese printmaking at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Binyon by inviting the Japanese printmaker, Urushibara Yoshijirō, to the British Museum, which eventually led to his thirty-year residence in England.

The Victoria and Albert Museum collected woodblocks, original drawings, tools and materials used for the traditional Japanese method of printmaking. As a museum which was originally founded with a practical aim of educating designers and the public at large in the matters of art and design, it was natural that it took every opportunity to collect specimens to illustrate the techniques of Japanese printmaking for those who might want to learn the method. As early as in 1886, four wood-blocks used for a leaf of *Hyakuchō Gafu* [Illustrated Book of Hundred

¹⁶⁰ 'Japanese Colour-prints: Exhibition Opened at South Kensington' the cutting from *The Times*, 6 November, 1913, in VAA, MA/1/H734 'R. Leicester Harmsworth'.

¹⁶¹ In *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für vervielfältigende Kunst*, Wien, 1903, S. 9, a reviewer of the exhibition insisted that there was no need for European artists to imitate Japanese prints since it was obvious that the colour scheme of *ukiyo-e* prints was not intrinsic to the Asians as had been shown in the chiaroscuro prints at the exhibition. Watanabe Shinsuke, 'Kiarosukuro Mokuhanga to Ukiyo-e Hanga' [Chiaroscuro Woodcuts and Ukiyo-e Prints], in *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts from the Frits Lugt Collection in Paris*, ed. by Kofuku Akira and Watanabe Shinsuke (Tokyo: The National Museum of Western Art, 2005), pp. 33-39, (pp. 33, 38).

Birds] by Kōno Bairei were registered as museum objects.¹⁶² J. S. Happer also contributed to the collection by donating rare wood-blocks by Harunobu and Hiroshige during his residence in London.¹⁶³

In this respect, the Japan-British Exhibition offered a special opportunity to enrich the collection as professional carvers and printers who inherited the traditional method of printmaking came to London to demonstrate their techniques at the exhibition site. Strange did not forget to make the most of this opportunity. In his letter to the Director of the Museum, he wrote, 'I would suggest that advantage be taken of the presence, at Shepherds Bush, in the Japan-British Exhibition, of wood-engravers and printers, to obtain a set of proofs from the Japanese wood-blocks in this Collection and in Circulation. We are not likely again to have so good a chance'.¹⁶⁴ In response to this offer, Sugisaki Shūmei (Hideaki), the carver who was known for his exquisite skill¹⁶⁵ and who came to London on the staff of Shimbi Shoin, agreed to undertake the printing of 128 prints from the woodblocks in the museum for a nominal fee of one pound. In addition, the collection of tools and materials used for the printing was purchased.¹⁶⁶ In fact, although the museum was offered a number of objects by the exhibitors of the Japan-British Exhibition, some of which were rejected, this request to Sugisaki was the only transaction that was suggested by the museum on its own volition.¹⁶⁷ From Shimbi Shoin, the museum also purchased *Process of Wood-cut Printing*, a huge volume which 'illustrates the entire process of printing a Japanese colour-print

¹⁶² Edward F. Strange, *Tools and Materials Illustrating the Japanese Method of Colour-printing: A Descriptive Catalogue of a Collection Exhibited in the Museum* (London: H.M. Stationery off., 1913; repr. the Board of Education, 1924), p. 18.

¹⁶³ VAA, MA/1/H558 'J. S. Happer'.

¹⁶⁴ Letter from E. F. Strange to the Director, 18th July, 1910, VAA, MA/35/106, 'Exhibitions, Japan-British'.

¹⁶⁵ He carved illustrations for art-related publications such as *Shōbi Chō* (Tokyo: Nihon Bijutsu Kyōkai, 1902) and the art journal *Bijutsuen*.

¹⁶⁶ VAA, MA/35/106, 'Exhibitions, Japan-British'.

¹⁶⁷ VAA, MA/35/106, 'Exhibitions, Japan-British'.

from 91 blocks, giving an impression from each block and then the result of its combination with the previous printings – 182 impressions in all’, as explained in the registered paper of the museum.¹⁶⁸ The volume reproduced one of the *ukiyo-e* paintings which were displayed at the Palace of Fine Arts at the exhibition, *Two Beauties in the Snow* by Kitagawa Fujimaro (Fig. 14),¹⁶⁹ and shows the meticulous skill of the printer who could even reproduce the texture of the original painting on silk (Fig. 37). Another notable acquisition was made through H. Yamawaki, the Commissioner of the Japan-British Exhibition. Yamawaki liaised between Strange and a Japanese wood carver, Miyata Rokuzaemon,¹⁷⁰ who suggested the exchange of tools and materials used in Japanese woodcut for those used in western wood engraving (Fig. 38).¹⁷¹

The woodblocks, original drawings, tools and materials thus collected were displayed at the museum to illustrate the method of *ukiyo-e* printmaking, accompanied by the handbook which explained the method with a description of each exhibit.¹⁷² In order to show how Japanese craftsmen worked, colour woodcuts by Emil Orlik showing ‘A Japanese draughtsman’, ‘A Japanese wood cutter’ and ‘A

¹⁶⁸ VAA, MA/1/S1591 ‘Shimbi Shoin’.

¹⁶⁹ *A Catalogue of Old Fine Arts Displayed at the Japan-British Exhibition* (Tokyo: The Japanese Commission of the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910), plate 136.

¹⁷⁰ Miyata Rokuzaemon is a name of carver inherited from the Edo Period. It is most likely that the person who suggested the exchange was Miyata Rokuzaemon the tenth (b. 1854). *Bungei Ruisan* was engraved by Miyata Rokuzaemon the seventh, who also provided information for the chapter on printmaking in the book. Maruyama Sueo, ‘Kokushi Nayose’ [List of Engravers], supplement to Maruyama Sueo, *Kokugakusha Zakkō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1982), pp. 153-154.

¹⁷¹ The set of tools prepared by Miyata was sent out in 1914 and the one by the V&A was dispatched belatedly in 1919 because of the First World War. VAA, MA/1/M2382 ‘Miyata Rokuzaemon’. The tools purchased from Shimbi Shoin and those given by Miyata are still preserved in the Far Eastern Section, the Asian Department, the Victoria and Albert Museum.

¹⁷² The book was reprinted in 1924, with added information on newly acquired objects. The diagrams in the book were taken from *Bungei Ruisan*, ed. by Sakakibara Yoshino (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1878) and also displayed in the museum. Strange, *Tools and Materials*. The copy of *Bungei Ruisan* which is still preserved in the Far Eastern Section, the Asian Department, V&A, has a manuscript of English translation of the chapter on printmaking.

Japanese printer', were also displayed (Fig. 39).¹⁷³ Moreover, at the exhibition of Japanese colour prints lent by R. Leicester Harmsworth, the collection of prints was arranged to show the development of the techniques in chronological order.¹⁷⁴ The exhibition was originally planned to be held from November 1913 to March 1914, but its closing date was extended to the end of June 'in view of the continued interest shown by students and the public in the Collection'.¹⁷⁵

Neither did the British Museum miss the opportunity offered by the presence of the Japanese craftsmen at the Japan-British Exhibition. Just after the close of the exhibition, the commissioning of a reproduction of the Chinese scroll by Gu Kaizhi (344-405) at the museum was recommended, according to the report written on 5 November 1910 in the Trustees' Minutes:

The Japan-British exhibition gave the occasion to Mr. Ohashi, the foreman of the famous firm of Tajima [Shimbi Shoin] to visit London with some members of his working staff. It is this firm which has produced, chiefly by the process of colour printed wood engraving, the several famous series of eminent masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese painting so well known to all students. Mr. Ohashi and his workmen are staying on in England beyond the close of the Exhibition. At Mr. Colvin's request they have made a minute technical examination of the Ku K'ai chih (Gu Kaizhi) roll with a

¹⁷³ Strange, *Tools and Materials*, p. 7. Emil Orlik, a Czech artist, visited Japan in 1900 and 1912 and learned the Japanese method of printmaking. Kuwabara Setsuko, 'Orlik and Japan' in *Emīru Oruriku, Nihon Dayori* [Aus Japan by Emil Orlik], ed. by Kuwabara Setsuko and Eberhard Friese (Tokyo: Yūshōdō, 1996), pp. 15-19.

¹⁷⁴ Edward F. Strange, *Japanese Colour-prints Lent by R. Leicester Harmsworth, Esq., M.P.: November 1913 to March 1914* (London: Printed under the authority of H.M. Stationery off., 1913), p. 10.

¹⁷⁵ VAA, MA/1/H734 'R. Leicester Harmsworth'.

view to its reproduction in facsimile.¹⁷⁶

Sidney Colvin was Binyon's boss at the Prints and Drawing Department and it is most probable that Binyon, as the most respected expert on Far Eastern art at the museum at the time, introduced the Japanese craftsmen to Colvin.

Later in 1924, Binyon wrote of the time when he first saw the reproductions of masterpieces of Far Eastern art in *Kokka* and publications of Shimbi Shoin more than twenty years earlier.

It [the encounter with *Kokka*] was a revelation, almost more thrilling than any of the kind I had experienced; for these masterpieces were all so strange and new. And then curiosity awoke as to the means by which these paintings were reproduced; the quality and texture of the colour, so unlike our own colour-process plates, were ravishing to the eye. I learnt that these were woodcuts printed by hand without a press, in the manner of the famous Japanese prints after Utamaro's and Hokusai's designs, but with new subtleties of opaque pigment and sometimes as many as a hundred blocks to take the different shades of colour. These wonderful prints were the work, I was told, of a little group of wood-engravers and colour-printers who had revived this national art... After revelling in those volumes, I went on to make acquaintance with other publications of the same kind, such as those published by the Shimbi Shoin, where one found again beautiful colour-woodcuts produced by the same methods.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in John Clark, *Japanese Exchanges in Art, 1850s to 1930s with Britain, Continental Europe, and the USA: Papers and Research Materials* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2001), p. 335.

¹⁷⁷ Binyon, 'The Art of Yoshijiro Urushibara' in *Ten Woodcuts*, n. p.

It must have been on the occasion of the Japan-British Exhibition that Binyon saw for the first time the techniques about which he had been so curious being actually practiced by native craftsmen.

The scroll which was reproduced was *Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace*. Judging from the fact that copies of the same reproduction are found in other institutions in the UK, including the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, university libraries in Oxford and Cambridge, and the National Library of Scotland, it is possible to assume that a certain number of copies were produced to be distributed to major libraries in the country (Fig. 40). It was described by Binyon in the leaflet accompanying the reproduced scroll that 'The present reproduction has been executed by Japanese artists; the wood blocks have been engraved by S. Sugisaki and printed in colours by Y. Urushibara. This is the first time that a painting in a European museum has been reproduced by the Japanese methods which have become famous through the illustrations to the 'Kokka' and the sumptuous publications of the Shimbi Shoin'.¹⁷⁸

Urushibara Yoshijirō, who also called himself Mokuchū, was born in Tokyo in 1889. His grandfather was a calligrapher but also learned by himself the method of colour printing and worked for Shimbi Shoin for many years. Yoshijirō, whose father died early in his life, learned printmaking with two of his older brothers and, as a staff of Shimbi Shoin, went to London to demonstrate the printing techniques. He was one of the craftsmen who reproduced Gu Kaizhi's scroll and, after its completion in 1912, also undertook the mounting of the reproduction. From 1912 to 1919, he worked as a freelance mounter and print restorer at the British Museum,

¹⁷⁸ Laurence Binyon, *Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace: A Painting by Ku K'ai-chih in the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, Reproduced in Coloured Woodcut* (London: The Trustees, 1912), p. 2.

and remained in London until he was repatriated to Japan because of the Second World War.¹⁷⁹

Binyon always valued highly Urushibara as an artist as well as a skilled craftsman. In his letter dated 10 September, 1912, he recommended Urushibara to William Rothenstein as follows:

We have a Japanese here who has been making a reproduction – in colour-woodcut – of the Ku K'ai-Chih painting. He is anxious to stay on here if he can get work. Now I wonder if the India Society would care to get him to make a reproduction of some fine Indian painting? As you know the quality of these woodcuts finds them on a level totally beyond anything possible by our Western processes, which never get rid of the odious shiny surface.... There are only 3 or 4 men in Japan who can do this work, so it's a chance.¹⁸⁰

It is likely that Binyon also introduced Urushibara to Frank Brangwyn, with whom he was to collaborate. Urushibara carved on wood and printed in colour the designs drawn by Brangwyn and gained reputation as a skilful craftsman (Fig. 41).¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Clark, *Japanese Exchanges in Art*, pp. 335-336, Okumura Gihachirō, 'Mei Surishi Urushibara Eijirō Ou o Itamu' [Obituary of Urushibara Eijirō, the Master Printer], *Nihon Hanga*, 129 (1943), 1948-1949, Ōta Mikiko, 'Tōzai Geijutsu no Kakehashi: Hangashi Urushibara Mokuchū' [The Bridge between the Arts of the East and the West: Urushibara Mokuchū, a Printmaker], *Ukiyo-e Art*, 149 (2005), 38-49.

¹⁸⁰ Letter from Binyon to Rothenstein, 10 September, 1912, MSS EUR B213, the India Office Record, the British Library.

¹⁸¹ Their works were not reproductions of Brangwyn's paintings or sketches. Brangwyn drew designs, considering how they were to be carved as woodcuts. Ōta Mikiko, 'Buranguin no Nihon, Mokuchū no Igirisu' [Brangwyn's Japan, Mokuchū's Britain] in *Japonisumu Hangaten: Ukiyo-e ni Miserareta Geijutsuka Tachi: Rivièru, Buranguwin, Urushibara Mokuchū* [Japonisme Prints: Rivièrre, Brangwyn and Urushibara], ed. by New Ōtani Art Museum (Tokyo: New Ōtani Art Museum, 2003), n. p., Libby Horner, 'Brangwyn and the Japanese Connection', *Decorative Arts Society Journal*, 26 (2002), 72-83 (p. 74).

Binyon contributed introductions or poems to all the three portfolios of the works of their collaboration.¹⁸² In the introduction to *Ten Woodcuts*, he valued the works of Urushibara not only as a skilful craftsman but also as an artist who produced colour-prints of his own designing and combined in himself the arts of designing, woodcutting and printing (Fig. 42).¹⁸³ Binyon's introduction to his friend artists and favourable reviews of his work must have been helpful for Urushibara in continuing his residence and making an artistic career in a foreign land. By helping Urushibara in this way, Binyon was also to contribute to the revival of woodcut printmaking in Britain which will be considered in the next chapters, as Urushibara was to become one of the leading artists of the revival as a Japanese printmaker who could offer valuable instructions on the traditional techniques of *ukiyo-e* printmaking to his fellow artists.

In this way, not only historical but also technical studies on *ukiyo-e* printmaking developed in Britain in accordance with the growth of the public collections of Japanese prints, tools and materials and the increase of academic interactions between Japan and Britain. Whereas the Japanese government always ignored *ukiyo-e* prints in its official representation of Japanese art, focusing on handicrafts in the latter half of the nineteenth century and on paintings in the early twentieth century, it was this neglected branch of Japanese art that continued to attract the attention of artists and connoisseurs in Britain even after the craze for things Japanese among the general public faded away around the turn of the century.

¹⁸² *Bruges: Drawings by Frank Brangwyn, Cut on Wood by Yoshijiro Urushibara. With Six Poems Written for This Work by R. L. Binyon* (London: Morland Press, 1919) *Leaves from the Sketch Books of Frank Brangwyn Cut by Urushibara, etc.* (Leigh-on-Sea: F. Lewis, 1940), *Ten Woodcuts*.

¹⁸³ Binyon, 'The Art of Yoshijiro Urushibara', in *Ten Woodcuts*, n. p. Urushibara produced original prints with various subjects, but many of them depicted English and European landscapes or still lives, especially flowers in oriental vases.

Outside government initiatives, Japanese merchants were astute in taking advantage of the continuing popularity of Japanese prints in the West. Also, it was rather after the end of the general craze that more systematic studies on Japanese prints and printmaking began to be pursued, based on the public collections which accumulated as legacies of the enthusiastic Japonists of one or two generations earlier and served as source of reference for those who wished to learn about any aspect of Japanese prints and printmaking.

In parallel with this development, the soil was also nurtured in Britain for an artistic reception of Japanese printmaking that was different in nature from that of the nineteenth century. This soil was nourished by the artistic revival of printmaking in Britain from the mid-nineteenth century. The next chapter will explore how the production of 'original' prints as a form of art was promoted as reaction against the mass-production of reproductive prints in the same period. In this revival of printmaking, the production of woodblock prints came to be taken up by William Morris and by the artists who were influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Chapter 3

The Artistic revival of printmaking in Britain

3-1 'Originality' in printmaking

Prints as reproduction and prints as artistic expression

Prints have contributed to the development of various cultures by offering visual information in various forms such as maps, anatomic charts, illustrations in encyclopaedias, etc. The essential feature of prints, multiplication, makes it possible to disseminate visual information to as large audience as possible. As far as visual art is concerned, prints have served two major functions. First, they have been produced as reproduction of works of art in other media such as painting, sculpture and architecture. The visual information communicated by the printed reproduction helped people who could not get access to the original works grasp how they actually looked. For example, reproductions of works by Raphael and Michelangelo were disseminated in the form of prints throughout Europe and reinforced their fame as great masters of art. Also, images of works of art were reproduced as prints to accompany writings on art by aestheticians and art historians, thus affecting people's understanding of art works.¹ In this respect, the task of printmakers was to reproduce the images of works of art in other media by other artists within the limits set by the use of printing techniques. In order to

¹ Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication*.

carry out this task, they developed peculiar codes of representation, in which images were translated into a language of lines and dots. In fact, engravers worked not as 'copyists' but as 'translators' who interpreted the worlds expressed in the language of other media and translated them into the language of engraving. The boundary of authorship was obscure in the reproduction of paintings as engravers took a considerable degree of licence in translating pictorial images into engraved ones. In some cases, painters themselves left some matters to the discretion of engravers.²

The second major function of prints was as an artistic means of expression. Some artists made prints not as reproductions of pre-existing works of art but as expression of their creativity. They designed images with the primary purpose of producing prints, attracted by the peculiar visual effects obtained only by printmaking processes. For example, some great artists such as Dürer and Rembrandt are renowned not only for their paintings but also for the prints they produced as works of art per se.

The importance of the difference between these two functions of hand-made prints was only to emerge with the development of photography and photomechanical processes. Photography was invented in the 1820s and, by the 1880s, photomechanical processes enabled photographs to be transferred to printing surfaces and multiplied. Unlike traditional processes in which images are translated into special codes of representation, photography and photomechanical processes do not require such translation and are able to communicate the images of things as they are seen by the camera lens. Even before the invention of photography, the inadequacies of traditional processes as a means of reproducing works of art had been discussed among art historians and connoisseurs, but the advent of photography made their shortcomings more conspicuous. Consequently,

² Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, pp.104-107.

photography and photomechanical processes replaced traditional printmaking processes as the most reliable means to serve one of the two functions mentioned above, that is, reproducing images of other works of art.³ As William Ivins points out, this technical innovation had a profound effect on people's recognition of the different roles of printmakers.

Up to that time very few people had been aware of the difference between pictorial expression and pictorial communication of statements of fact. The profound difference between creating something and making a statement about the quality and character of something had not been perceived. The men who did these things had gone to the same art schools and learned the same techniques and disciplines. They were all classified as artists and the public accepted them all as such, even if it did distinguish between those it regarded as good and as poor artists. The difference between the two groups of artists was generally considered to be merely a matter of their comparative skill. They all drew and they all made pictures. But photography and its processes quietly stepped in and by taking over one of the two fields for its own made the distinction that the world had failed to see.⁴

As the distinction between these two groups of printmakers became conspicuous, those who made reproductive prints in a traditional manner and were made redundant by the introduction of photography and photomechanical processes came

³ 'Introduction' in *Art and Its Images: an Exhibition of Printed Books Containing Engraved Illustrations after Italian Painting: Held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, April-June 1975* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1975), pp. 5-21.

⁴ Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication*, p.136.

to be discredited as mere copyists. At the same time, the other group of printmakers, those who used prints as artistic means of expression, tried to enhance their status as artists by differentiating themselves from the reproductive printmakers.

Etching revival

In the mid-nineteenth century, some printmakers, especially etchers, made conscious efforts to promote prints as an independent art form, and tried to gain a proper position in the traditional hierarchy of the arts. Since its foundation in 1768, the Royal Academy had denied full membership to printmakers. Although it had admitted some associate engravers, it rejected their claim for full membership and participation in the government of the Academy on the grounds that engraving lacked 'those intellectual qualities of Invention and Composition, which Painting, Sculpture and Architecture so eminently possess' and that its greatest praise only consisted 'in translating with as little loss as possible the beauties of these original Arts of Design'.⁵

It should be noted here that a clear distinction was made between the works which were believed to embody artists' 'intellectual qualities', 'invention', and 'originality' and those which were thought not to. Apparently, printmaking was regarded as unoriginal, while the former was hailed as art which deserved to receive the full privileges of the Academy. As Gordon Fyfe points out, this stratification of arts reflected 'the process whereby the notion of creativity as an effect of a unitary intelligence gained cultural supremacy'.⁶

Therefore, in order to gain full status as artists, printmakers tried to show

⁵ The Royal Academy of Arts, *Council Minutes*, 30 December 1812, vol.4, p.396, quoted in Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, p.111.

⁶ Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, p.115.

themselves as possessing these qualities and, in this process, the word 'originality' came to have special significance. Francis Seymour Haden, the spokesman of the etching revival in Britain, insisted on the importance of 'originality' as a special quality which distinguished art from mere manufacture.

An art differs from a manufacture in this, that, though it depends on agencies of a material kind for its outward expression, still those agencies, like the brush of the painter, are of a simple kind, and are wholly directed by an impulse which has its seat and centre in the brain of the artist...If, therefore, art is the brain impulse which it is here assumed to be, and this reading of it is confirmed by Johnson, when he declares it to be something which is not taught, it clearly follows that the first great fundamental principle of art must be personality – originality; out of which, again, come ideality, invention, sensibility to external impressions of form, colour, and composition, which is a sense of the beautiful, passion, poetry, and wherever else the mind of the artist is capable of. Not that the practice, and even a certain proficiency in special branches of art, suppose the possession, as of necessity, of all these great qualities; one of them, however, I venture to affirm is necessary, and that one is originality.⁷

Moreover, in order for prints to be recognised as 'original', that is, 'personal' expression which were created through artists' 'brain impulse', it was stressed that artists have to undertake the making of the printing surface by themselves as the intervention of other hands such as professional engravers might distort artists'

⁷ Francis Seymour Haden, 'The Relative Claims of Etching and Engraving to Rank as Fine Arts', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, June 1, 1883, pp. 714-715.

original intentions. Haden also made clear this point when insisting on the superiority of etching over reproductive engraving:

All forms of engraving, in short, whatever the processes employed in their production, divide themselves, necessarily and naturally, into two kinds, those which are original and those which are not – those which, under the name of painter-engraving, or etching, were practiced by the great masters of painting, who were their own engravers, and by means of which we are able to obtain, even in this remote day, work as original as their painting, and at a comparatively moderate cost; and those by which, under the common term of engraving, the design of the painter is reproduced upon the plate by other minds and other hands.⁸

As Pat Gilmour points out, the need to stress that artists were their own engravers was first institutionalised by Adam Bartsch, who published *Le Peintre-Graveur*, the pioneering catalogues of old master prints from 1803 to 1821.⁹ The name of the first society for the promotion of etching, the Society of Painter-Etchers, is evidence of the currency and importance of this notion in the artistic revival of printmaking. The Society was founded in 1880 and encouraged artists to etch their own plates. It was even thought ideal if printing from etched plates, which requires skills that are hard to master, was done in complete anonymity by professional printers whose task was to convince the artists that their original intentions were not distorted.¹⁰ The 'originality' of printmaking, which was

⁸ Haden, 'The Relative Claims of Etching and Engraving to Rank as Fine Arts', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, June 1, 1883, p. 717.

⁹ Gilmour, 'On Originality', *Issue*, vol. 2, no.1 (1991-92), p.10.

¹⁰ Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, pp.127-129.

believed to be attained by artists' involvement in printmaking process, continued to be pursued by printmakers including not only etchers but also artists who employed other printmaking processes in pursuit of artistic expression later in the century.

3-2 Printmaking and the Arts and Crafts Movement

Manufacturing reproductive prints and division of labour in printmaking

As the concept of 'originality' came to have special significance in printmaking, there grew a prejudice against reproductive prints. It was especially so in wood engraving. Before it was superseded by photomechanical processes in the 1890s, wood engraving was the predominant means of producing images for popular journals and books. As a manufacturing system developed in the production of wood-engraved plates to keep pace with the growth of mass journalism, wood engravers came to be dismissed as mere copyists.

Wood-engraving, which was already used in a minor way in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was refined considerably by Thomas Bewick in the late eighteenth century. Bewick was trained as a metal engraver in Newcastle and began to use metal engraving tools such as burin for cutting on end-grain of boxwood. After Bewick's experimentation in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, it was soon recognised that this method had advantages to the book trade over other printmaking techniques. Unlike intaglio processes and lithography, blocks are cut in relief and can be printed with typefaces at the same run of the press. Moreover, while the woodcutting method in which soft wood is cut along its grains with knives and gouges is suitable for creating bold images, the use of burins in wood-engraving makes it possible to depict minute details. Also, hard woodblocks used for this method are durable enough to yield large print runs.

The recognition of the advantages of wood-engraving coincided with the

growth of mass journalism in the nineteenth century. Social and economic factors such as the growth of the population, the rise in literacy, the increase of surplus money to spend on leisure and the abolition of newspaper tax contributed to the increasing demand for cheap newspapers and magazines. Moreover, as publishers came to realise that pictorial images affected the popularity of the magazines and newspapers as much as their selling prices did, a number of illustrated periodicals started one after another: *Penny Magazine* in 1832, *Punch* in 1841, and *The Illustrated London News* in 1842, to name but a few. Wood engraving, with its advantages described above, was the cheapest and the most reliable means to reproduce images for these periodicals. Consequently, a number of firms of trade wood engravers were founded.¹¹

In order to keep up with the increasing demand, division of labour was developed at various levels in producing woodblocks. Accordingly, the task of engravers narrowed down to reproductive engraving of specific details without any scope left for exercising ingenuity and interpreting the subjects in their own ways. In the traditional apprenticeship of engraving, a wide range of skills were taught to apprentices. However, in order to supply cheap labour for the booming wood engraving industry, apprentices were quickly taught specialised skills. Drawing of images on blocks, which used to be done by engravers themselves in the age of Bewick, was entrusted to professional draughtsmen or, in the later period, photography was traced on blocks. The sole task of engravers was to imitate every line drawn by draughtsmen or traced from photography without any personal interpretation. Moreover, as large images became popular in illustrated magazines, it became customary to bolt together small blocks to make up larger ones. After a drawing was made on a large composite block, it was divided into small sections and

¹¹ Jobling and Crowley, *Graphic Design*, pp.9-35.

distributed to different engravers. The engravers had to work in exactly the same way as the other engravers so that when the sections were reassembled the whole engraved image on the composite block would not show much incongruity. All these divisions of labour and fragmentations of images resulted in what was called 'facsimile engraving' and 'unmeaning line'.¹² The effects of manufacturing system were lamented by Arthur Comfort, Hon. Chairman of the International Society of Wood-Engravers.

The manufacturing of illustration was, perhaps, the greatest sin. Blocks, large and small, were each divided and given to different engravers, who had, without having any particular artistic taste, and no artistic training other than what might be picked up in an engraving office, after serving a long apprenticeship to what their parents and guardians had thought a good paying business, developed a technique that was useful in certain directions...All this was necessary from the standpoint of the illustration manufacturer, because it helped the speed in turning out blocks; but it prevented development in many places, and has been probably the great reason why the quality of wood-engraving has dropped in the estimation of the majority of people to the extent that to know a reproduction is a print from a wood block is to damn it at once.¹³

The state of reproductive engravers was parallel to that of factory workers in many other industries and engravers were generally regarded as a depressed

¹² Gerry Beegan, 'The Mechanization of the Image: Facsimile, Photography, and Fragmentation in Nineteenth-Century Wood Engraving', *Journal of Design History*, vol.8, no.4 (1995), 257-274.

¹³ Arthur Comfort, 'Letter to the Editor on the Subject of the Future of Wood-Engraving', *The Studio*, vol.14, 1898, pp.194-195.

group of sweated labour, suffering under poor working conditions and forced into repetitive work.¹⁴ The trade engravers who worked in such a system of manufacturing must have appeared as typical victims of harmful effects of industrialisation and modernisation to the eyes of critics like John Ruskin, who wrote 'These woodcuts, for *Barnaby Rudge* and the *Cornhill Magazine*, are favourably representative of the entire illustrative art industry of the modern press, - industry enslaved to the ghastly service of catching the last gleams in the glued eyes of the daily more bestial English mob'.¹⁵

What became the focus of criticism was the situation in which engravers were forced to become mere copyists. Due to the lack of apprenticeship in wide range of skills, drawings were made by those who had no proper knowledge of the potential of materials, tools and techniques which engravers employed to complete their designs as engraved images. Engravers, deprived of any scope of exercising their imagination and ingenuity, had to imitate lines which were not designed to be engraved. In *The Studio*, A. L. Baldry wrote of trade engraving:

It was injudicious enough to put itself at the disposal of some art workers who were strangers to its laws, and committed the mistake of trying to deal with work which was not specially designed for it... As soon as it became a merely reproductive art, willing to imitate the technicalities of other arts, no one cared to strive any longer to learn the mysteries of the craft. It was then nothing but a mechanical device, an imitative process, copying touch by touch and blot by blot, the accidental qualities of the brush or pen'.¹⁶

¹⁴ Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, p.113.

¹⁵ John Ruskin, 'Ariadne Florentina', in *The Work of John Ruskin*, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 29 vols., (London: G.Allen, 1903-1912), XXII (1906), p.469.

¹⁶ A. L. Baldry, 'The Future of Wood-Engraving', *The Studio*, vol.14, 1898, p.13.

It was natural, then, for William Morris and the artists who worked under the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement to try to restore artist-craftsmanship to wood engraving so that engravers could become involved in the creative process of printmaking when they set about wood engraving of illustrations for books published mainly by their private presses in the late nineteenth century.

Artist-craftsmanship and 'truth to materials' in printmaking

Edward Burne-Jones recollected the time when he and William Morris were fascinated by fifteenth and sixteenth-century woodcut prints, especially those by Dürer, as undergraduates in Oxford. 'Two luminaries burst upon us at that time... One was Chaucer and the other was Dürer'.¹⁷ As early as 1855 Morris 'set to work at drawing on wood and cutting the design himself', when he found Dante Gabriel Rossetti's drawing for William Allingham's *Day and Night Songs* 'the most beautiful drawing for an illustration'.¹⁸ Morris maintained his interest in early woodcut prints, forming a collection of incunabula in the years around the founding of the Kelmscott Press in 1891.¹⁹ He admired the woodcut ornamentations and illustrations in illuminated books and manuscripts of the Middle Ages on which he gave several lectures in the 1890s. (Fig. 43)

What Morris and Burne-Jones could not tolerate in the contemporary wood engraving industry was the fact that designers made drawings without any consideration for the potential of materials and how they were to be engraved.

¹⁷ Studio diary of T. M. Rooke, 20.1.97, quoted in William S. Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press: a History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p.47.

¹⁸ J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899; repr. New York: Dover Publications, 1995), p.87.

¹⁹ Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p.48.

As to scribbly work, it enrages one beyond endurance. Nearly all book and periodical illustration is full of it – drawings, you know the kind, that have wild work in all the corners, stupid, senseless rot that takes an artist half a minute to sketch and an engraver half a week to engrave, for scribble is fearful labour to render. My dear, look at most things in “Once a Week” – the wasted time of poor engravers in rendering all that scrawl, if rightly used, might fill England with beautiful work.²⁰

It is clear from the following statement in a lecture in 1892 entitled ‘The Woodcuts of Gothic Books’ that Morris believed that ‘truth to material’ and artist-craftsmanship had to be achieved in printmaking as well as in all the other kinds of craftwork in which he got involved.

The designs must be suitable to the material and method of production, and not offer to the executant artist a mere thicket of unnatural difficulties, producing no result when finished, save the exhibition of a *tour de force*. The executant, on his side, whether he be the original designer or someone else, must understand that his business is sympathetic translation, and not mechanical reproduction of the original drawing.²¹

In this respect, Morris believed, it was necessary for designers and wood-engravers to understand each other’s work. In the same lecture, he insisted

²⁰ Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1904), I, pp.254-255.

²¹ William Morris, ‘The Woodcuts of Gothic Books’, in William Morris, *The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Arts of the Book*, ed. by William S. Peterson (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 25-44 (p. 40).

on the importance of the reciprocal relation between these two groups of artists.

And here I come to a very important part of my subject, to wit, the relation between the designer and the wood-engraver; and it is clear that if these two artists do not understand one another, the result must be failure; and this understanding can never exist if the wood-engraver has but to cut servilely what the artist draws carelessly. If any real school of wood-engraving is to exist again, the wood-cutter must be an artist translating the designer's drawing. It is quite pitiable to see the patience and ingenuity of such clever workmen, as some modern wood-cutters are, thrown away on the literal reproduction of mere meaningless scrawl. The want of logic in artists who will insist on such work is really appalling. It is the actual touches of the hand that give the speciality, the final finish to a work of art, which carries out in one material what is designed in another; and for the designer to ignore the instrument and material by which the touches are to be done, shows complete want of understanding of the scope of reproducible design.²²

Morris did not try to dissolve the division of labour between designers and engravers and he believed that, through the collaboration between them, two qualities had to be expressed in the final product. Firstly, it was designers' original intentions that had to be conveyed through the hands of engravers. Secondly, the finished works should not be mere reproductions of those originally conceived in other media. Designers' original drawings had to be expressed with the added

²² Morris, 'The Woodcuts of Gothic Books', in Morris, *The Ideal Book*, ed. by Peterson, p. 38.

effects which were brought about only with the use of particular materials and techniques employed by engravers. In order to achieve these two qualities in the finished products, designers and wood-engravers were required to have capacity for each other's work: designers, by learning engravers' work, would be able to understand the potential of materials and the effects which would be given to his design with the use of particular tools and techniques, while engravers, by learning designers' work, would be able to understand what designers intended to express.

it is necessary for the designers to have a feeling for the quality of the final execution, to sympathise with the engraver's difficulties, and know why one block looks artistic and another mechanical; so it is necessary for the engraver to have some capacity for design, so that he may know what the designer wants of him, and that he may be able to translate the designer, and give him a genuine and obvious cut line in place of his pencilled or penned line without injuring in any way the due expression of the original design.²³

His ideal was, however, difficult to put into practice in the actual production of book illustrations in the Kelmscott Press. Most of the illustrations of the Kelmscott Press books were designed by Edward Burne-Jones and engraved by the professional engraver, William Harcourt Hooper. Hooper had made his career as a facsimile engraver by reproducing drawings by artists such as Fred Walker, Millais, du Maurier, Tenniel and Leighton for *Illustrated London News* and *Punch* until he was recruited by Morris. It soon became apparent that Hooper's adherence to the

²³ Morris, 'The Woodcuts of Gothic Books', in Morris, *The Ideal Book*, ed. by Peterson, p. 39.

'principle of exact copying' went against Morris's ideal of craftsmen who would participate in the creative process of printmaking as 'translators'. Burne-Jones's pencil drawings offered for illustration were full of delicate lines and shading and needed to be translated into lines of engraving. However, his rigid belief in fidelity to the original drawings prevented Hooper from translating Burne-Jones's design, which continued to irritate Morris. Morris had to make a compromise by employing another artist, Robert Catterson-Smith, who did the translating job before designs were given to Hooper.²⁴

The illustrations thus created for the Kelmscott Press books showed an affinity with the woodcut illustrations in the medieval books Morris so much admired. (Fig. 44) Although they were produced by the wood-engraving method, these illustrations were filled with thick black lines which might be more easily created by using woodcutting techniques. As in the case of the relations between designers and engravers, the incongruity between the design and the potential of materials and method also shows the gap between Morris's ideal and the actual outcomes of his practice.

The artists who were inspired by Morris's attempts at the Kelmscott Press were to overcome the difficulties Morris had to face by themselves undertaking the tasks of both designers and engravers. Charles Ricketts was one such artist. Although he was originally trained as reproductive engraver, Ricketts came to believe that 'truth to materials' in wood-engraving could only be attained if the whole process of designing, drawing and engraving was done by the same artist.

No discussion is needed to prove that the final carrying out of a design by the designer is a desirable thing in itself; you will see how the "warmth" of

²⁴ Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, pp.147-152.

the line may be preserved thereby, how the entire substance of the design will be knit or welded in a way that cannot be obtained otherwise; that the design like the type, benefiting by revision in the material for which it is designed, will become cut, and a stamp as it were like the page of type itself...In the handling of pictures, the rendering of flesh, hands, feet, and faces an original engraver has that chance of refining upon his design, that with an interpreter however skilful cannot always be relied upon, and that cannot exist at all in process work, however perfected.²⁵

From the Vale Press, which he founded with his partner Charles Shannon, and the commercial presses he collaborated with, Ricketts published a number of volumes of magazines and books filled with typographical arrangements, ornaments and illustrations which were designed by himself (Fig. 45). Witnessing Ricketts and Shannon engraving the illustrations for *Daphnis and Chloe* (1893), William Rothenstein described, 'I had never come into touch with the Morris movement, and this craftsmanship side was new to me. I was therefore the more impressed by their skill and patience'.²⁶ Most of the illustrations which were produced by Ricketts were, like those in the Kelmscott Press books, composed of thick black lines without tonal variety, although they were produced by wood-engraving methods. However, as Joanna Selborne points out, Ricketts's books' importance lies in the fact that they were 'the first in modern times to be designed throughout by the same artists who drew and cut its wood-engraving'.²⁷

Ricketts's attempt at original wood engraving was followed by the members

²⁵ Charles S. Ricketts, *A Defence of the Revival of Printing* (London: Hacon & Ricketts, 1899), pp. 32-33.

²⁶ Quoted in Simon Brett, *Out of the Wood: British Woodcuts and Wood Engravings 1890-1945* (London: The British Council, 1991), p.9.

²⁷ Selbourne, *British Wood-engraved Book Illustration*, p.39.

of his circle such as Lucien Pissarro²⁸ and Thomas Sturge Moore (Fig. 46).²⁹

Ricketts wrote of Sturge Moore's work as follows:

I would point out that the style of original wood engraving is not here merely accidental, as of a trade engraver who is artist at his leisure, but in aim they show that directness of all work understood within the particular conditions of a medium. They aim at effect brought about by white cutting into black, or by black lines showing the work of the tool in their shaping, and we have here no imitation of chalk or wash drawing, or of steel engraving, or of photography.³⁰

Sturge Moore's illustrations, characterised by the use of subtle white lines against black areas in some parts of the illustrations, could be seen as the transitional state of wood-engraving which was to be directed toward the dominance of white-line technique by the modern wood-engravers in the early twentieth-century. Selborne points out that Sturge Moore 'could rightly be considered the first wood-engraver of his time to use wood in a natural way'. Selborne saw wood-engraving and white line techniques as being the 'natural way' to use wood.³¹

However, the ideals of 'originality', artist-craftsmanship and 'truth to materials' in woodblock printmaking continued to be pursued also in woodcut printmaking, which is more suitable for producing images composed of thick outlines

²⁸ Lucien Pissarro, son of Camille, joined Ricketts's circle when he came to London and founded the Eragny Press in 1894. Having learned wood-engraving from Auguste Lepère and colour printing from Manzi, Pissarro engraved most of his drawings for the illustration to the Eragny Press books.

²⁹ Thomas Sturge Moore was taught wood-engraving by Ricketts at the Lambeth School of Art and became his life-long friend.

³⁰ Charles Ricketts, 'Note on Original Wood Engraving', *The Pageant*, 1897, quoted in Joseph Darracott, *The World of Charles Ricketts* (London: Cameron & Tayleur, 1980), p.51.

³¹ Selbourne, *British Wood-engraved Book Illustration*, p.39.

and planes. The woodcut printmakers, inspired by the experiments with wood-engraving in the late nineteenth century, pursued different visual effects from those of wood-engraving by employing woodcut techniques and proceeded on to the different course of pursuit of original printmaking. In this respect, it was timely that Japanese printmaking method came to be known in Britain from various sources in this period. Encouraged by the studies and discourse on Japanese prints which have been analysed in Chapter 2, they adopted the Japanese method and explored the possibility of woodcut printmaking as artistic and original expression.

Chapter 4

British printmaking based on the Japanese method: 1890s – 1910s

4-1 Early experiments in the 1890s

Tokunō's report

In the transmission of Japanese printmaking techniques to Britain, a report published in 1893 by the Smithsonian Institution, the United States National Museum, played a crucial role. In 1889, at the request of S. R. Koehler, the Smithsonian's Curator of Graphic Arts, T. Tokunō, the Chief of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing of the Japanese Ministry of Finance, wrote an account of the techniques in English and sent it to the Smithsonian Institution with a collection of Japanese printmaking equipment. It was edited by Koehler and published in 1893 as 'the first authoritative statement on this subject made by a native of Japan thoroughly qualified for the task'.¹ The written description of the techniques was accompanied by photos and illustrations drawn by a Japanese artist to show how the tools were actually used by Japanese engravers and printers (Figs. 47, 48). It is clear from the annotations by Koehler that he tried to make sure the description was as accurate and detailed as possible by undertaking a good deal of correspondence

¹ 'Japanese Wood-cutting and Wood-cut Printing by Mr. T. Tokuno (Edited by S. R. Koehler, Curator, Section of Graphic Arts)', in *Report of the United States National Museum of 1892*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), pp. 221-244 (p. 221).

with Tokunō.

Tokunō's description was followed by Koehler's notes, in which he compared Japanese and European printmaking methods. Koehler pointed out that there were several similarities between the method and tools used in contemporary Japan and those used in Europe in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, he demonstrated the similarity in the ways the engravers held their knives perpendicularly by comparing the illustration of a Japanese wood-cutter offered by Tokunō and 'the oldest known representation of a European wood-cutter' published in Frankfort-on-the-Main in 1568 (Figs. 49,50). He also demonstrated how knives used by old European wood-cutters were constructed in a similar way as Japanese knives (Figs. 51,52) and even stated that according to Cennino Cennini da Colle di Valdelse at the end of the fourteenth century, a shield of wood, which was equivalent of Japanese *baren*, was sometimes used by European printers to take impressions from wood blocks.²

Having pointed out the similarities between Japanese and European methods, Kohler remarked on 'differences of a very marked kind'. He explained that these accrued from the fact that European woodcut works were essentially black-line facsimile of pen-and-ink drawings whereas Japanese ones were reproductions of wash drawings. He also noted the difference between the tools used for applying pigment to blocks, namely rollers used by European printers and brushes used by Japanese printers. He described how the pliability of Japanese brushes helped printers exercise their own ingenuity as artists themselves.

The brush is a pliable instrument, capable of expression in the hands of an

² 'Japanese Wood-cutting and Wood-cut Printing', in *Report of the United States National Museum of 1892*, pp. 233-236.

intelligent being. The roller, on the contrary, even in the hands of the most skilled printer, is much less pliable, and on the steam press it is without any pliancy. This quality has, indeed, become a merit in the steam press, so that it is now looked upon as more reliable than the hand press. But this is true only in so far as uniformity of result in the impressions is concerned. The artist can do nothing with it, while with a bare block or plate and a brush full of color he can do wonders...It follows from this that the Japanese printer must be something of an artist. In the words of Mr. Tokuno, he must have the skill to produce "the various hues and shades with printing brushes, in precisely the same way as the water-color painters do".³

Koehler also remarked on 'the little care had by the Japanese wood-cutters and printers for labor-saving devices and mechanical aids' and marvelled at the way Japanese craftsmen manipulated simple tools to produce greatest effects in the finished works.⁴

The report was by far the most detailed account of Japanese techniques among the contemporary sources and was soon to be cited by British writers on Japanese prints. It was already featured in *The Studio* only a year after the report was published. The aim of publishing the summary of the report in *The Studio* was explained as follows.

Here the intention is to note merely those matters which affect experimental efforts to found a school of coloured woodcuts in Europe.

³ 'Japanese Wood-cutting and Wood-cut Printing', in *Report of the United States National Museum of 1892*, pp. 236-239.

⁴ 'Japanese Wood-cutting and Wood-cut', in *Report of the United States National Museum of 1892*, pp. 241-242.

Based on Japanese methods, but not necessarily imitative in the effects produced, or in many details of the process, it is possible that a new school of artistic prints is growing up in Europe to-day. Examples by MM. Lepère and Rivière, &c., shown lately in Paris and London, and others, less known, produced in England by M. Lucien Pissarro, Mr. Edgar Wilson, and Mr. J. D. Batten, prove that the craft has vitality strong enough to inspire European artists to develop a convention of printing in water-colours, that may, one day, take its place with etching, mezzotint, lithography, and those reproductive arts peculiarly under control of the artist himself.⁵

It was accompanied by the interview with a Japanese expert, 'Mr. Eida', to supplement the information offered by Tokunō. In this interview, as in the description by Tokunō and Kohler, the great degree of discretion the use of simple tools gave to craftsmen was noted. The Japanese expert explained the advantage of hand-printing with *baren*, saying 'in contradistinction to the European principle of pressing the block on the paper and thus obtaining your impression, we lay the paper on the block, and, dispensing with mechanical means, are enabled to regulate and modify the pressure as and where we wish, and thus to obtain the gradated tints and half-tones that are so great an element of the charm of Japanese coloured prints....and herein (as you may easily see) lies the chance for the craftsmen to use his mind as well as his hand, and to show himself the artist and not only the workman'.⁶

John Dickson Batten and Frank Morley Fletcher

⁵ 'Woodcut Printing in Water-colours: After the Japanese Manner.', *The Studio*, vol.3, 1894, p.113.

⁶ 'Woodcut Printing in Water-colours', *The Studio*, vol.3, 1894, pp.111-112.

The article about Tokunō's report and the interview with 'Mr. Eida' were followed by an interview with John Dickson Batten about his experiments with woodcut printing in water colour which appeared in the next issue of *The Studio*.⁷ According to Rodney K. Engen, 'An influential figure, Batten's primary skill was in book illustrations in a style derived from German wood cuts and the Arts and Crafts figures like William Morris and his followers who adopted mythological themes and Celtic, Norse and Indian legends'.⁸ As far as is known from its lists of members, Batten was a member of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society from 1904 to 1910 at least.⁹ According to the annual report of the Art Workers' Guild, one of the earliest organisations connected with the Arts and Crafts Movement, Batten gave a lecture on 'Printing in Colour' together with E. J. Wall and Eida before the members of the Guild on 4 May, 1894.¹⁰ The article in *The Studio* began by stating 'In place of reporting an excellent paper by Mr. J. D. Batten, read lately before a well-known guild, the author has allowed an interview on the same subject to be given here'.¹¹ Batten described his experiments as 'an attempt to follow the method of colour-printing employed by the Japanese'.¹² It is not certain whether he had already read the report by Tokunō and Koehler, but the interview reveals how he struggled to introduce the Japanese techniques, referencing as many available sources as possible. For example, it is implied that he used the Japanese woodblocks displayed in the South Kensington Museum, trying to unravel the

⁷ 'Woodcut Printing in Water-colours III.', *The Studio*, vol.3, 1894, pp.144-148.

⁸ Rodney K. Engen, *Dictionary of Victorian Wood Engravers* (Cambridge: Teaneck, N.J.: Chadwyck-Healey, 1985), p.14.

⁹ List of Members, 1904, 1907, 1910 in AAD, Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society Archive, AAD 1/543-1980, AAD 1/565-1980, AAD 1/567-1980.

¹⁰ *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Art-workers' Guild*, 1894, p. 8. A portfolio of Batten, *Reproductions of Some Work Done by John D. Batten between the Years 1886-1932*, into which the reproduction of his colour prints are pasted, is preserved in the Art Workers' Guild.

¹¹ 'Woodcut Printing in Water-colours. III.', *The Studio*, vol.3, 1894, p.144.

¹² 'Woodcut Printing in Water-colours. III.', *The Studio*, vol.3, 1894, p.144.

mysteries of Japanese woodcutting.

I read that the Japanese cut their blocks in cherry-wood and along the grain, not across it. So for experiment I chose the same method, and showed a young engraver the blocks at South Kensington Museum, and gave him an outline design to cut in their fashion. Although he had had seven years' apprenticeship to English wood-engraving, in two or three days he came back and said he found it was impossible to cut it along the grain in Japanese fashion, and he showed why. Then I saw that, with English ways of cutting and English tools, it was impossible to imitate the Japanese with his own knife held in his own fashion.¹³

A few years later, he looked back upon his experiments, saying 'My aim throughout has been to teach myself a method of printing in colours which should be free from certain mechanical restrictions which hamper the colour-printer of Europe to-day, and which appear to me to be adverse to the attainment of any really beautiful result. With this object in view I have studied the works of the Japanese printers, and have endeavoured to obtain all the information that I could with regard to the methods they employ'.¹⁴

Batten was attracted by the beauty of the materials used in Japanese printmaking. "The paper seems to accept the colour in a happier way than it does in lithography, and the actual impress of the block has real value, adding the grace of varied surface to that of interchange of colour. And as compared with the ordinary colour block print, there is this inestimable advantage: the possibility of obtaining

¹³ 'Woodcut Printing in Water-colours. III.', *The Studio*, vol.3, 1894, p.145.

¹⁴ John D. Batten, 'Letter to the Editor from Mr. John D. Batten Respecting a Chromo-xylograph Entitled *Eve and the Serpent*', *The Studio*, vol.7, 1896, p.36.

simple masses of graduated colour not fretted and teased by stipple or line, but beating evidence of the free sweep of the brush and the flow of the pigment'.¹⁵ He also understood that in order to bring out such beauty of materials artists had to exercise their own judgement and artistic perception. 'The work could not safely be entrusted to a mere mechanic, for in the printing of each block there is need of judgement, not only in the laying on of the colour, but in the different texture that can be given to the colour by varying pressure'.¹⁶

For Batten, the potential of Japanese printmaking to enable artists to control the execution of their design through their manual involvement in the production of prints without any mechanical intervention opened a new field for printmaking as artists' original expression.

I regard it as an art in itself, and alone; not merely one more method of multiplying copies of originals produced by another artist. In this, the designer must design, from the first, a *print*, not a painting. Nor will he find the spirit of his first intention crushed by a weight of mechanical technicalities; but, on the contrary, discover that he has a medium to express himself which will be from first to last within the control of his mind and hand.¹⁷

In the subsequent years, Batten and other artists including Frank Morley Fletcher produced in collaboration the experimental prints which showed an affinity to Kelmscott illustrations by Burne-Jones.¹⁸ *Eve and Serpent* (1895) (Figs. 53,54)

¹⁵ 'Woodcut Printing in Water-colours. III.', *The Studio*, vol.3, 1894, p.148 .

¹⁶ John D. Batten, 'Letter to the Editor from Mr. John D. Batten, *The Studio*, vol.7, 1896, p.40.

¹⁷ 'Woodcut Printing in Water-colours. III.', *The Studio*, vol.3, 1894, p.148.

¹⁸ Frank Morley Fletcher was born in Whiston, Lancashire, in 1866 and studied at

was 'the first satisfactory proof' they produced by a method which seems to have been conceived through mixture of what available European and Japanese techniques, tools and materials they could get at that time. The blocks consisted of wood-engraved boxwood, woodcut sycamore planks and metal plates, and water-colours were mixed with dextrin and glycerine instead of rice paste.¹⁹ By the time they produced *The Harpies* in 1897(Fig. 55), however, they settled down to the method which followed quite faithfully what was explained as traditional Japanese method in Tokunō's description.

In almost every instance Mr. Fletcher has reverted to the actual method of the Japanese. The use of milk for the sizing of the paper, and the use of glycerine and dextrin as a medium for the colours have been abandoned...Mr. Fletcher then set himself to cut the line block with a knife upon a carefully chosen plank of English cherry, a method of work which I suppose has scarcely been attempted in England since the use of the graver was established a full century ago. (It is impossible to use the graver except upon the cross-section of the wood.) In this attempt he has been completely successful; so that all the blocks are cut in the same manner. It is not easy to overestimate the advantage of having the blocks cut and the proofs printed by the same hand.²⁰

By then Fletcher had also produced original prints on his own. One of his prints,

the Atelier Cormon in Paris. He was a member of the Art Workers' Guild from 1897 to 1924. *British Printmakers 1855-1955*, ed. by Garton, pp. 24-25, H. J. L. J. Massé, *The Art Workers' Guild 1884-1934* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1935).

¹⁹ John D. Batten, 'Letter to the Editor from Mr. John D. Batten', *The Studio*, vol.7, 1896, pp.36-40.

²⁰ John D. Batten, 'Letter from Mr. J. D. Batten Concerning His Water-colour Print "The Harpies"', *The Studio*, vol.10, 1897, pp.50-52.

'Meadowsweet', shows his mastery of one of the most difficult Japanese techniques of printing the gradation of colour, *ichimonji bokashi*, as seen in the graduated blue of the water. (Fig. 56) The 'truth to materials' and artist-craftsmanship which could be attained through the practice of the Japanese techniques must have been particularly appealing to these artists in the period when the Arts and Crafts Movement was at its height. For the spread of the Arts and Crafts ideas across the country, the education offered at regional art schools was an important vehicle.²¹ The Japanese method of printmaking was also to be disseminated through the teaching at major art schools as the embodiment of the Arts and Crafts ideas.

4-2 Japanese printmaking at art schools

The Central School of Arts and Crafts and Fletcher's handbook

Soon after the pioneering works by Batten and Fletcher, the Japanese method of printmaking was introduced to the teaching at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, 'powerhouse of the Arts and Crafts in the capital'.²² In its first year, 1896-7, the curriculum of the School had concentrated on subjects related to the building trade and to silversmithing. It was soon expanded in accordance with the student demand and the personal interests of W. R. Lethaby, the first Principal of the School, and the class of woodcuts in colour, together with those of bookbinding and embroidery, was added in the second year.²³ According to the prospectuses of the School, 'Printing of Colour Prints from Wood Blocks by a method based on the

²¹ Linda Parry and Karen Livingstone, 'Introduction: International Arts and Crafts' in *International Arts and Crafts*, ed. by Livingstone and Parry, pp. 10-37 (pp. 18-19).

²² Alan Crawford, 'United Kingdom: Origins and First Flowering', in *The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America: Design for the Modern World*, ed. by Kaplan, pp. 21-67 (p.54).

²³ Theresa Gronberg, 'William Richard Lethaby and the Central School of Arts and Crafts', in *W. R. Lethaby 1857-1931: Architecture, Design and Education*, ed. by Sylvia Backemeyer and Theresa Gronberg (London: Lund Humphries, 1984), pp. 14-23 (p.19).

Japanese practice' was taught by Frank Morley Fletcher from 1897 to 1904 and by Sydney Lee from 1906 to 1910.²⁴ Edward F. Strange also gave a special lecture on the Japanese manner of printmaking at the School in 1913. The Japanese method continued to be taught until Noel Rooke took over the class of wood engraving in 1913 and pursued the teaching of white-line method based on the tradition of Bewick.²⁵

It is quite probable that examples of Japanese prints and woodblocks kept at the School were used by students during the classes on woodcut printmaking. The School had, and still preserves, a large Teaching Examples Collection, most of which originated as Schools' Examples Collection purchased by the Technical Education Board. Since he was appointed as an art inspector to the Technical Education Board in 1894, W. R. Lethaby was responsible for the purchases of Schools Examples, which consisted of both reproductions of and real examples of various works of art. In the report to the Board in 1895, Lethaby stated, 'What may appear at first sight rough Gothic carvings, ugly Japanese prints and crude Dürer woodcuts, will we believe, prove of the greatest value by way of stimulus and suggestions as to

²⁴ Sydney Lee, who is known rather as wood-engraver than woodcutter, was actually 'one of the first to follow Mr. Morley Fletcher's lead'. Malcolm Salaman described Lee's mastery of Japanese printmaking by writing 'not only in technique does he find himself in sympathy with the Japanese, his sense of design has also derived inspiration from them, without being imitative. This inspiration is rather as to the suggestive point of view, and the synthetic feeling for those essential lines and surfaces which make for decoration'. Malcolm Charles Salaman, *Modern Woodcuts and Lithographs by British and French Artists* (London; New York: "The Studio" Ltd., 1919), p. 20, 'Wood-engraving for Colour in Great Britain', *The Studio*, vol.49, 1913, p. 284.

²⁵ The London County Council, Technical Education Board, *Prospectus and Timetable: The Central School of Arts and Crafts, 1897-1913*. Rooke was appointed as a teacher of Book Illustration in 1905. Due to Lethaby's opposition to setting up a wood engraving class on the ground that woodcut in the Japanese manner had already been taught by Fletcher, Rooke had to teach the Bewickian method secretly at his book illustration class until Lethaby resigned as Principal in 1911. James Hamilton, *Wood Engraving & the Woodcut in Britain c.1890-1990* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1994), pp.54-55.

methods'.²⁶ Although they were originally purchased as circulating collections to be used in art schools across the country, these examples were housed in the Central School and virtually functioned as a collection for use within the School. They included *ukiyo-e* prints, which consisted mainly of nineteenth-century prints of *kabuki* actors and those depicting children's game (Figs. 57,58), Japanese stencils and Japanese woodblocks. Some of the Japanese prints were prominently exhibited at the entrance hall of the School.²⁷

The teaching of woodcut printmaking in the Japanese manner was extended outside the Central School through the publication of *Woodblock Printing* by Frank Morley Fletcher as part of *The Artistic Crafts Series of Technical Handbooks* edited by Lethaby.²⁸ The book consisted of detailed descriptions and illustrations regarding the tools and techniques of Japanese printmaking (Figs. 59,60). Also, an original print designed, cut and printed by Fletcher was inserted as an example into each copy of the book (Fig. 61). In his preface to *Woodblock Printing*, Lethaby described the general aims of its publication: 'to set up a standard of quality in the crafts which are more especially associated with design' and 'to treat design itself as an essential part of good workmanship'.²⁹ It is clear from this statement that

²⁶ *Technical Education Board Minutes*, May 1895, quoted in Sylvia Backemeyer, 'The Teaching Examples Collection, Its Foundation and Development', in *Object Lessons: Central Saint Martins Art and Design Archive*, ed. by Sylvia Backemeyer (London: Lund Humphries, 1996), pp. 9-14 (p.9).

²⁷ Backemeyer, 'The Teaching Examples Collection', Timothy Clark, 'Nineteenth-century Japanese Actor Prints', Mavis Pilbeam, 'Children's Games: an Album of Japanese Woodblock Prints from the Middle of the Meiji Period (1868-1912)' in *Object Lessons*, ed. by Sylvia Backemeyer, pp. 9-11, 51-53, 54-56.

²⁸ The series also included *Bookbinding* by Douglas Cockerell, *Silverwork and Jewellery* by H. Wilson, *Woodcarving* by George Jack, *Stained Glass Work* by W. Whall, *Embroidery and Tapestry Weaving* by Mrs. Archibald H. Christie, *Writing and Illuminating and Lettering* by Edward Johnston, *Handloom Weaving* by Luther Hooper, *Manuscript and Inscription Letters* by Edward Johnston, *Heraldry for Craftsmen and Designers* by W. H. St. John Hope, *Dress Design* by Talbot Hughes.

²⁹ W. R. Lethaby, 'Editor's Preface' in Frank Morley Fletcher, *Wood-block Printing: a Description of the Craft of Woodcutting & Colour printing Based on the Japanese Practice* (London: John Hogg, 1916), p. v.

Lethaby saw woodblock printmaking in the Japanese manner as a craft which embodied both designing process and craftsmanship as inseparable elements from each other. The unity of design and craftsmanship was one of the ideals Ruskin and Morris tried to regain in the age of industrialisation and mechanisation.

During the last century most of the arts, save painting and sculpture of an academic kind, were little considered, and there was a tendency to look on 'design' as a mere matter of appearance. Such 'ornamentation' as there was usually obtained by following in a mechanical way a drawing provided by an artist who often knew little of the technical processes involved in production. With the critical attention given to crafts by Ruskin and Morris, it came to be seen that it was impossible to detach design from craft in this way, and that, in the widest sense, true design is an inseparable element of good quality, involving as it does the selection of good and suitable material, contrivance for special purpose, expert workmanship, proper finish, and so on, far more than mere ornament, and indeed, that ornamentation itself was rather an exuberance of fine workmanship than a matter of merely abstract lines. Workmanship when separated by too wide a gulf from fresh thought – that is, from design – inevitably decays, and, on the other hand, ornamentation, divorced from workmanship, is necessarily unreal, and quickly falls into affectation.³⁰

Japanese woodcut printmaking, which evidently involved the designing, namely drawing and planning of blocks, and the actual cutting and printing, was a good example of artist-craftsmanship which enabled artists to achieve this ideal, if the

³⁰ Lethaby, 'Editor's Preface', in Fletcher, *Wood-block Printing*, pp.v-vii.

whole process was done by the same artist.

Printmaking also had potential to dissolve the art-craft divide. As Stephen Calloway points out, by the 1890s printmaking was increasingly taught at art schools as a 'useful way of encouraging in their students both pictorial imagination and craft skills', thus responding to the 'Arts and Crafts ethos of dissolving the distinctions between fine art and the crafts'.³¹ According to Fletcher, woodcut printmaking in the Japanese manner would offer students good training not only in fine workmanship but also in pictorial composition by helping them experiment with colour schemes with much freedom.

Even as a means of general training in the elements of decorative pictorial composition the wood blocks have great possibilities as an adjunct to the courses of work followed by art students. The same problems that arise in all decoration may be dealt with by their means on a small scale, but under conditions that are essentially instructive. Colour schemes may be studied and worked out with entire freedom by printing and reprinting until a problem is thoroughly solved. A colour design may be studied and worked out as fully by means of a small set of blocks, and with more freedom for experiment and alteration than is possible by the usual methods of study, such as painting and repainting on paper or canvas or wall; for the form being once established by the blocks, the colour may be reconstructed again and again without limit.³²

It is also possible to see that their encouragement of woodcut printmaking

³¹ Stephen Calloway, 'Arts and Crafts Graphics', in *International Arts and Crafts*, ed. by Livingstone and Parry, pp. 88-91 (pp. 90-91).

³² Fletcher, *Wood-block Printing*, p. 87.

was one of the attempts of the Arts and Crafts Movement to re-create old techniques – ‘a profound, creative relationship with the past’ as Alan Crawford calls it as a feature of Arts and Crafts.³³ Like Koehler, Lethaby insisted on the similarity between old European woodcuts and Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints by quoting Edward F. Strange’s words in his preface to *Wood-block Printing*.

The following account of colour printing from wood-blocks is based on a study of the methods which were lately only practised in Japan, but which at an earlier time were to some degree in use in Europe also. The main principles of the art, indeed, were well known in the West long before colour prints were produced in Japan, and there is some reason to suppose that the Japanese may have founded their methods in imitating the prints taken from Europe by missionaries. Major Strange says: ‘The European art of chiaroscuro engraving is in all essentials identical with that of Japanese colour printing...It seems, therefore, not vain to point out that the accidental sight of one of the Italian colour-prints may have suggested the process to the Japanese’.³⁴

The theory by Edward F. Strange which has been mentioned in Chapter 2-2 encouraged Lethaby to insist that adopting the Japanese printmaking is not mere imitation of a foreign method. A review of an exhibition curated by Strange in 1913 in which early *ukiyo-e* prints were displayed along with European chiaroscuro prints, might have reinforced this idea: ‘No one desires that our artists and designers should imitate Japanese methods; but, as has been pointed out, there is nothing in the

³³ Crawford, ‘United Kingdom’, in *The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America*, ed. by Kaplan, p. 61.

³⁴ Lethaby, ‘Editor’s Preface’ in Fletcher, *Wood-block Printing*, pp. viii-ix.

method which had not been used in Europe'.³⁵ It is clear from the following statement that Lethaby saw the introduction of the Japanese method of printmaking as a way to revive lost European techniques. 'Sufficient has been said to show that in studying Japanese colour-prints, and working more or less after the same method, we are not trying to adopt anything exotic, but rather readapting an art which belongs as much to the West as to the East'.³⁶

For Lethaby and Fletcher, old and primitive crafts thus revived were of great relevance in the age of mechanical production.

In these days the need for reference to primitive handicrafts has not ceased with the advent of the machine. The best achievement of hand-work will always be the standard for reference and on their study must machine craft be based. The machine can only increase the power and scale of the crafts that have already been perfected by hand-work. Their principles, and the art of their design, do not alter under the machine. If the machine disregards these its work becomes base. And it is under the simple conditions of a handicraft that the principles of an art can be most clearly experienced. The best of all the wonderful and excellent work that is produced today by machinery is that which bears evidence in itself of its derivation from arts under the pure conditions of classic craftsmanship, and shows the influence of their study.³⁷

The mission to revive lost crafts in a modern society was carried out in various

³⁵ 'Japanese Colour-prints: Exhibition Opened at South Kensington' the cutting from *The Times*, 6 November, 1913, in VAA, MA/1/H734 'R. Leicester Harmsworth'.

³⁶ Lethaby, 'Editor's Preface' in Fletcher, *Wood-block Printing*, p. xiii.

³⁷ Fletcher, *Wood-block Printing*, pp. xv-xvi.

classes at the Central School, such as the class of writing and illumination by Edward Johnston which was based on his study of medieval manuscripts and Alexander Fisher's revitalising of the art of enamelling. The teaching of woodcut printmaking by Fletcher was yet another example.³⁸

Japanese printmaking at regional art schools

The teaching of the Japanese method of printmaking, initiated in the Central School, was soon to spread to major art schools across the country by Fletcher and his followers. Fletcher, while teaching at the Central School, was the headmaster of the Reading School of Art under the directorship of Walter Crane from 1897 to 1905.³⁹ Fletcher's promotion of the Japanese method was particularly influential at the Reading School where, through his teaching, he nurtured the next generation of woodcut printmakers in colour who were also to contribute to the dissemination of the method through art education, publication and exhibitions in later years. Among his pupils in Reading were Allen Seaby, William Giles and the Swedish-born American B. J. O. Nordfeldt. In 1911, Fletcher's position as headmaster was succeeded by Allen Seaby, who continued to teach the Japanese method in Reading until his retirement in 1933. The Department of Typography and Graphic Communication in Reading University still preserves the set of tools for Japanese printmaking and a number of woodblocks cut in the Japanese manner which suggest that printmaking was taught at the School, following quite faithfully the traditional Japanese method (Figs. 62,63). The portfolio published in the edition of 100 by the

³⁸ Gronberg, 'William Richard Lethaby and the Central School of Arts and Crafts', in *W. R. Lethaby 1857-1931*, ed. by Backmeyer and Gronberg, p. 22.

³⁹ In 1892, School of Art and Science united with the Oxford University Extension College to become a University Extension College, which became University College, Reading in 1902. *Art and the University from 1860*, ed. by Reading Museum and Art Gallery (Reading: Reading Museum and Art Gallery, 1976), n. p.

School in 1923 contains the woodcut colour prints produced in the Japanese manner by Seaby and his pupils. Among these prints were those by Kathleen Hale, who was to become well-known as an illustrator, and the proof from the key block of her work, *The Fawn*, was also printed as an excellent example of the students' work in *The Original Colour Print Magazine* in 1924 (Fig. 64).⁴⁰ Later in her autobiography, Hale recollected Seaby's teaching in Reading.

The principal of the Art Department was Allen Seaby, a wry old man, brittle with rheumatism, but as cheerful and alert as a bird. He was dedicated to traditional woodcuts, a laborious process which he insisted on teaching me. It involved cutting away the background of the design on exceedingly tough blocks of wood with a delicate hammer and chisel, leaving untouched the finest of outlines. One slip of the tool could sever a line and ruin weeks of work. Three blocks were necessary for a three-colour print. Printing from them was tricky and only a few prints reached the required standard. I worked extremely hard, and indeed was only turned out of the studio late in the evenings when it was time for the caretaker to lock up.⁴¹

Fletcher left Reading to become the Director of the Edinburgh College of Art in 1908. Trying to re-create the environment of the old apprenticeship, he described the teaching structure of the Edinburgh College as follows:

The whole system is under the control of a director, who is generally

⁴⁰ *Colour Prints from Wood Blocks* (Reading: School of Art, University College, 1923) 'Colour Prints by Students of Reading University College', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, June, 1924, pp. 18-19.

⁴¹ Kathleen Hale, *A Slender Reputation: an Autobiography* (London: Frederick Warne, 1994), p.44

responsible to the board for the teaching, organization, discipline, and domestic arrangements of the college. Each section is under the immediate control of a head of section, who does a certain amount of teaching himself and supervise the teaching given in the section. It was accepted as a guiding principle when the college was founded that the arts can only be satisfactorily taught by men engaged in them. The members of the staff actually practise what they teach, and are men whose reputations as artists enforces their influence as teachers. To realize this ideal more fully, and in a certain sense restore the old relation of master and apprentice, the heads of sections are all provided with studios in which they carry on their own work and use it as a means of instruction.⁴²

Following this 'guiding principle', Fletcher taught woodcut printing in colour by himself, sometimes together with Mabel Royds or Elizabeth Y. Brunton, until he left the College in 1923. The course, which continued to be taught even after Fletcher's departure, was listed under 'Special and Decorative Arts' or 'Crafts' and described in the prospectuses as 'A course of demonstration in methods based on the Japanese practice of cutting and printing in colour from wood blocks, with special application to poster Designing and Printed Decoration'.⁴³

Japanese printmaking method was also adopted as part of the teaching scheme at the Glasgow School of Art, another major centre of art education in Scotland. The 'Japanese methods' of 'Colour Block Printing' was taught from 1912-13 to 1931-32, listed under the syllabuses of Section of Design and Decorative

⁴² Frank Morley Fletcher, 'Edinburgh College of Art' in *Arts & Crafts: a Review of the Work Executed by Students in the Leading Art Schools of Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Charles Holme (London: Studio, 1916), p. 122.

⁴³ *Edinburgh College of Art Prospectus*, 1908 – 1927. The information from the prospectus was offered by Logan Sisley, the Edinburgh College of Art.

Art until 1926-27 and School of Design thereafter.⁴⁴ As at the Central School, woodblock printmaking was introduced into the curriculum of the Glasgow School as a subject in which students could learn both the design and the actual execution of the design. The Craft Classes in the Decorative Art Studios included wood block printmaking by the Japanese method as one of the options. These classes were held to 'afford opportunities to students in Design and *especially* to advanced students to (a) train themselves to design for certain industries and to superintend the execution of their own designs. (b) Obtain a thorough knowledge of some art or craft by taking a personal part in the actual execution'.⁴⁵ Ian Fleming and Ian A. J. Cheyne, both of whom studied at the Glasgow School of Art, produced prints, using Japanese techniques.⁴⁶

Woodcut printmaking in the Japanese manner was also seen as suitable medium by which students at art schools could learn to understand the properties of materials they used. As mentioned earlier, John Dickson Batten recognised the potential of the Japanese method to make artists exercise their own ingenuity to bring out the beauty of the materials. This potential was of great advantage in art education as it would lead students to learn how to achieve 'truth to materials' through the actual process of designing and execution. Like Fletcher, John Edgar Platt was an artist who was drawn to Japanese printmaking as his main medium of

⁴⁴ The School's prospectuses of the years from 1932-33 to 1937-38 listed 'Colour block printing', which was presumably done in the Japanese manner, although the words 'Japanese methods' were dropped in these years. *Glasgow School of Art Prospectus*, 1912-1938.

⁴⁵ *Glasgow School of Art Prospectus*, 1914-15, p.45.

⁴⁶ Fleming inscribed 'under the guidance of Chica MacNab' in his print, *Parkscape, Rain and Sunshine* (1928). Chica MacNab was the sister of Iain MacNab, the wood engraver who founded the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London. She was employed by the Glasgow School as Probationer in Block Cutting Class for the year 1926-1927. Glasgow School of Art Archives, Glasgow School of Art Minutes Book, no.13, Jan. 1925 – Jan. 1928, p. 63, Satō and Watanabe, *Japan and Britain*, pp.165-166, *Ian Fleming: a Major Retrospective Exhibition, Aberdeen Art Gallery*, [Exhibition catalogue] 1996.

expression and taught at various art schools, contributing to the dissemination of the Japanese techniques country-wide.⁴⁷ After teaching as the Head of the Department of Applied Art at the Edinburgh College of Art under the directorship of Fletcher, he was appointed the Principal of Leicester College of Art in 1923. In his lecture on Japanese woodcut printmaking to his students in Leicester, he stated as follows.

The gift of making representations of the world we live in is only half the mental outfit of an artist, the other half is his delight in the qualities and possibilities of materials. The stained glass worker is at least as much concerned with bringing out the beauty of his coloured glass as with the subject matter of the window. It is this pleasure in and understanding use of the material that keeps art wholesome... Every material has its own set of possibilities and its own set of limitations, and it is the emphasis of these that gives character to a work of art.⁴⁸

In this respect, the 'simple' and 'primitive' method of Japanese printmaking could be used as an ideal lesson for art students. Such a view on Japanese printmaking as had already been revealed by W. R. Lethaby and Fletcher was also shared by Platt. 'The very care and fastidious craftsmanship demanded by the technique of woodblock

⁴⁷ The art schools where Platt taught were as follows: Leek College of Art (Principal, 1910-1919), Harrogate School of Art (Principal, 1919-1920), School of Art, Derby (Principal, 1920), Edinburgh College of Art (Head of Department of Applied Art, 1920-1923), Leicester College of Art (Principal, 1923-1929), Blackheath School of Art, London (1929-1939). His notebook shows that Platt also gave a number of demonstrations of the Japanese method at various places. For example, he listed the venues of the demonstrations which he seems to have given around 1923: Bradford Arts Club, Birmingham School of Art, Art Students Union, Leicester, Southport Art Gallery, MAHSA & NSAM, Leicester, One-man show with Seaby at Bromhead Gallery, London, Colour Print Club, London. John Edgar Platt notebook in the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum.

⁴⁸ G. M. Ellwood, 'Famous Contemporary Art Masters: John Platt', *Drawing and Design*, vol.4, New Series VI, 1924, p.186.

colour printing have a tonic effect on the artist. It is well known that the works of the primitives in any art, who have had to study and consider their material, have a satisfying quality sometimes wanting in the work of their more accomplished successors'.⁴⁹

In this way, as soon as it was introduced by Batten and Fletcher in the 1890s, the Japanese method of printmaking spread quickly through the teaching at major art schools across the country and continued to be taught well into the 1920s and 1930s. In this process, Japanese printmaking was regarded as the medium to embody the Arts and Crafts ideas, which had already been established by the 1890s and continued to have influence in the early twentieth century: artist-craftsmanship, revival of old crafts and truth to materials.⁵⁰ As has already been shown, the Kelmscott prints by Morris and Burne-Jones opened the way to promote woodblock printing as original expression by artist-craftsmen, not as reproductive wood-engraving, which was, to their eyes, one of the negative outcomes of the industrialisation, mechanisation and commercialisation in the Victorian period. However, there still remained gaps between their ideals and the actual outcomes of their practice. The separation between designers and craftsmen prevented the mutual understanding of each other's works. Also, the use of wood-engraving technique to create the effects of woodcut prints resulted in the incongruity between the design and the potential of materials and method used. While wood engravers in the early twentieth century revived the Bewickian tradition of 'white-line'

⁴⁹ John Edgar Platt, 'Notes on Woodblock Colour Printing', *The Studio*, vol.90, no.392, 14 November, 1925, p. 283.

⁵⁰ Stella Tillyard shows the currency of the Arts and Crafts ideas in the first two decades of the twentieth century and how these still prevalent ideas were strategically used by the modernists to make the Post-Impressionist works intelligible and familiar to the English audience. Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism 1900-1920*.

techniques, Fletcher and his followers took an alternative way to overcome these difficulties and to achieve the Arts and Crafts ideas by using the Japanese method.

After the First World War, the artistic tendencies of Britain went into a new phase. The efforts by early 'modernists' in pre-war years, especially Roger Fry and his fellows at the Bloomsbury Group, had made some forms of 'modernist' art familiar to a relatively large audience in Britain⁵¹ and modernism in British art was to develop in various ways by taking in European influences in the inter-war years. At the same time, as Charles Harrison points out, because of 'the comparative parochialism of the great majority of English art of the time', 'many English artists who were neither irretrievably naïve nor unremittingly reactionary still saw good reason in the twenties to draw upon a tradition in English art which had remained unbroken over this same period'.⁵² Social change also had a bearing on popular taste: the inter-war years saw the growth of home ownership among middle-class people, which resulted in the boom of interest in interior decoration.

British colour prints also saw new developments in the 1920s and 1930s. The printmakers who produced prints based on the Japanese method promoted their works for a wider audience through exhibitions and publications as media to publicize their works. The Japanese method of printmaking, which had been followed by woodcut printmakers, was also adopted by another emerging group of printmakers, that is, linocut printmakers. Moreover, in promoting their works, they corresponded to the current artistic and social circumstances mentioned above – they associated their prints with the notions of 'Englishness' and 'modernity' and the general trend of home ownership to various degrees. The next chapter, by looking at these new developments in British colour prints, aims to show how Japanese

⁵¹ Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism 1900-1920*.

⁵² Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 168, 198.

printmaking continued to have an impact in interwar Britain by being appropriated to suit artistic and social change.

Chapter 5

British printmaking based on the Japanese method: 1910s – 1930s

5-1 Exhibitions and publications

Printmaking societies

As shown in the last chapter, by the early twentieth century, the Japanese method of printmaking had been disseminated through teaching at art schools, and, as a result, a number of artists had begun to produce prints using the newly-introduced Japanese techniques, tools and materials. Accordingly, outlets for the publication of their works were to be established.

In this respect, the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour became the central force. It was an exhibiting society founded in 1909, based on the model of the exhibiting society for colour prints in France, la Société de la Gravure Originale en Couleurs. Theodore Roussel, a French etcher resident in London, was appointed as its first President. It was stipulated that the membership should be limited to 100.¹ Immediately after its establishment, the Society was featured in *The Studio* and described as a society which had 'for its aim the production of a high quality of work and takes steps to ensure that the productions of its members shall comply with certain rigorous conditions the fulfilment of which serves as a guarantee of good

¹ Chapman, 'John Edgar Platt and the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour', pp. 148-152.

craftsmanship.² The conditions stipulated to be followed by the members were as follows:

- (a) That all works should be the invention of the artist, to the exclusion of all copies or reproductions of any kind;
- (b) That all prints obtained from original engravings should be the work of the artist, and should be *printed by himself*;
- (c) That all works in the production of which photography has been employed should be excluded;
- (d) That all proofs should be guaranteed as printed in colour by the artist, and not coloured or completed by hand.³

The rule that prints should be designed, carved and printed by the same artists reflected their adherence to 'originality' which, as we saw in Chapter 3, became a big issue in the artistic revival of printmaking in the second half of the nineteenth century. One of the early members of the Society, William Giles, wrote,

A colour print being a laborious undertaking the artist selects his best studies, which themselves represent a selecting vision; the elimination of many sketches for the very best, apart from the technical demands of material and medium, makes a print a unique expression, and the peculiar language of each progressive stage is borne in the mind of the artist from the first and it is this which makes the Society of G.P.C. insist on the importance of 'Original' in contradiction to works of reproduction by men

² W. Lee Hankey, 'The Society of Graver-printers in Colour', *The Studio*, vol.49, 1910, p.289.

³ Hankey, 'The Society of Graver-Printers in Colour', *Studio*, vol.49, 1910, p.290.

other than the artists.⁴

With such adherence to 'originality' in printmaking, the members who used the Japanese method of printmaking undertook the whole process of designing, carving and printing, whereas the process of *ukiyo-e* printmaking was traditionally divided among designers, carvers and printers in Japan. Elizabeth Keith, the British artist who lived in Japan from 1915 to 1924, produced prints in collaboration with professional carvers and printers at Watanabe Shōzaburō's workshop, following the Japanese tradition of *ukiyo-e* printmaking.⁵ (Fig. 65) When she returned to Britain, she realised that her method was not in accord with that adopted by other contemporary British printmakers. Malcolm C. Salaman, who introduced Keith to Giles wrote as follows:

It was not, as a matter of fact till she returned to England in 1924, with all her vivid and artistic prints, that she realised, through a chance meeting at my house with Mr. William Giles, President of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour, when she saw a masterly print of his own, done after less than a year's study, how the tradition of Japanese colour-printing was really a local fetish, and that with all her own skill and intuition, besides the effects of what she had seen locally in practice on her own prints, she felt she could soon master the process of cutting and printing her own designs with her own hands.⁶

⁴ William Giles, 'Exhibitions', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 2, June 1925, p.63.

⁵ *Elizabeth Keith: the Printed Works* (Pasadena, Calif.: Pacific Asia Museum, 1991).

⁶ Malcolm Charles Salaman, *Elizabeth Keith*, *Masters of The Colour Print*, IX, (London; New York: The Studio, 1933), p.3.

Also, it must have been this principle of 'originality' adhered to by British printmakers that encouraged Urushibara Yoshijirō, who was to become one of the major members of the Society, to undertake the whole process of designing, carving and printing. At the same time as he carved and printed the designs offered by other artists including Frank Brangwyn, he also began to produce 'original' prints of his own designs.

The first exhibition of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour was held at the Goupil Gallery, London, in June 1910. Various methods of printmaking such as etching, aquatint, lithography and engraving were allowed as long as a work was printed in colour, and 109 prints were displayed at the exhibition. It is notable that more than a third of the prints exhibited are presumed to have been produced by the Japanese method. The authors of these prints included Frank Morley Fletcher, John Dickson Batten, Sydney Lee, Allen Seaby and William Giles.⁷ From then on, the Society's exhibition continued to be held annually in London except during the war years,⁸ and were patronised by Campbell Dodgson, Keeper at the British Museum, his successor, A. M. Hind, and Malcolm Hardie, Keeper of the Department of Engraving, Illustration and Design at the Victoria and Albert Museum, through the purchases of the exhibits for the museums.⁹ The Society also had an

⁷ *Catalogue of the Inaugural Exhibition of Works by the Members of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour, Goupil Gallery, 1910.*

⁸ The annual exhibitions were held at Goupil Gallery, 5 Bedford Street, Strand (1910-1914), Bromhead, Cutts & Co, 18 Cork Street, Burlington Gardens (1920-1933), Colnaghi & Co, 144-146 New Bond Street (1934) and Walker's Gallery, 118 New Bond Street (1935-1938). The Society also held Special Exhibition of Trial Proofs, Variations & Drawings for Colour Prints at Bromhead, Cutts & Co in 1924 in order to 'impress the observer, not only with the way in which the artistic intention of the final state is kept in view throughout, but also with the care taken and the sacrifices made in the process.' 'The Making of Colour Prints', *The Times*, 11 October, 1924, p. 8.

⁹ Chapman, 'John Edgar Platt and the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour', p. 153. Also, an article in *The Times* reported that a signed proof of every subject displayed at the 14th annual exhibition in 1929 was purchased by Captain Percy F. Godenrath, the Canadian print dealer, commenting 'This acquisition of an entire London

international audience as its exhibitions toured to Europe, North America and Japan.¹⁰ At the same time, prints produced in the Japanese manner continued to occupy the largest number. The predominance of the Japanese method was further reinforced when the presidency of the Society was assumed by William Giles and John Edgar Platt, both of whom were disciples of Fletcher, in the years 1926-39 and 1939-53 respectively. Accordingly, many of the contemporary printmakers who adopted the Japanese method as their primary means of artistic expression were numbered among its members. The two major experts on Japanese prints in Britain at that time, Laurence Binyon and Edward F. Strange, were also listed as its Honorary Members.

The activities of the Society were also publicised through the publication of journals, *The Original Colour Print Magazine* and *The Colour Print Club Journal*. *The Original Colour Print Magazine* was edited by William Giles from 1924 onwards. The magazine was published 'for the development and appreciation of the Original Colour Print in its widest sense, including Original Bookplates and the correlated Arts of Heraldry, Calligraphy and Design'¹¹ and dealt with various aspects of colour prints, including the technical advice given by the practitioners of the Japanese method such as Urushibara Yoshijirō, Allen Seaby and W. J. Philips. Also, original prints produced by the artists were inserted in each issue of the magazine. The publication of the magazine was forced to end in 1926, owing probably to Giles'

exhibition is perhaps unprecedented in the annals of art.' 'Colour Prints for Canada', *The Times*, 20 March, 1929, p.21.

¹⁰ The cities to which the Society's exhibitions toured between 1910 and 1913 are as follows: Paris (December 1910, December 1911, May 1912), Brussels (March 1912), Moscow (May 1912), Munich (June 1912), Toronto (October 1912), New York (October 1912), Detroit (December 1912), Pittsburg (January 1913), Cleveland (February 1913), Baltimore (March 1913), Philadelphia (April 1913). It is also reported that an exhibition of the prints by the members of the Society was held under the auspices of Asahi, one of the leading newspapers in Japan, in 1923, *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, 1924, p.21.

¹¹ *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.1.

appointment as the President of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour in the same year.¹² However, Giles started to edit another magazine called *The Colour Print Club Journal* in 1931, which was published as the organ of the Colour Print Club, an offshoot of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour. The journal was proclaimed as 'the official organ of the New Movement.'¹³ In these publications, the strong impact of Japanese printmaking on the woodcut printmakers affiliated to the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour was acknowledged. In the foreword of *The Colour Print Journal*, it was stated that the 'Society of Graver-Printers in Colour came into being through the popularity that colour achieved in the West on the advent of the Japanese Colour Print, which presented a new expression in Original Colour Prints.'¹⁴ Some of the members of the Society also regularly published books, articles and leaflets on printmaking in the Japanese manner.¹⁵ In 1923, an article in *The Queen* recommended the making of colour woodcuts in the Japanese manner as promising career for women. The reasons were varied: the schools that taught this method and the exhibitions of colour prints were increasing, women could work

¹² Giles explained that he could not continue the magazine owing to the amount of time required to sacrifice for its editing. William Giles, *Original Colour Print Magazine Prospectus for 1926*, n.p. Another reason for the sudden end of the magazine may be ascribed to the death of Giles' wife, Ada M. Shrimpton, who was also an artist of colour prints and offered much help in editing the magazine. On her death, she left a bequest known as the A. M. Shrimpton and William Giles Bequest to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, from which £3,000 was to be used for 'the purchases of European, Japanese or other foreign colour prints by deceased artists' and for the competitions and awards held for the encouragement of colour printing by contemporary British artists. Chapman, 'John Edgar Platt and the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour', p. 154, 'Extracts Embodying the Will and Wishes of the Late Ada Matilda Shrimpton (Giles)', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no.3, June 1926, pp.127-128.

¹³ *Colour Print Club Journal*, 1931, p.5.

¹⁴ *Colour Print Club Journal*, 1931, p.5.

¹⁵ Allen W. Seaby, 'Colour-printing from Wood-blocks', *The Studio*, 1919, pp.149-158, *Hand printing in colour* (Leicester: Dryad Handicrafts, c1921), John Edgar Platt, 'Notes on Woodblock Colour Printing', *The Studio*, vol.90, no.392, 14 November, 1925, pp. 280-283, 'Colour Woodcuts', *The Artist*, vol.VII, March 1934, pp.30-32, April 1934, pp.62-64, May 1934, pp.95-97, June 1934, pp.128-130, July 1934, pp.162-164, Aug 1934, pp. 195-197, Vol. VIII, September 1934, pp. 26-28, *Colour Woodcuts: a Book of Reproductions and a Handbook of Method* (London, Sir I Pitman & sons, ltd., 1938).

on this medium at home as it required only a small set of tools and the market for colour prints was expanding.¹⁶

Urushibara must have played a particularly important role in providing useful information about Japanese printmaking to British contemporaries. He wrote articles for *The Original Colour Print Magazine* and explained from his experience as a professional carver and printer minute details of the Japanese techniques and materials which had not been made known in the books and articles written by western experts. As a member of the Art Workers' Guild, he also gave a demonstration for other members. Binyon wrote, 'Mr. Urushibara is a member of that delightful fellowship the Art-Workers' Guild, and when he gave a demonstration one evening of his colour printing, his brethren of the Guild were immensely impressed with his swift and certain mastery.'¹⁷

Stimulated by the activities of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour, two exhibiting societies for the promotion of colour prints on the similar lines were established: the Colour Woodcut Society in London in 1919 and the Central Club of Colour Woodblock Engravers in Birmingham in 1924. The Colour Woodcut Society, whose members largely overlapped with those of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour, held annual exhibition in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁸ It was reported that 'Many of the prints in the seventh annual exhibition of the Colour Woodcut Society, at the Macrae Gallery, 16 Fulham-road, are in the Japanese manner...A great deal of attention is paid by the artists to showing what they can do with a medium which is

¹⁶ E. M. Goodman, 'Careers: Their Price and Promise: the Work of the Colour Print Artist', *The Queen*, March 8, 1923, pp. 312, 330.

¹⁷ Binyon, 'The Art of Yoshijiro Urushibara', in *Ten Woodcuts*, n. p.

¹⁸ The catalogues of the fourth to sixteenth annual exhibitions of the Colour Woodcut Society (1923-1935) are found in the Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum. The exhibitions were held at the following galleries: Macrae Gallery, 16 Fulham Road (1923-1932), The Foyle Art Gallery, Charing Cross Road (1933-1934), and The Cooling Galleries, 92 New Bond Street (1935).

difficult to master but which, once mastered, makes a dull design look remarkable at first sight.¹⁹ Also, one of the founding members of the Central Club of Colour Woodblock Engravers, Muriel A. F. Grove, described how former students at the Midland Art School were inspired by Fletcher's book and by the demonstration of Japanese colour printing given by Urushibara at the School, which eventually led to the formation of the Club, having agents in Canada, Africa, India and America and an annual exhibition in Birmingham.²⁰

French and American connections

The activities of the members of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour also had international connections. The Society's first exhibition toured to Paris in 1910. Also, colour prints by John D. Batten and William Giles were displayed at the first exhibition of the French printmaking society, la Société de la Gravure sur Bois Originale in 1912. About these exhibitions, an article in a French magazine, *Art et Décoration*, reported, 'L'exposition à Paris de la "Société anglaise des graveurs imprimeurs" et celle de la "Société de la gravure sur bois originale", qui s'est tenue récemment au Musée des Arts Décoratifs, dénotent une renaissance de l'impression en couleurs à l'eau, par les procédés de la gravure sur bois.'²¹ It is also notable that Urushibara visited Paris frequently and helped the French printmakers, Prosper-Alphonse Isaac and Jules Chadel, experiment with the Japanese method of printmaking. They produced prints in collaboration among two or three of them.²²

¹⁹ 'Coloured Woodcuts', *The Times*, 14 October, 1926, p. 12.

²⁰ Muriel A. F. Grove, 'The Central Club of Colour Wood-block Engravers: Its Origin and Activities', *Colour Print Club Journal*, 1932, pp.49-51.

²¹ Isaac, 'La Gravure sur Bois: à la Manière Japonaise', *Art et Décoration*, vol.33, 1913, p.155.

²² Hélène Goarzan, 'Urushibara to Isakku to Shaderu: Yōroppa ni okeru Japonisumu to Shikisai Mokuhanga' [Urushibara, Isaac and Chadel: Japonisme and Colour Woodcuts in Europe], *Gareria Tsūshin* [Nouvelles de l'Estampe], 30 (1996), 7-15 (pp.10-14).

'Outil de Graveur', the print which depicts etcher's plate, needle and dabber, bears seals of these three artists.(Fig. 66)

In the United States, there were also artists who adopted the Japanese method of printmaking from the 1890s onwards. However, while some artists including Arthur Wesley Dow, Edna Boies Hopkins, B. J. O. Nordfeldt and Elizabeth Colwell undertook the whole process of designing, carving and printing, the artists such as Helen Hyde, Bertha Lum and Charles Hovey Pepper actually lived in Japan and employed professional craftsmen to carve and print their designs.²³ Giles criticised the latter group of artists thus:

Later America came into the movement and as it is relatively much closer to Japan, it is not unusual for her wood-block workers to go to Japan, especially those living on the Pacific coast. They are not content with learning the craft, but exploit the services of the skilled Japanese Block-Cutter, and Printer, to translate their work, though they do not hesitate to sign their own names. Is it sheer lack of humour, when they state they destroy the blocks "with their own hands" when the edition is complete!²⁴

While Urushibara transmitted the Japanese printmaking techniques to France, Frank Morley Fletcher also established an Anglo-American linkage as he emigrated to America to become the first director of the Santa Barbara School of the Arts in

²³ Julia Meech, 'Reinventing the Exotic Orient', in *Japonisme Comes to America: the Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts 1876-1925*, ed. by Julia Meech (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1990), pp. 101-222, Andrew Stevens, 'The Spread of Style: Americans and the Color Woodcut of the Early Twentieth Century', in *Color Woodcut International*, ed. by Javid, pp. 44-53.

²⁴ William Giles, 'The Modern Movement of the Colour Print', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no.1, June 1924, p. 7.

1923. He taught Japanese printmaking techniques at the School as 'the most dominant and constructive influence' as Joseph Knowles recollects.²⁵

The British printmakers who consolidated their position through the above mentioned exhibiting societies were to form one of the factions in the artistic revival of printmaking in Britain. As has already been mentioned, the period after the mid-nineteenth century saw conscious efforts by printmakers to promote prints as independent art form. However, the same period also saw the segregation of each printmaking technique. According to Frances Carey and Anthony Griffiths, with few exceptions a 'printmaker was known as an etcher or a lithographer or a wood engraver, and seldom thought of trying another technique...Each technique was contained in its own world, with its own artists, its specialist societies, and, more often than not, its specialist publishers.'²⁶ Although they had some concerns and interests in common, each group of printmakers insisted on the merits of their own techniques to emulate each other. The woodcut and linocut printmakers were no exception and insisted on the desirability of their prints by associating them with the notions of 'Englishness' and 'modernity' and the booming interest in house decoration among middle-class people. The next sections will consider how the woodcut and linocut printmakers in colour promoted their methods by reinterpreting aspects of Japanese printmaking in these current British contexts.

5-2 'Englishness' of colour prints

²⁵ The financial crisis of the School in 1930 and his failing eye-sight, however, prevented him from developing a substantial group of printmakers of the Japanese method around him in America. Joseph Knowles, 'Santa Barbara's Historic Link to Color Wood Block Printing', *Noticias*, vol. 16, no.1 (winter 1970), n.p., *British Printmakers 1855-1955*, ed. by Garton, p. 25.

²⁶ Frances Carey and Anthony Griffiths, *Avant-Garde British Printmaking: 1914-1960* (London: British Museum Publications, 1990), pp.9-10.

Colour prints in watercolour

As has been mentioned earlier, it was clearly stated in the periodicals of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour that the works produced by the members of the Society were directly influenced by the Japanese colour prints. In this respect, they paid particular attention to the watercolourly effects achieved through the adoption of Japanese techniques, tools and materials. 'The modern movement of the Original Colour Print in Water-colour is the direct outcome of the Japanese Colour Print from woodblocks printed by hand without the use of Press; the blocks are not inked by a roller or dabber, but with washes of colour applied to them with brushes. The result is a print possessing the gradations of a water-colour totally unlike a machine distributed tint.'²⁷

As a good example of this effect, a print by William J. Phillips, 'Summer' (Fig. 67) was shown in the second number of *The Original Colour Print Magazine*. Giles explained, 'In this print we should find delight in the gradated washes of colour, a quality only obtainable by this method of printing, the luminosity of the pigments due to complete absence of oil and therefore freedom from future oxidization.'²⁸ As exemplified by this print, many of the works produced by the printmakers who adopted the Japanese method showed the luminosity, transparency and lightness of watercolour pigment to its utmost effect, so much so that they looked as if they were original watercolours. (Figs. 68-71) The strong affinity to watercolours made a commentator on the exhibition of the Colour Woodcut Society in *The Times* state 'it often leaves one wondering why – except for purposes of multiplication – the artist went to the trouble of cutting blocks when he might have got what he appears to be

²⁷ William Giles, 'The Modern Movement of the Colour Print', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.6.

²⁸ William Giles, 'The Original Colour Print "Summer"', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 2, June 1925, p.47.

aiming at in a water-colour painting. Not unnaturally, this impression is left by some of the most technically accomplished prints, such as "Nightjar" by Mr. Allen W. Seaby.²⁹ It is also interesting to note that many of the subjects they depicted in their prints were topographical scenes and images of wild life which had traditionally been popular subjects of watercolours.

It is possible to see these works as examples of these artists' efforts to develop their own styles of colour prints which were derived from their interpretation of Japanese colour prints but which could be distinguished from Japanese prototypes. In his article, William Giles emphasised that, unlike the artists of the previous generation who imitated Japanese prints in the fashion of Japonisme in the nineteenth century, the printmakers of the Society had reached a 'true understanding' of Japanese prints, by way of which they absorbed the essence of Japanese printmaking and created their own styles of colour prints.

The reaction from the black oil painting began with the water-colour school early in the nineteenth century, and later found expression in the pre-Raphaelite Movement. With the advent of the Japanese colour print, public taste was already prepared for its reception and able to appreciate its dimensional and decorative masses of colour. In these colour prints chiaroscuro was entirely eliminated, the antithesis of the copper-plate print. Without doubt, it was the landscape prints of Hiroshige with their rendering of atmospheric planes of colour that inspired the European artist to emulation. Until quite recently, there was an undue imitation of these Japanese prints without a true understanding of their spirit, the black line, and the limitation of colour that often was the result of economic necessity

²⁹ 'Colour Woodcuts', *The Times*, 10 October, 1928, p. 14.

and the sumptuary laws that enforced a restricted number of colours, as Col. E. Strange has pointed out in his recent book on Hiroshige. The universal desire is now for lighter and more atmospheric colour.³⁰

As one of their attempts to differentiate their prints from Japanese prototypes, the restriction or elimination of black outline should be mentioned. Again, the print by Phillips, 'Summer', was explained as a good example in this regard.

A Japanese colour print is a creation of pattern, while the limited number of colour printings was an economic factor determined by cheap production, making the introduction of a black outline necessary, especially in their figure work. If this figure by Mr. Phillips be compared with those of Harunobu or Utamaro it will be found that the figure has been regarded in terms of substance, and planes of modelling. It is not dependent on intricacy of a gorgeous fabric pattern and we have insisted a more objective truth.³¹

The 'objective truth' which they tried to achieve through the use of planes and modelling instead of outlines was believed to be the tradition of Western art.

A black line in a colour print lowers the tone of the colour of a print; the reflected light is not strong enough to overcome it as in the case of

³⁰ William Giles, 'Present Day Tendencies of the Original Colour Print' *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 3, June 1926, p.120.

³¹ William Giles, 'The Original Colour Print "Summer"', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 2, June 1925, p.47.

irradiation of stained glass it negates the necessity of truth of plane against plane which is a first demand in objective vision and the ideal of illusion which has become traditional of the West. When the colour print artist feels this, his line is either restricted or printed greyer or of another colour or eliminated altogether, and henceforth he sees colour in truthful juxtaposition of planes.³²

Such contrivances could be seen as their efforts to follow what John Dickson Batten had insisted on earlier.

Although in all technical matters it seems to be wisest to follow fairly closely the methods of the Japanese, yet as regards the intricate problems of design to which the possibilities of this craft give rise, I am convinced that it would be fatal to accept and adopt as our own the beautiful and consistent scheme that the Japanese have evolved, and I believe that if this art is ever to take root in the West it will be necessary for us to weigh for ourselves each problem and to work out our own solution of the appropriate use of colour, and tone, and shadow, and line.³³

The strong affinity to watercolours was the solution which they reached in order to make colour woodcut prints 'take root' in their native soil.

Watercolours, which had first developed for religious purposes such as illumination of manuscripts in the Middle Ages in Europe, flourished especially in

³² William Giles, 'Exhibitions', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 2, June 1925, p.62.

³³ John D. Batten, 'Letter from Mr. J. D. Batten Concerning His Water-colour Print "The Harpies"', *The Studio*, vol.10, 1897, p.52.

England from the eighteenth century. The first exhibition society that exhibited only watercolours, the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, was founded in 1804. Its first exhibition in 1805 was highly successful and, in 1823, W. H. Pyne, commenting on the watercolours of J. M. W. Turner and Thomas Girtin, described how the English watercolour established itself as source of national pride: 'Thus these two distinguished artists, improving rapidly, as by inspiration, whilst young men, achieved the honour of founding that English School, as it now stands recorded, the admiration of all nations.'³⁴ Watercolour was generally regarded as suitable for depicting the English scenery and climate and prevailed as amateur practice, which made the medium familiar to a wide range of people.³⁵ The late nineteenth century saw the revaluation of English watercolours of the golden age, the last quarter of the eighteenth century, among scholars and collectors,³⁶ and in *History of the Old Water-Colour Society* by John Lewis Roget, published in 1891, the medium was proclaimed as 'a truly national art.'³⁷ The final chapter of Laurence Binyon's *English Water-colour*, which was published in 1933, was entitled 'Revival' and the contemporary watercolourists who were active from the late nineteenth century were seen 'to re-create the tradition of English water-colour.'³⁸ Still in the 1920s, watercolours, which 'represented a worthy British taste in contrast to the more alarming style being adopted by foreign artists', that is, the modernist style

³⁴ An article by W. H. Pyne in *Somerset House Gazette*, 8 November, 1823, p.66, quoted in Jonathan Mayne, 'Taste in Water-colour', *Apollo*, 77 (April 1963), 289-294, (p. 289).

³⁵ Michael Clarke, *The Tempting Prospect: a Social History of English Watercolours* (London: The British Museum Publications, 1981), pp. 103-122.

³⁶ Mayne, 'Taste in Water-colour', *Apollo*, vol.77, April 1963, p. 289.

³⁷ John Lewis Roget, *A History of the 'Old Water-colour' Society, Now the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, with Biographical Notices of Its Older and of All Deceased Members and Associates*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans & Green, 1891), I, p. 2.

³⁸ Laurence Binyon, *English Water-colours* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1933), p. 190.

promoted by artists in Europe, were immensely popular among the public.³⁹ The woodcut colour prints, by being made akin to watercolours, must have appealed to the taste of the public for their similarity to the 'truly national art.'

'The English School'

In this respect, it is interesting to note that William Giles, the spokesman of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour, called the style of colour prints by the members of the Society 'the English School.' For example, he wrote of Fletcher and his followers, that is, the printmakers who adopted the Japanese method, as follows. 'A quarter of a century has passed since the pioneer efforts of F. Morley Fletcher, already mentioned. To him the English School owes its inspiration, and the Editor takes this opportunity to acknowledge indebtedness to his influence.'⁴⁰ Also, a print by Allen W. Seaby, 'Blackcock and Greyhen' (Fig. 72) was mentioned as follows:

His outlook is individual, in spite of the remark one sometimes hears, that it betrays Japanese influence; we often pass our verdicts without sufficient consideration. The English School is remarkably free from undue Japanese influence; to understand what this imputation can truly imply, we must think of artists who employ Japanese craftsmen to cut and print their blocks. To the uninitiated this may seemingly place the "Original" artist at a disadvantage, but it will be otherwise when the history of a National Art comes to be written. Original art thrives best when thrown upon its own resources; indeed great art is often the outcome of a great misunderstanding,

³⁹ Simon Fenwick, *The Enchanted River: 200 Years of the Royal Watercolour Society* (Bristol: Sansom and Co., 2004), pp. 128-131.

⁴⁰ William Giles, 'The Modern Movement of the Colour Print', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.6.

a great exaggeration, or some strong emphasis.⁴¹

Although its techniques were borrowed from a foreign art, woodcut colour printmaking was promoted as a form of art which was, as it were, naturalised on the English soil and, like watercolours, proclaimed as 'National Art'.

Such claims and aesthetic styles they promoted could be seen as a response to the general climate of the prevalence of the ideas of 'Englishness' in the same period. By the 1920s, the ideas of 'Englishness' had been nurtured on not only political but also cultural levels. In the age when national identities were enthusiastically forged and a number of 'traditions' were invented⁴², the ideas of 'Englishness' were popularised among the majority of the British people through various branches of culture.⁴³ Visual arts were no exception and a number of artists expressed 'Englishness' in their works in various ways.⁴⁴ As David Peters Corbett, Ysanne Holt, and Fiona Russell point out, the expression of 'Englishness' in art was closely related to the increased unease generally felt in the face of the modernisation which entailed rapid social and economic transformation, Britain's growing status as an empire and threats from other international powers. As a result, it took the form of 'recoil, a revulsion from modern life and its symbols' and many artists sought the subject of their works in pre-industrial and anti-urban locations.⁴⁵ Such locations

⁴¹ William Giles, 'The Colour Print of Allen W. Seaby', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.8.

⁴² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire* (New York: Vintage, 1989) pp. 142-164, Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Hobsbawm and Ranger, pp.263-308.

⁴³ *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, ed. by Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

⁴⁴ *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940*, ed. by David Peters Corbett, Ysanne Holt, and Fiona Russell (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁴⁵ David Peters Corbett, Ysanne Holt and Fiona Russell, 'Introduction', in *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940*, ed. by Corbett, Holt and Russell, pp. ix-xix (pp.x-xi).

had traditionally been popular subjects of watercolours. From the second half of the eighteenth century, watercolours had been used predominantly for depicting topographical scenes with the development of recreational travel. As Greg Smith points out, 'From the mid-nineteenth century through to the present day, watercolours have been used to convey a nostalgic and consoling image of an essentially pre-industrial society, which has come to define an important aspect of national identity.'⁴⁶ This feature, together with the general recognition as a 'national art', made watercolour an ideal medium to appeal 'Englishness' visually to a wide range of people. The colour woodcuts which also depicted idyllic landscapes and wild lives with similar visual effects to those of watercolours must have had the same attraction to the public.

5-3 'Modernity' of colour prints

'Modernity' in woodcuts

While many of the woodcut printmakers continued to produce prints which recall the tradition of English watercolour, several began to create more modernistic design in their prints in the 1930s. Among the works by such artists, those by John Edgar Platt epitomised this tendency most conspicuously. Platt, who taught at various art schools around the country and became the President of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour from 1938 to 1953, produced a considerable number of colour woodcut prints. One of his earliest colour woodcuts, 'Venantius of Ravenna'

⁴⁶ Preservation of the nostalgic images of rural Britain which were under threat of disappearing in the face of modernisation and wars was one of the major functions of watercolourists, as exemplified by the images of home counties in watercolours by Helen Allingham and Myles Birket Foster Greg in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the Recording Britain project during the Second World War. Greg Smith, 'Watercolour: Purpose and Practice', in Simon Fenwick and Greg Smith, *The Business of Watercolour: a Guide to the Archives of the Royal Watercolour Society* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), pp. 1-34 (p. 29).

(1916) (Fig. 73), is reminiscent of the prints in the Pre-Raphaelite style by John Dickson Batten. In 1922, he produced a much simplified design with flat masses of bright colours for the poster, 'Chameleon. For the zoo... alight at Camden Town' issued by the London Underground (Fig. 74), although he continued to make woodcuts of landscapes represented realistically throughout the 1920s (Fig. 75). In his lecture in 1924, he talked to his students at the Leicester School of Art as follows:

For a medium to become widely used it is necessary that it should be well adapted to express the art impulse of the particular time and place. The effects most readily expressed in wood-block colour printing are just those which have always interested the artists of the Far East, that is emphatic expression of subject by selection and arrangement of essentials and the suppression of all that is irrelevant. It is interesting that this method as perfected by Japanese has now become available for Western artists just at a time when its particular character is in accord with the current ideas and aims of Western art.⁴⁷

From around 1930, this interest in 'emphatic expression' came to be actually reflected in his woodcuts, whose designs were composed of simple shapes, colours being often superimposed on one after another (Fig. 76). Such woodcuts were also the outcome of his 'respect for material', which he mentioned as one of the increasingly evident tendencies of modern art.⁴⁸ He argued that the materials and techniques used in the Japanese method of printmaking necessarily led artists to

⁴⁷ G. M. Ellwood, 'Famous Contemporary Art Masters: John Platt', *Drawing and Design*, vol.4, New Series VI, 1924, p. 186.

⁴⁸ John Edgar Platt, 'Notes on Woodblock Colour Printing', *The Studio*, vol.90, no.392, 14 November, 1925, p. 280.

modernistic design.

And then there is the modern preoccupation with pictorial construction, with the placing and relations of planes, shapes and lines. Woodblock colour printing compels clear thinking about pictorial construction, because the lines and masses printed from woodblocks are necessarily precise and definite. This medium necessitates selection and elimination, the expression of the idea stripped of non-relevant accidents, and so of its very nature makes the artist aim for an abstraction rather than a literal rendering of nature.⁴⁹

Also, in designing woodcuts, he stressed the importance of the expression of 'rhythm', one of the qualities which had become key elements in modern art.

The attractiveness of the general pattern of a picture depends much on the rhythms of the mass forms, their size, shape, and disposition. The necessity in this medium for a fully realized working-drawing gives opportunity for deliberate working out of such rhythmic elements. Rhythm may come from the designer's innate sense of metrical stress, by the use of such technical methods of design as the geometrical subdivision of the picture space, by the organized sequence of tone and colour relations, by the emphasis of the calligraphic qualities arising out of the free and responsive movements of the trained hand, or by developments from the rhythm suggested by the nature and organic structure of the object portrayed. The

⁴⁹ Platt, 'Notes on Woodblock Colour Printing', *The Studio*, vol.90, no.392, 14 November, 1925, p. 283.

colour-woodcut depends, not on naturalistic representation, but on rhythmic coherence.⁵⁰

The interest in simplified, rhythmic design was also shared by Meryl Watts, one of Platt's students at Blackheath School of Art, and Ian Alec Johnson Cheyne, who learned the Japanese techniques of printmaking at the Glasgow School of Art, as shown in their colour woodcut prints (Fig. 77).⁵¹

Claude Flight and the Grosvenor School of Modern Art

However, while works of such subtly modernistic design were limited to those of a small number of woodcut printmakers, the linocut printmakers who appropriated certain aspects of Japanese printmaking expressed 'modernity' in a much more explicit way in both the designs and the subjects of their prints. A considerable amount of literature has been written on British linocuts between the wars and on Claude Flight, the leading figure of the movement.⁵² Most of these previous studies, however, emphasised the severe criticism expressed by Flight of the way Frank Morley Fletcher and his followers imitated the Japanese techniques of printmaking, thereby taking little account of the fact that Flight also introduced some aspects of Japanese printmaking. Therefore, this section aims to shed new light on the British

⁵⁰ Platt, *Colour Woodcuts*, pp. 35-36.

⁵¹ Chapman, 'John Edgar Platt and the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour', p. 157.

⁵² Gordon Samuel, and Nicola Penny, *The Cutting Edge of Modernity: Linocuts of the Grosvenor School* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Lund Humphries, 2002), Caroline Taylor, 'Flight Power', *Antique Collecting*, (May/June, 1996), 54-59, Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age: Claude Flight and the Grosvenor School* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), Stephen Coppel, *Claude Flight and His Followers: the Colour Linocut Movement between the Wars* (Canberra, A.C.T.: Australian National Gallery, 1992), Lora S. Urbanelli, *The Grosvenor School: British Linocuts between the Wars* (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1988), Michael Parkin, 'Claude Flight and the Linocut', *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, 6 (Fall 1987), 26-33, *British Colour Linocuts of the 1920s & 1930s* (London: Redfern Gallery, 1985), *Claude Flight and His Pupils* (Colchester: Minories, 1973).

linocuts between the wars by examining how Flight and his followers tried to promote linocut as the embodiment of 'modernity' by integrating certain elements of Japanese printmaking into this newly invented art form.

Linoleum, which is made from solidified linseed oil and cork dust with canvas backing, was invented as floor covering in the mid-nineteenth century, and, by the 1910s, various artists came to experiment with this material as printing block. These pioneers included German Expressionists, Russian avant-garde artists and the artists resident in London in the early 1910s such as Horace Brodzky and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (Fig. 78). However, while these pre-war linocut prints were produced predominantly in black and white, inter-war Britain saw remarkable developments of the linocut using colour. At the centre of this flowering of colour linocuts was Claude Flight and his students at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London, and his students at the school.

Claude Flight, after spending many years as engineer, librarian, farmer and bee-keeper, enrolled at the Heatherley's School of Art at the age of thirty-one in 1912, the year when the Italian Futurist artists had the first London exhibition. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, a poet and publicist who had announced the 'Initial Manifesto of Futurism' as the leader of the Futurist movement in 1909, made his first visit to London as a propagandist of avant-garde literature in 1910. By the time he returned to London in March 1912, his ideas gained support from the artists such as Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla and Gino Severini, who signed the 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting' and aggressively promoted the expression of speed and energy in paintings in praise of the dynamism of the modern machine age. Boccioni, Carrà and Russolo came with Marinetti for the opening of the exhibition, 'Works by the Italian Futurist Painters', at the Sackville Gallery, and Severini came later in the year for his one-man show at Marlborough

Gallery. These exhibitions, together with the extravagant manifestos and performances of Marinetti and his followers, caused bewilderment among the British public and excitement among students at London art schools. Flight is believed to have been introduced to the Italian Futurists through C. R. W. Nevinson, the most ardent advocate of Futurism in England who occasionally attended Heatherley's School.⁵³ After going into military service in France during the First World War, Flight spent 'a year in French art schools', which suggests the possibility of his contact with continental developments in art.⁵⁴ At the same time, he bought a cave residence at Chantemerle on the Seine, about forty miles away from Paris, which was to become his annual summer retreat in the inter-war years, often visited by his fellow artists.

Back in England, in 1922, Flight became an active member of the Seven & Five Society, which was founded in 1919. Its manifesto published in 1920 declared that the Society was 'not a group formed to advertise a new "ism"' and that its object was 'merely to express what they feel in terms that shall be intelligible, and not to demonstrate a theory nor to attach a tradition.' While the provincialism and conservatism of the Seven & Five Society in its early years was criticised by Wyndham Lewis, one of the most radical minds of the time in English art,⁵⁵ the linocuts, watercolours and oil paintings by Flight displayed at the exhibitions of the Society from 1922 to 1928 attracted attention of the press as 'the boldest spirit of the little coterie.'⁵⁶ Maurice Fort in *Artwork* wrote of his work, 'For those who like approximate classifications, his work may be described as a mixture of Futurism and

⁵³ Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ Letter from Adrian Hill to Michael Parkin, quoted in Parkin, 'Claude Flight and the Linocut', p. 26.

⁵⁵ Harrison, *English Art and Modernism*, p. 164.

⁵⁶ P. G. Konody, 'The '7&5': Mr. Claude Flight's Picture', *The Observer*, n.d. [Redfern Gallery clipping file], quoted in Urbanelli, *The Grosvenor School*, p. 14.

Cubism. He is, however, more profound and less confused than the early Italian Futurists, and his work is more immediately attractive than that of most French Cubists.⁵⁷ In 1927, his work was published together with works of Ben Nicholson and leading European modernist figures in the avant-garde magazine, *Ray*, which was edited by his friend and fellow member at the Seven & Five Society, Sydney Hunt (Fig. 79).⁵⁸ However, as the Seven & Five Society moved toward total abstraction after Ben Nicholson became its chairman in 1926, Flight's approach to modernism came to be regarded as insufficiently progressive by other members of the Society and he was eventually voted out in 1928.

It is not certain when Flight first realised the potentials of linocuts. However, it is possible to think that he was much inspired by the efforts of Frank Cizek, the Austrian educationist who promoted the use of linoleum at art classes for children in Vienna.⁵⁹ The works of Cizek's pupils were shown at an exhibition in London in 1908, which was seen by Flight. In his later writings, Flight often mentioned about Cizek as the influential figure in the promotion of linocut in Europe:

Professor Cizek, of Vienna, seems to have been the first European of any standing to use linoleum colour printing in what one may call a European way; this, in the art classes which he directs so wonderfully and with such apparent success; and it was Professor Cizek who realized what a handy and sympathetic medium is linoleum for children to express their delightful and

⁵⁷ Maurice Fort, 'The Seven and Five Society', *Artwork*, vol. 2, no. 6, January – March 1926, p. 98.

⁵⁸ The first number of *Ray* in 1927 was illustrated by a watercolour by Flight, *Trawler*. The magazine was short-lived and lasted for only two numbers.

⁵⁹ A. S. Levetus, 'Professor Čizek's Classes for Children, Vienna', *The Studio*, vol. 91, no. 396, March, 1926, pp. 168-171.

naïve imaginings.

Flight was an editor of *The Arts and Crafts Quarterly* from 1926 to 1927 and wrote six articles on colour linocut for the magazine.⁶⁰ The articles were compiled as a book, *Lino-cuts*, in 1927 and became a standard manual on the medium.⁶¹ This book was complemented by his further handbook, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, which was published 1934.⁶²

From 1926, Flight was invited to teach linocut printmaking in colour at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art, which was housed in large premises at 33 Warwick Square, Pimlico, London. The School was founded in October 1925 by Iain MacNab, a Scottish wood engraver and former joint principal of Heatherley's School, to 'encourage students to express their own individual ideas rather than be forced to accept worn-out academic theories.' The School accepted anyone with enthusiasm for art and students could 'join at any time and for any length of time, their term starting from the day they start work.'⁶³ Various subjects were taught at the School, but the linocut class by Flight was by far the most popular and gathered students from around the world. The international students who came all the way to London, attracted to Flight's linocut class, included Lill Tschudi from Switzerland and Dorrit Black, Ethel Spowers and Eveline Syme from Australia. Syme wrote about the time when she happened to see the book by Flight, *Lino-cuts*, at the Depot of the Arts and Crafts Society of Victoria in Australia in 1928, 'Most of us who had experimented in the medium in Victoria owed our technique to Morley Fletcher's book on Japanese

⁶⁰ Claude Flight, 'Linoleum-Cut Colour Printing', papers no. 1-6, *Arts and Crafts Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 6, March 1926 – vol. 2, no. 1, May 1927.

⁶¹ Claude Flight, *Lino-cuts: a Hand-book of Linoleum-cut Colour Printing* (London: J. Lane, 1927).

⁶² Claude Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing* (London: B.T. Batsford, ltd., 1934).

⁶³ *Year's Art*, 1933, pp. 113-114.

Woodcut, but here was something new and different, lino-cut no longer regarded as a base form of woodcut, but evolved into a distinct branch of 20th Century Art.⁶⁴ The linocut class attracted not only students but also the staff of the School such as Cyril Power, an architect and teacher at the School, and Sybil Andrews, the School Secretary. Before joining the Grosvenor School, Power and Andrews gave a lecture entitled 'Aims of the Art of To-Day' at the Heatherley's School and pointed out as one of the key elements of modern art 'dynamism', that is, 'action and movement' expressed through 'the stressed exaggeration of lines, shapes and masses, and color'.⁶⁵ They were to find linocut the best medium to express this quality.

The exhibitions of linocuts by Flight and his followers were held almost annually from 1929 to 1937 at the Redfern Gallery and the Ward Gallery. Their exhibitions also toured abroad, to the United States, China and Australia. Moreover, Frank Rutter, one of the lecturers at the Grosvenor School and an art critic who published a defence of Post-Impressionism in 1910 and who organised the 'Post-Impressionists and Futurist Exhibition' at the Doré Gallery in 1913, continued to write favourable reviews on their linocuts in his columns in *The Sunday Times*. Flight's book in 1934 was illustrated with the reproductions of many of the linocuts by him and his students, in which he wrote, "Modern art" – and by "modern art" we speak of such prints as are exhibited in this book, prints which express some experience of to-day in the technique of to-day'.⁶⁶

Modernity' in linocuts

⁶⁴ Eveline Syme, 'Claude Flight and His Teaching', *The Recorder*, no. 3, September 1929, reprinted in *A Survey of Australian Relief Prints 1900- 1950*, ed. by Chris Deutsher and Roger Butler (Armadale, Vic.: Deutsher Galleries, 1978), p. 75.

⁶⁵ Sybil Andrews and Cyril Power, 'Aims of the Art of To-Day', c.1924, quoted in Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, p. 52.

⁶⁶ Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, p. 63.

The linocuts which were publicised through these media depicted various aspects of modern life – public transport and bustling crowds in the cities, popular entertainment and sports, enthusiasm for racing events, and so on (Figs. 80-85). Flight insisted on the importance of the relevancy of art to the contemporary life by writing, 'The art of to-day must be in relation to the life of to-day, and, art being *the most universal expression of the most universal emotion*, the art of to-day must be the expression of this collective spirit in terms of simplicity, of unity, and of harmony.'⁶⁷ In the article he contributed to *The Original Colour Print Magazine*, he paid attention to the 'speeding up of life in general' as 'one of the interesting and psychologically important features of to-day'.⁶⁸ 'Rhythm' and 'movement' were also the key themes which often appeared in Flight's writings and were depicted in many of the Grosvenor School linocuts.

The subjects which I have taken are such things as buses coming down a street, waves breaking on the shore or carrying a ship on the sea, dancing, or the movement in a crowd, swings, or the eddies of the wind and rain: all these have their particular significant rhythm which I have been trying to grasp and place in my colour prints, textiles, sculpture and paintings so as to give the feeling of the universal rhythm in each individual movement.⁶⁹

These qualities which embodied the dynamism of the modern society corresponded to those which the Italian Futurists sought to express through their arts. Not surprisingly, the contemporary critics often described Flight as representing the

⁶⁷ Claude Flight, 'The Art of To-day', *Colour*, vol.2, no.4, April 1926, p. 8.

⁶⁸ Claude Flight, 'Dynamism and the Colour Print', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no.2, June 1925, p.56.

⁶⁹ Claude Flight, 'Mr. Flight Explains Himself', *Arts and Crafts*, vol. 1, no.4, July 1928, p. 184.

tenets of Futurism. For example, in *Artwork*, James Laver wrote, 'Mr. Flight, in his lino-work at least, is a futurist in the strict sense, that is, he is chiefly concerned with expressing the motion of objects, as opposed to those who merely depict objects in motion'.⁷⁰ S. C. Kaines Smith went so far as to call him 'the only true futurist that this country has produced' in his book published in 1934, *Painters of England*.⁷¹ Also, the elements seen in their prints such as the geometric composition, the intersection of lines and planes and the decorative treatment of bold colours suggest affinity to Cubism and Art Deco (Figs. 86-88). It is reasonable to think Flight and his followers absorbed these modernistic elements through their contacts with art on the continent. As mentioned earlier, there is every reason to believe that Flight was familiar with the French art schools and Italian Futurism to some extent. Also, some of Flight's followers such as Lill Tschudi and Eveline Syme spent some time in Paris, receiving instructions from the Cubist and Futurist artists including André Lhote, Fernand Léger and Gino Severini.

Flight himself, however, refused to be categorised in any of these schools of modernism.

I am a lone figure, belonging to no school... I have been trying to delve below the surface of things and to express the collective spirit of the times in terms of simplicity, unity and harmony... The Cubists missed, partly from lack of humanism and the Futurists from a lack of order.⁷²

⁷⁰ James Laver, 'Recent Etching and Engraving', *Artwork*, vol.3, no. 11, September - November 1927, p. 151.

⁷¹ Quoted in *Claude Flight and His Pupils*, n.p.

⁷² The interview with Flight which appeared in 'Golder's Green Artist's Life as "Caveman"', *Golders Green Gazette*, 3 June, 1927, p. 1, quoted in Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, p. 17.

Also, the fact that Flight was eventually excluded from the Seven & Five Society due to the lack of abstraction in his works suggests that he could not have been considered sufficiently radical by some of the contemporary artists on the cutting edge of modernism. As has been pointed out in the previous studies on Flight and his followers, it was the peculiar combination of modernism and traditional craftsmanship that characterised their linocuts, and their interpretation of 'modernity' was personal and individual, rather than being attached rigidly to any particular school.⁷³

Adaptation from Japanese printmaking

What kind of printmaking method, then, was employed to express the qualities of 'modernity' as interpreted by Flight and his followers? P. G Konody stated that 'this new method is nothing more than a labour-saving device to get the same results that were obtained with greater pain and less quickly by cutting in wood.'⁷⁴ It could even be said that Flight's method was a simplified version of traditional Japanese printmaking or of the woodcut printmaking employed by Fletcher and his followers. Instead of wood, linoleum was employed, which is softer and easier to cut. Also, instead of water-based pigment, oil colours or printing inks were used. Flight explained, 'Many printers, following the custom of the Japanese, who are masters of their medium, use powdered colour and rice paste for printing, but this method is unnecessarily complicated and the results in English hands are never as satisfactory as the oil or ink method.'⁷⁵ The colour is applied to blocks with roller and printed on dry paper. Flight also recommended the use of the baren in an instructional

⁷³ Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, p. 22, Urbanelli, *The Grosvenor School*, pp. 18-19.

⁷⁴ P. G. Konody, 'Linocuts', *The Observer*, 27 July, 1930, p. 12.

⁷⁵ Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, p. 48.

article.(Fig. 89) He modified the Japanese prototype, so that it was easier to make and to handle. He wrote about this tool as follows:

This tool (baren or home-made rubber) is used for rubbing the back of the paper when printing and is adapted from a Japanese model. Unlike the Japanese "baren," which is made of rolled string backed with cardboard in a casing of bamboo leaf, this "baren" is made from two rounds of millboard, one slightly smaller than the other, strongly glued together and covered with the bamboo leaf which has been soaked in water for twenty-four hours... In place of the above the beginner can make shift with a small round box or tin covered tightly with rough linen, or he can work with two rounds of millboard glued together, covered with linen or canvas, the ends being bound with string in the same way as with the bamboo leaf.⁷⁶

As Gordon Samuel and Nicola Penny point out, the use of a separate block for each colour was the most notable adaptation from Japanese printmaking.⁷⁷ The technique of registering of blocks, which was obviously introduced from Japanese printmaking, made it possible to print from multiple blocks (Fig. 90). The visual effects resulting from the similarity of methods between linocut and Japanese printmaking led P. G. Konody to comment, "The same method is, of course, used by the Japanese in printing their woodblocks, and by a few Western artists who have adopted the Japanese method. It is thus not surprising that in general appearance the lino-cut is more closely akin to the colour print of the Far East than to the European woodcut."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, pp. 29-30.

⁷⁷ Samuel and Penny, *The Cutting Edge of Modernity*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ P. G. Konody, 'British Lino-cuts', *The Observer*, 28 May, 1933, p. 14.

Flight actually showed his appreciation of Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints in his writings.

We have had many marine painters in Europe who have spent their lives studying the sea, but I doubt if any of them, for all their skilful technique and huge canvasses, have created a work of art of such value, of such “eye-opening” capacity, as the obscure nineteenth-century Japanese Hokusai, with his tiny wood-cut colour print of a wave.⁷⁹

As is clear from the following statement, he also admitted the connection of his method of linocut and Japanese printmaking, based on his understanding of the techniques and contexts of *ukiyo-e* printmaking.

Unlike the modern wood-cutter the linoleum-cutter, though sharing grandparents had a different father. This father was a little slit-eyed Asiatic, a man of the people who cut out his own cherry-wood blocks, as many as eight different blocks being used, each printed in a different colour to complete a single picture. These pictures were at first portraits of popular actors and were printed in hundreds and sold for ridiculously small sums among the people. Later the wood-cutters turned to landscapes and subjects of country and town life.⁸⁰

Flight’s adaptation and simplification of Japanese tools and techniques made linocut, which had been predominantly printed in monochrome, easier to

⁷⁹ Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, pp. 8-9.

produce in multi-colours. Flight insisted that colour linocuts produced through this method would lead toward the 'Art of Colour', the form of art which Flight believed to be the goal of modern art.

If, as W. H. Wright predicts, the whole movement towards colour from Constable and Turner up to the Modern Art of to-day is towards an 'Art of Colour,' then surely our simple colour prints in every home will prepare us for what he feels will be the outcome of all the century-long strivings between the different schools of thought. And when some "colour-instrument" has been invented and the modern artist's creative conceptions are properly impressed, then 'With the completion of this new medium the art of colour will have entirely dissociated itself from the art of painting, not only in impulse and conception, but in the world's attitude to it.' Whatever our ideas may be as to the future of art the appeal of colour is ever present and can be satisfied so easily by the Modern Colour Print.⁸¹

The Arts and Crafts tradition in linocut printmaking

The Arts and Crafts tradition inherited in linocut printmaking by Flight and his followers could also be seen with regard to Flight's understanding of *ukiyo-e* printmaking. In the way of recalling the laments expressed by Ruskin and Morris about the current state of the majority of people whose surroundings were deprived of beautiful things, Flight deplored, 'Living in ugly homes, adorned with ugly furniture and hangings, the average man has grown up without training in the arts, and he does not realize that the greatest and most satisfactory of all the pleasures is

⁸¹ Claude Flight, 'The Modern Colour-Print' *Arts and Crafts Quarterly*, vol.1, no.2, April, 1925, p.7.

denied to him.⁸² He saw great potential in colour prints in overcoming this situation. 'The time may come in the future, we hope, when the public at large will accept and appreciate its novels and magazines illustrated by wood-cuts and linoleum-cut colour prints, cut direct by artists who are themselves craftsmen.'⁸³ He paid particular attention to the possibility that colour prints would be produced cheaply so that they could become available to people with small income.

People live in smaller rooms, and the pictures they buy must necessarily be smaller, the price also they are willing to pay for a picture is much less than they were willing to give formerly. Woodcuts and colour-prints can meet this demand, for, in case of woodcuts, one hundred copies are usually printed from each block, and in colour-prints generally fifty. This means that one can afford to sell colour-prints and woodcuts for from one to three guineas, and perhaps when the demand grows greater, at something approaching the prices once current in old Japan, whereas water-colours cost from £5 to £20, and oil paintings fabulous sums which no one can afford to pay.⁸⁴

He also wrote, 'the art of colour printing in Japan was only appreciated and the prints only bought by the people; the artists themselves being of the humblest origin.'⁸⁵ These statements show his eagerness to establish prints as 'art for the

⁸² Flight, *Lino-cuts*, pp. 1-2.

⁸³ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, p. 8.

⁸⁴ Claude Flight, 'The Modern Colour-Print' *Arts and Crafts Quarterly*, vol.1, no.2, April, 1925, p.7. He also mentioned about the ideal price for colour linocuts in his book in 1927, describing, 'Linoleum-cut colour prints could be sold, if only the interest in and the demand for them could be stimulated, at a price which is equivalent to that paid by the average man for his daily beer or his cinema ticket.'
Claude Flight, *Lino-cuts*, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, p. 9.

people', the vision of art which had been envisaged by the proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In this respect, he apparently had in mind the original context in which *ukiyo-e* prints were produced and appreciated by ordinary people in Japan. In Edo Japan, the production and retail systems of *ukiyo-e* prints developed to a remarkable extent, which enabled a wide range of people to enjoy prints cheaply. Flight believed that his ideal of 'art for the people' could be achieved by creating a society similar to Edo Japan in which sufficient demand for and supply of prints existed.

here in England at the present day is the chance, I think, of creating an art which will appeal to the people, because in colour printing we must create – not copy the past... Ease of reproduction means that the sale of the prints can be at a price within the possibilities of the smallest purse, and the supply plus the youthful training in the schools should create a demand.⁸⁶

With respect to the educational value of colour printing, Flight expressed the opinions which recall the views held by the woodcut printmakers such as Fletcher, Lethaby and Platt, which were analysed in Chapter 4. Flight insisted on how a simple medium like linocut gave students valuable lessons in essentials of design.

Apart from the very charming pictures of a suitable size for the modern room which can and are being cut in and printed on linoleum, the self-education which the discipline imposes on the cutter and printer is of great aid to the art student. Here all possibility of niggles and detailed

⁸⁶ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, p. 12.

copying of nature is impossible and the student is compelled to express himself in terms of the simple medium, in terms of flat masses of colour superimposed; nothing could be better than experiments in Linoleum-cut Colour Printing to counteract the almost universal confusion in the teaching of the Art Schools of England to-day; this return to simplicity and a search for the essentials of the subject in hand will be found an invaluable aid to design.⁸⁷

He also argued that, through the production of linocuts, students could learn the importance of design and consideration of possibilities and limitations of materials.

As with the other mediums, such as water-colour, oil-colour, wood-engraving, etc., what is to be expressed must be limited, as far as technique goes, by the possibilities of the medium... Design, or composition, is a subject of great importance, for unless the picture is well designed in the first place, all the subsequent cutting and printing will be useless, for the experience will not be expressed in a manner which is perfectly clear to the beholder.⁸⁸

His vision of the educational value of linocut was not limited to teaching at art schools and he emphasised that the democratic nature of the materials and tools used for linocut made the medium accessible to anyone. Linoleum, which was usually used for household floors, was readily available. Moreover, Flight suggested that a gouge could be made from the rib of an umbrella or a large bodkin and that the handle of a toothbrush, the back of a dessert spoon, or a paper-knife could be used for

⁸⁷ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, p. 43.

⁸⁸ Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, p. 9.

rubbing the back of the paper to print detailed parts of blocks. With these simple tools, he believed, anyone could learn to express and become an artist-craftsman.

Like the woodcut printmakers, Flight also paid attention to the potential of simple tools and materials which gave artists much discretion for controlled and personal expression. In this respect, he pointed out the advantage of hand-printing with the use of baren. By rubbing with baren using various pressures, artists could regulate the density and quality of colour and the texture from linoleum, giving the image an especially personal character. He stated, 'it is absolutely essential that they are printed by hand without the use of a press, the results of press printing – we have unfortunately certain printers who advocated this method – being deplorably mechanical and works of art of a very low order'.⁸⁹ The medium, in which only a small set of blocks were used and images could be printed and reprinted with much ease, also allowed artists to experiment with different colour schemes, thus avoiding the mechanical uniformity within editions as well as giving useful instructions in colour compositions.⁹⁰

Linocut vs. woodcut

In this way, Flight's views on colour printmaking had similarities with those held by the woodcut printmakers in certain respects – the adoption of some of the Japanese techniques, tools and materials and the belief in the educational value of colour printmaking closely associated with the Arts and Crafts tradition. However, while many of the woodcut printmakers produced works which showed an affinity to watercolour paintings, Flight tried to dissociate colour prints from paintings. He

⁸⁹ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, p. 50.

⁹⁰ Flight often gave comments on the colour schemes of linocuts by Lill Tschudi, who, following his advice, reprinted the same blocks with different colours. Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, p. 60.

insisted that colour printmakers should not try to imitate other media but create the visual effects which could be obtained only through the process of printmaking.

colour prints which are reprinted from either wood or linoleum blocks should be treated not as either water-colours or oils, but as pictures that are the result of the special labour that is expended on their creation. The special labour in this case being cutting and printing, they should have the quality of something that is (1) cut out, and (2) printed in different layers of colour⁹¹

Instead of the gradation of colour which many of the woodcut printmakers created in their prints with similar visual effects as those in watercolour paintings, Flight and his followers often used the technique of superimposing colours so that their prints revealed the quality of being printed plane by plane (Fig. 91). Flight himself used to produce prints with watercolour-like effects. Eveline Syme, one of Flight's students at the Grosvenor School, mentioned about his early works and the subsequent development of his own style.

His earlier work was more naturalistic and more akin to water-colour, and it is very interesting to trace the evolution from his early naturalism to his present formalism among the prints in his portfolio. He is charmingly frank about his work. 'As a linocut that's bad, you know', he will say of an early print that the spectator probably considers very charming. 'Too much in the water-colour convention'.⁹²

⁹¹ Claude Flight, 'The Modern Colour-Print' *Arts and Crafts Quarterly*, vol.1, no.2, April, 1925, p.6.

⁹² Eveline Syme, 'Claude Flight and His Teaching', *The Recorder*, no. 3, September

In his book in 1927, *Lino-cuts*, he reproduced one of his earliest linocuts, 'L'arc de Triomphe de Carrousel and Louvre' as 'an example of a badly conceived colour print, because of the attempt to imitate the method of expression and technique of a water colour sketch'.⁹³ (Fig. 92)

These statements by Flight show his detachment from and criticism of the woodcut printmakers who produced colour prints imitating the effects of watercolour painting. It is possible to presume that his antagonism against them became stronger after Frank Morley Fletcher criticised colour linocuts in his article in *The Original Colour Print Magazine*.

To condemn linoleum printing in itself would be foolish in view of the remarkable work that has been done by its means, especially by the children in Professor Cizek's class in Vienna, or by some of Professor Orlik's pupils, or by the Printing School (Kunstgewerbeschule) in Leipzig, but the best of the work has been in black and white and of a primitive and simple kind. The material is not suited for printing a beautiful surface of colour nor for giving the finer qualities of line, and when it is used for colour the result is poor. Linoleum work illustrates very clearly the rule that when the tools and materials of an Art are made easy, the tendency is for design to deteriorate, and for the Art to become base.⁹⁴

Citing the above statement by Fletcher, Flight wrote in his book, *Lino-cuts*, 'The

1929, reprinted in *A Survey of Australian Relief Prints*, ed. by Deutsher and Butler, p. 75.

⁹³ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, Plate 9.

⁹⁴ Frank Morley Fletcher, 'The Woodblock Colour-Print, A Democratic Art', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.4.

object of this book is to endeavour to disprove this statement and to show the greater fluency of expression is possible both in form and colour in linoleum-cut colour printing if that printing is developed in a European way, the technique being the means to an end instead of almost an end in itself'.⁹⁵ Flight emphasised the difference between his method of printmaking and that employed by Fletcher and his followers by calling the former 'European' and the latter 'Anglo-Japanese'. He wrote,

The Anglo-Japanese wood-cut colour printers in England are a case at point, these printers having been influenced very strongly by the Japanese, so strongly that the colour prints which they create with such cleverness of technique are lacking in any vital motives of expression in keeping with the age they are living in. So much of the work of to-day is based on that minute attention to detail of the "Pre-Raphaelites" of the last century, detail which is unnecessary and has no significance and the artist becomes so bound up technically in the difficult processes of the Japanese, those processes which are absolutely suitable to an Eastern people, among whom individual artists are readily giving up their lives to the creation, for example, of a single complicated ivory carving, and the vital experience is lacking.⁹⁶

As Stephen Coppel remarks, one should consider the contemporary hierarchy of printmaking as a context of such rivalry between Flight and Fletcher. Woodcut printmakers, whose medium had just recently been revived, had to enhance their

⁹⁵ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, p. 17.

⁹⁶ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, pp. 15-16.

position in order to emulate etchers, who were at the top of the hierarchy, and tried not to be associated with linocut, which were generally considered as childish form of art due to the fact that linocut was taught to children at some schools.⁹⁷ Flight wrote, 'we grown-up lino-cutters and printers have had to live down the common belief that lino-cuts, because they are a children's form of expression, and comparatively easy in technique, are therefore a "second-rate" art and when practised by grown-ups have not much value'.⁹⁸

It should also be remarked that Flight did not criticise the Japanese method of printmaking itself but the way the woodcut printmakers imitated the Japanese techniques even in their minute details without much adaptation. He wrote, 'As with all art that is not native born, these colour printers, aping the Japanese technique and mannerisms without the Japanese tradition and spirit, produce in their wood-cut prints as a rule an unreal and theatrical appearance, and their influence on the art of the time is nil'.⁹⁹ He also wrote of them as follows:

Inspired by the work of such masters as Hokusai 1760-1849, Utamaro, 1754-1806 and Hiroshige, 1796-1858, they attempted to get a Japanese feeling as well as a Japanese technique, the result being that their efforts were lacking both in reason and technique, and, both the public and the artists themselves, not realising the possibilities of this new medium if put

⁹⁷ Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, pp. 14-15.

⁹⁸ Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, p. 7. A similar rivalry also existed between the woodcut printmakers and the wood engravers. The wood engravers formed the Society of Wood Engravers in 1920, whose purpose was 'to hold exhibitions devoted solely to woodcutting and engraving by the European Method'. Minutes of the first meeting, 27 March 1920, The Society of Wood Engravers' Archive, quoted in Selbourne, *British Wood-engraved Book Illustration*, p. 110. One of its members, John Farleigh, once experimented with woodcut techniques, which he later described, 'It looked sadly Japanese, and the Wood Engraving Society threw it out for this very reason when I submitted it for their Annual Show', John Farleigh, *Graven Image: an Autobiographical Textbook* (London: Macmillan, 1940), p. 161.

⁹⁹ Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, p. 60.

to its right uses, the art of the colour print has not yet developed to anything like the extent one would have expected¹⁰⁰.

Instead of 'aping' Japanese printmaking, he believed, the contemporary printmakers had to put the medium 'to its right uses', adopting what is only useful to express something that is relevant to their own time. He also cited the following statement from the book by Stewart Dick, *The Arts and Crafts of Old Japan*:

As S. Dick says in 'The Arts and Crafts of Old Japan', the English man 'demands of the sculptor, painter, engraver, wood-cutter, just that unintelligent, pseudo-realism which the decadence of the Renaissance invented to please his forefathers...demanding light and shade modelling or minutiae of form from a craft only capable of strong line and flat mass of colour'.¹⁰¹

'Strong line and flat mass of colour' were actually key features of linocuts by Flight and his followers. It is possible to think that, in order to achieve 'vital motives of expression in keeping with the age they are living in' through such lines and masses of colour, Flight made use of some techniques from Japanese printmaking, but, in doing so, he much simplified the Japanese techniques so that the vitality of expression would not be hampered by technical difficulties. With this hybrid method of printmaking, Flight and his followers vividly depicted the 'modernity' of the contemporary society.

¹⁰⁰ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰¹ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, p. 17.

5-4 Colour prints as part of the domestic interior

'An art of the people for their homes'

It is interesting to note that, although they criticised each other in some respects, both woodcut and linocut printmakers insisted eagerly on the suitability of their prints for interior decoration. Frank Morley Fletcher wrote, 'The conditions of modern life render it a form of art that is appropriate in scale, and in decorative power, to ordinary living rooms. More than most kinds of modern pictorial art, a colour print has a true Mural character'.¹⁰² Claude Flight also stated, 'Colour-prints being necessarily small, look better in smaller rooms'.¹⁰³

As implied in the above statements by Fletcher and Flight, they emphasised the smallness of prints as one of the factors which made them suitable for wall decoration. According to them, the scale-down of the size of contemporary houses rendered colour prints in due proportion to their walls.

The growing popularity of the water-colour, and the colour print, has been the result of the changed conditions of modern life. The small house is now preferred, whereas early in the last century a large establishment was the custom; the oil painting took its proper place on the walls, as did the frescoes in public buildings elsewhere. Increased facilities of transport and week-ends, a greater desire for open air, and lighter walls, have made a lighter expression of decoration imperative.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Frank Morley Fletcher, 'The Woodblock Colour-Print, A Democratic Art', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.5.

¹⁰³ Claude Flight, 'The Modern Colour-Print' *Arts and Crafts Quarterly*, vol.1, no.2, April, 1925, p.7.

¹⁰⁴ William Giles, 'The Modern Movement of the Colour Print', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.7.

Behind such statements was the growing number of small houses for the middle classes in the suburbs. The emergence of the middle class after the Industrial Revolution had already promoted the development of suburban residential areas from the early Victorian period, but the interwar period saw the highest ever upsurge of home ownership among middle class people in the newly developed areas around the cities, which were generally called 'garden suburbs.' Although the 'new middle class', swollen by the growth of service industries after the First World War, were poorer than their counterparts in the pre-war period, their desire for home ownership as a mark of distinction from the working class urged them to seek cheap and small houses in the suburbs.¹⁰⁵ As if to catch up on this trend, 'how to decorate a small house' became a popular subject in books and articles written about interior decoration in the same period.¹⁰⁶ Also, the increased emphasis on the importance of light and fresh air around the turn of the century promoted the shift of house layout from a narrow back extension of a Victorian house to a square plan surrounded by garden which enabled a house to be filled with sunlight. The sun-lit interiors, together with the relative simplicity of the Arts and Crafts and English vernacular cottage styles which were popular in the early twentieth century, helped the shift from dark cluttered Victorian rooms toward lighter expression in domestic interior design.¹⁰⁷

As interest in interior decoration changed in accord with this trend, small pictures and prints attracted attention as a refreshing kind of wall decoration in

¹⁰⁵ Mark Pinney, 'Introduction' in *Little Palaces: House and Home in the Inter-war Suburbs* (London: Middlesex University Press, 2003), pp. 7-14, Helena Barrett and John Phillips, *Suburban Style: the British Home, 1840-1960* (London: Macdonald, 1987), pp. 9-43.

¹⁰⁶ Derek Patmore, *Decoration for the Small Home* (London: Putnam, 1938), *Country Life Book of Small Houses*, ed. by Roger Smithells (London: Country Life, 1939). A number of articles about the decoration of small houses appeared in *Ideal Home* in the 1920s. *Ideal Home* also published 'the Small Home and Garden' issues annually in the 1930s.

¹⁰⁷ Barrett and Phillips, *Suburban Style*, pp. 81-123.

smaller and lighter homes.¹⁰⁸

As modern furnishing has progressed, so the fashions in pictures have progressed with it; the day of the large and costly oil painting; heavily framed in gilt, so beloved of our grandparents, has gone. There is no room on the modern wall for the ponderous family portraits and unwieldy landscape subjects so fashionable in the past...Colour reproductions of old masters, or modern pictures, the colour woodcut, etchings both in black and white and colour, are all eminently suitable for the modern room.¹⁰⁹

An article about colour prints entitled 'Picture for Every Home' also proclaimed as follows: 'Colour block prints are ideal for home purposes, since they have a quality by no means found even in famous works of art, which may only be suitable for galleries; they are good to *live* with.'¹¹⁰ Moreover, it is interesting to note that in talking of the suitability of colour woodcuts for small houses, one of the woodcut printmakers, John Edgar Platt, mentioned the association of *ukiyo-e* prints with small Japanese rooms. He wrote, 'our small modern room bears a definite resemblance in general appearance to the rooms the Japanese prints were made to decorate.'¹¹¹ It is not certain what kind of Japanese rooms he had in mind nor if he rightly understood how *ukiyo-e* prints were used as wall decoration in Japanese

¹⁰⁸ For example, a glance at the issues of *Ideal Home* in the 1920s finds the following articles: 'Ideal Pictures for the Home', January, 1922, p. 54, 'Framing and Hanging Pictures', August, 1923, pp. 82-83, 'Pictures in the Home', July 1924, pp. 18-19, Mrs. Alan Bellingham 'Japanese Prints', February 1926, pp. 130, 162, 'The Art of Hanging Pictures', November 1926, pp. 366-367, Len Chaloner, 'Pictures for Every Home', April 1927, pp.306-307, 'Etchings Are in Vogue', November 1928, p. 363, 'If You Are Giving Pictures', December 1929, pp. 440-441, R. H. Wilenski, 'Pictures in the Modern Home', January 1932, pp. 47-48 .

¹⁰⁹ 'If You Are Giving Pictures', *Ideal Home*, December 1929, p. 440.

¹¹⁰ Len Chaloner, 'Pictures for Every Home', *Ideal Home*, April 1927, pp.306-307.

¹¹¹ Platt, *Colour Woodcuts*, p.35.

houses, but it is notable that he argued about the use of prints in contemporary British houses based on his own understanding of the original context in which *ukiyo-e* prints were used.

According to the printmakers, not only the sizes but also the qualities of design of their prints made them appropriate for decoration in modern houses. These qualities were thought to be in harmony with the current style of domestic interior.

The main function of the colour-woodcut seems to be that of a wall picture for the room of moderate size. Although the medium is not suitable for making individual prints larger than about quarter imperial, it lends itself to the expression of those qualities of design which make a picture effective on a wall – mass pattern made up of carefully designed yet frankly printed silhouettes of clear colour, broad yet delicate gradations, vigorous line, strong contrasts of tone, and so on. Indeed it will be found that the pictorial idiom of the colour-woodcut is remarkably in accord with the present-day interior, with its unobtrusive furniture and fittings, restrained colour, and dependence on architectural proportion rather than on ornament.¹¹²

As is clear from the above statement, prints were argued about in terms of their compatibility with other elements of a room rather than as works of art on their own. The qualities of prints were regarded as components of the interior which, together with other elements in the room, would make up an entity – they should be integrated to the whole scheme of a domestic interior.

¹¹² Platt, *Colour Woodcuts*, p.35.

Such a view was prevalent in the contemporary literature on domestic interior and was very explicitly expressed by Roger Smithells and S. John Woods, who wrote, 'a picture is no longer regarded as an object-in-itself to be hung on a wall without reference to the rest of the room. A picture is an entity; so is a room; and if a picture and a room to combine successfully, each must stand on its own feet without treading on the other's toes.' They suggested that one should either build furniture and colour-schemes around the picture as the focal point or treat pictures as simply "decorative" furniture', and went on to write,

Pictures have to be regarded in the same light as doors and windows, they must not appear as objects hung *on* the wall, just as a door is not a hole in the wall but a logical and inevitable component of the whole room, having a logical and inevitable relationship to the wall of which it forms a part.¹¹³

Among the qualities which unify the elements in the room, colour schemes attracted particular attention. As Stephen Calloway remarks, colour schemes became the 'far and away the most obsessive theme' of interior decoration in the 1920s.¹¹⁴ As the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs of 1925 propagated Art Deco, one of whose major characteristics was an interest in the use of the colour, colour schemes of interior decoration became all the more fashionable theme (Fig. 93).¹¹⁵

¹¹³ They also cited the following statement by Paul Nash: 'To-day, more than ever before, the painter must work with the architect; the whole trend of modern art is not away from life, as many ignorant people state; on the contrary it is increasingly moving into life on every front. If anyone doubts this let him begin by examining the character of modern painting and sculpture in relation to the contemporary room.' Roger Smithells and S. John Woods, *The Modern Home: Its Decorations, Furnishings, and Equipment* (Benfleet: F. Lewis, 1936), pp. 97-98.

¹¹⁴ Stephen Calloway, *Twentieth-century Decoration: the Domestic Interior from 1900 to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1988), p. 142.

¹¹⁵ Charlotte Benton and Tim Benton, 'The Style and the Age' in *Art Deco, 1910-1939*, ed. by Charlotte Benton, Tim Benton and Ghislaine Wood (London: V&A Publications,

Accordingly, a number of books and articles were published on this theme.¹¹⁶

Colour: This is the keynote of present-day decoration. Not many years ago people chose sober colours for the decoration of their rooms, because they thought them restful and good backgrounds for their cherished possessions. The drab and dreary greens and blues of the early distempers, and the heavy red and browns of Victorian wall-papers were merely depressing, and brought no brightness and gaiety into the home. All this is now changed. To-day no colour is regarded as too bright, provided that it is used discriminately and harmonises with its surroundings.¹¹⁷

In this fashion for colour schemes of interior decoration, even the effects of colours on the health and psychology of residents were discussed.¹¹⁸

The tendency to see a picture as one of the components of interior decoration and the interest in colour scheme meant that a picture was seen as if only a patchwork of colours. For example, Derek Patmore wrote about the paintings in Mrs. Chester Beatty's room (Fig. 94) as follows.

2003), pp. 12-27 (p. 23). One of the official folios of the exhibition, *Intérieurs en Couleur, France* (Paris: Paris: A. Lévy, 1925) showed the fine examples of contemporary French interior decorations in the Art Deco style in richly coloured illustrations.

¹¹⁶ Among such books were *Colour Designs for Modern Interiors* (London: Architectural Press, 1935), John Gloag, *Colour & Comfort* (London: Duckworth, 1924), John M. Holmes, *Colour in Interior Decoration* (London: The Architectural Press, 1931), Basil Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration* (London: Country Life, 1926), *Colour in Everyday Rooms* (London: Country Life, 1934), and Derek Patmore, *Colour Schemes for the Modern Home* (London: The Studio, 1933).

¹¹⁷ Ellen Woolrich, 'Colourful Homes', *Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia*, 1927, p. 47.

¹¹⁸ Holmes, *Colour in Interior Decoration*, pp. 8-9, T. Leighton Pearce, 'Colour and Health', *Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia*, 1925, p.45, Ellen Woolrich, 'Colourful Homes', *Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia*, 1927, p.48.

MODERN PAINTING IN A PERIOD ROOM: A room at the house of Mrs. Chester Beatty, London, showing how effective modern paintings can appear in a period room. Over the mantel there is a Sisley....Adjacent to it is a Boudin, the Master of the seaside. Little crinolined figures make gay patches of enamel-like colour on the wind-swept beach...Completing the wall and on the left of the Sisley is a bridge over the Seine by Pissarro, a harmony of stone and the grey branches of the trees.¹¹⁹

In the same light as this, a painting in the room illustrated in Plate XIII in *Modern Furnishing and Decoration* (Fig. 95) was explained,

BUILDING A SCHEME ROUND A PICTURE: The importance of choosing a picture to suit the room in which it is placed cannot be overstressed. Moreover it is an easy matter, when the picture has been hung, to find objects to harmonise with it. Hanging a picture, such as this landscape by J. D. Fergusson, over a panel of material, often helps towards blending it into the colour of the walls. An alternative scheme to use with this picture would be to paint the walls green, and upholster the furniture in tones of beige and pink.¹²⁰

As can be seen in this illustration, furniture and upholstery of the same colours as those used in the painting – green, beige, pink, red and blue – were chosen to furnish the room and the painting was treated as patches of colours to be integrated into the colour scheme of the interior.

¹¹⁹ Derek Patmore, *Modern Furnishing and Decoration* (London: Studio, 1934), plate II.

¹²⁰ Patmore, *Modern Furnishing and Decoration*, plate XIII.

Advocates for more austere modernist styles put greater emphasis on forms in paintings than on colours as elements to be harmonised into the whole scheme of the interior and opted for sheer white walls. This was exemplified in the room by Le Corbusier (Fig. 96) which was illustrated in Dorothy Todd and Raymond Mortimer's book and captioned, 'The architectural forms seen in this section of a large room show a certain relation to those familiar in the work of such painters as Léger, Ozenfant or Baumeister, some of whose pictures appear on these walls.'¹²¹ Colour schemes of interior decoration, on the other hand, interested some modernists and the more conservative, the kind of people who would buy houses of mock Tudor or much toned-down modernist styles in the suburban areas of the kind criticised by the architects of the Modern Movement.

It was in this general interest in colour schemes that the printmakers promoted their colour prints as part of the domestic interior. Claude Flight wrote, 'the colour-print being a simple colour scheme can be chosen to suit the colour scheme of the particular room to be decorated.'¹²² In the article entitled 'A Few Suggestions for Interior Decorations', Flight insisted on the importance of proportional relationship among the elements of the room.

Proportional relation is what we require instead of chaos, the chaotic disorder of so much of our surroundings. It is doubtful if we shall ever come within a great distance of this ideal, but we can if we will harmonise our more immediate surroundings, making our drawing rooms real withdrawing rooms from the world of disorder. We can begin with the

¹²¹ Dorothy Todd and Raymond Mortimer, *The New Interior Decoration: an Introduction to Its Principles, and International Survey of Its Methods* (London: B.T.Batsford, 1930), Plate 32.

¹²² Claude Flight, 'The Modern Colour-Print' *Arts and Crafts Quarterly*, vol.1, no.2, April, 1925, p.7.

rooms as we have it, more or less beautiful in its proportions, we can have painted, stained, printed or appliqué hangings in harmony with these proportions, in harmony with the furniture; our chairs, tables, sofas, etc., if they are designed with this object, can carry on the scheme of things... Cross stitch is being revived, though this process is unnecessarily lengthy and its place can be taken by cut felt, appliqué work and the use of more modern materials and methods such as linoleum - - cut colour printing or stencilling¹²³

Flight founded a small interior decoration company with his partner, Edith Lawrence. In the same article as above were shown the appliqué works designed by Flight and executed by Lawrence (Fig. 97), which look quite similar to the colour linocut prints of 'The Seasons' series by Flight (Fig. 98). In the photo of the drawing room of Flight's sister in Hampstead Garden Suburb, some of these appliqué works were shown as components to furnish the room (Fig. 99).¹²⁴ Colour linocut prints by Flight and his followers were also produced for such schemes of interior decoration.

Woodcut printmakers of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour also promoted their prints in a similar vein. Hall Thorpe produced colour woodcut prints for interior decoration, most of which were still lives of colourful flowers in vases. He had his own gallery in South Kensington and published catalogues of his prints for mail order. The advertisement of the Hall Thorpe Gallery read, 'These four prints were admirably suited to decorate a small room. They will pick up the colour of your fabrics and help you to carry out your colour scheme in furnishing your

¹²³ Claude Flight, 'A Few Suggestions for Interior Decorations', *Architectural Association Journal*, vol.44, no.504, February 1929, p. 308.

¹²⁴ Calloway, *Twentieth-century Decoration*, p. 163.

home.'¹²⁵ Thorpe himself wrote, 'In producing these wood-prints, I have always had in mind the rooms of an imaginary home in which they were intended to be of definite service in supplying a needful part in some colour scheme.'¹²⁶ His flower prints seem to have been popular as they were ubiquitous in illustrations of interior decoration in contemporary magazines. For example, his prints were featured in an example of interior decoration for a cottage, explained, 'The delightful woodcuts of Mr. Hall Thorpe are a perfect means of introducing a good splash of colour into any room.'¹²⁷ (Fig. 100) Urushibara Yoshijirō's colour print illustrating two rabbits, 'Black and White' (Fig. 101), was also featured as an effective device for composing a colour scheme in another article in *Idea Home*. It was explained with an illustration of a room, 'BLACK, WHITE AND SCARLET, with the scarlet in the frame to the black and white rabbits and the black again in the furniture, look very decorative in the group shown on the right.'¹²⁸ (Fig. 102)

Also, as can be inferred from the following statement, the 'lighter and more atmospheric'¹²⁹ colours of woodcut prints such as those produced by many of the printmakers of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour must have been regarded as suitable to adorn the plain walls which were prevalent in the houses of country-cottage style, the most popular type of houses in suburban areas.¹³⁰

Pictures in colour, such as woodcuts, are very much at home with neutral schemes, such as the present vogue for plain distempered walls and

¹²⁵ *Idea Home*, March 1928, p. xi.

¹²⁶ Hall Thorpe, *Woodcuts in Colour by H. T. for Home Decoration* (London: 1930), n.p.

¹²⁷ Julia Cairns, 'How to Furnish a Cottage', *Idea Home*, August 1924, p. 91.

¹²⁸ 'Dining-Room Details: Useful, Inexpensive and Decorative', *Idea Home*, December 1934, p. 411.

¹²⁹ William Giles, 'Present Day Tendencies of the Original Colour Print' *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 3, June 1926, p.120.

¹³⁰ Barrett and Phillips, *Suburban Style*, pp. 128-130, 150.

weathered oak furniture. A single flower piece above the chimney, or a landscape reproduction will be all that is necessary, beyond hangings and upholstery, to bring colour to the room.¹³¹

It should also be mentioned that, in the same period, antique *ukiyo-e* prints or their reproductions were still popular among the public. They were often featured as wall decorations in *Ideal Home* and treated as components of the colour scheme of interior design. (Figs. 103, 104) Their continuing popularity might have also encouraged the British printmakers to promote their prints as part of the domestic interior.

Lastly, there was another factor that the printmakers emphasised when promoting their prints for wall decoration – the cheapness of prints compared to paintings. Hall Thorpe wrote, 'It was inevitable that something less costly than the rare original painting should be required to enable people with moderate incomes to indulge their taste for colour schemes in the decoration of their rooms.'¹³² At the exhibitions of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour and those of the linocuts by the Grosvenor School artists, both woodcuts and linocuts were sold for similar prices, one to three pounds on average. As was shown in the last section, Claude Flight insisted eagerly on the cheapness of prints. His ideal was to establish colour linocuts as 'art for the people' like *ukiyo-e* prints which used to be produced cheaply by artist-craftsmen and appreciated by ordinary people in Edo Japan. He wrote,

Let the people but understand when they are young the possibilities of this form of art ... and their aesthetic appreciation will grow as they grow, for

¹³¹ 'If You Are Giving Pictures', *Idea Home*, December 1929, p. 440.

¹³² Thorpe, *Woodcuts in Colour*, n.p.

they will create a demand which the artists will soon supply, and perhaps a real and vital art of to-morrow, an art of the people for their homes, will arise, an art expressed in terms of unity, of simplicity, and of harmony.¹³³

The consumption of colour prints

How, then, were colour prints actually supplied to people as part of the domestic interior? The records of some of the major retailers and institutions of art and design in interwar years such as Heal & Son (Heal's), Design and Industries Association (D. I. A.) and British Institute of Industrial Art (B. I. I. A.) give some clues to this question. On the second floor of its premises on Tottenham Court Road, Heal's had a gallery called the Little Gallery, where 'colour prints, toys & fanciful things' were sold in the 1920s and 1930s. Its advertisement (Fig. 105) read,

IN THE LITTLE GALLERY AT HEAL'S you'll always find an interesting & amusing collection of PRINTS, COLOURED WOODCUTS, lithographs, etc. Anything that has an individual and decorative character and can be sold for a few shillings – or a guinea or two. We stipulate that these prints shall be fresh, interesting and bright, and – very important – not expensive.¹³⁴

The prints at the gallery, 'chosen with a single eye to their possibilities as decoration for the home',¹³⁵ included colour reproductions of paintings by modern artists, such as Cézanne, Van Gogh, Matisse and Picasso, 'a constantly-changing selection of original woodcuts, by artists of international repute', framed posters, illustrations

¹³³ Flight, *Lino-cuts*, pp. 10, 12.

¹³⁴ *Presents for Particular People at Heal & Son's*, 1924, back cover, in AAD, Heal's Archive, AAD/1978/302.

¹³⁵ *Reasonable Furniture & Furnishings for Small Houses, Cottages and Flats*, 1926, p. 55, in AAD, Heal's Archive, AAD/1978/2/304.

from old herbals and maps, etc.¹³⁶ As the illustrations in the catalogues show only a few examples of woodcuts, it is difficult to know whose woodcuts were actually selected, but prints by Hall Thorpe can be found on many of the illustrations, including those which were shown in room settings. (Fig. 106) Also, a print which seems to be the one by Urushibara Yoshijirō, 'Trees in Moonlight' (Fig. 107), can be seen hung on the wall of a bedroom illustrated in some of the catalogues.¹³⁷ (Figs. 108,109) A photo of the Little Gallery at Heal's taken in the 1930s (Fig. 110) shows prints displayed along with ceramic objects which are presumed to have been selected for home decoration as well.¹³⁸

The Mansard Gallery at Heal's, which held exhibitions of avant-garde artists such as London Group and Group X, also had some exhibitions of prints. They were often displayed with other decorative objects, and, again, it is difficult to know all the names of the printmakers who were represented. However, it is possible to think that the following exhibitions included original woodcuts produced in the Japanese manner:

'Woodcuts, Colour-Prints and the New Pâte-blanc Pottery Figures', 1926

'Modern Ceramics & Colour Prints', 1928 (Fig. 111)

'Art of Wood-block Printing', 1930

It is reported in *The Times* that the exhibition in 1928 displayed colour woodcuts by Urushibara, A. W. Seaby, Elizabeth Keith, Leo Frank and Hans Frank, all of whom

¹³⁶ *Reasonable Furniture & Furnishings for Small Houses, Cottages and Flats*, 1929, p. 53, in AAD, Heal's Archive, AAD/1978/2/307.

¹³⁷ See, for example, *A Book of Bedroom Furniture*, 1930, p. 11, *The Joyous Adventure of Furnishing*, 1930, p. 7, in AAD, Heal's Archive, AAD/1978/2/308.

¹³⁸ AAD, Heal's Archive, AAD/1994/16/1651.

followed the Japanese method of printmaking.¹³⁹

Heal's is known to have succeeded in responding to the demand of the general public who were still uncertain about Modernism, by integrating elements of the Arts and Crafts, 'Englishness' and Modernism in its products and advertisements.¹⁴⁰ In this respect, colour woodcut prints which embodied the ethos of the Arts and Crafts Movement and 'Englishness' with much toned-down modernistic elements were suitable objects to be sold at Heal's. It is interesting to note that D. I. A., which was founded to further the tenets of William Morris in its pursuit of modernist design by designers, architects, manufacturers and retailers including Ambrose Heal,¹⁴¹ featured colour prints by Hall Thorpe as wall decoration to make a room 'fit for its purpose.'¹⁴² (Fig. 112)

The colour woodcuts by the printmakers of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour were also featured as decoration for houses of people with moderate income by B. I. I. A., the first government-sponsored institution for the promotion of industrial art. John Dickson Batten and Frank Morley Fletcher were fellows of B. I. I. A.,¹⁴³ and it was reported in *The Original Colour Print Magazine* in 1924 that an 'interesting and tentative experiment' had been made during the previous year by B. I. I. A. to 'incorporate the Colour Print in its proper setting as a part of the modern

¹³⁹ 'Prints and Pots', *The Times*, 17 February, 1928, p. 20.

¹⁴⁰ Suga Yasuko, *Igirisu no Shakai to Dezain: Morisu to Modanizumu no Seijigaku* [British Society and Design: The Politics of Representing Morris and Modernism] (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2005), pp. 193-216.

¹⁴¹ Noel Carrington, *Industrial Design in Britain* (London: Allen A& Unwin, 1976).

¹⁴² In a D. I. A. yearbook, one of his prints was explained, 'The introduction of colour into a decorative scheme is as necessary as the introduction of light. No room associated with living is altogether fit for its purpose if there is any hint of dreariness, or colourless formality about it.' Another print by him is also featured in a café room whose decorations were carried out by Waring and Gillow. *Design in Modern Industry: the Year-book of the Design & Industries Association, 1923-24*, pp. 37, 39.

¹⁴³ *Some Particulars with Regard to the Aims & the Activities of the British Institute of Industrial Art* (London: 1923), pp. 11-12, *Report on the Work of the British Institute of Industrial Art 1919-1924*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1925) pp. 52-53.

home; reminiscent of the Kunst Gewerbe-Ausstellungen on the continent.¹⁴⁴ The catalogue of the B. I. I. A. exhibition of 'Industrial Art of Today' held in the North Court of the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1923 recorded six colour prints by A. M. Shrimpton and John Edgar Platt which were displayed in 'rooms on the west side'.¹⁴⁵ Also, at the exhibition in 1929, 'British Industrial Art for the Slender Purse', the exhibition which was intended to show everyday objects with good design affordable for ordinary people, fifteen prints by William Giles, Paul Edmonds, Ethel Kirkpatrick, John Edgar Platt, Allen W. Seaby and Hall Thorpe were displayed in the Permanent Collection section.¹⁴⁶

While colour woodcuts were retailed and advertised through these major retailers and institutions of art and design, there is no record of linocut prints displayed or sold at such institutions, in spite of Claude Flight's insistence on the suitability of colour prints for home decoration. *Ideal Home* featured colour woodcuts in many of its illustrations as part of the domestic interior, but none of colour linocuts by the printmakers from the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. One of its articles entitled 'Woodcuts for Modern Homes' wrote, 'Never was colour more in demand than it is to-day, not so much the bizarre and futuristic colour combinations, but rather splashes of naturally blended colour which will bring life and cheerfulness into the home.'¹⁴⁷ Flight's emphasis on the modernity and the European connection and the Futuristic design of the prints by Flight and his followers must have made their prints less admissible to the general public whose taste for home decoration

¹⁴⁴ William Giles, 'Exhibitions', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.21.

¹⁴⁵ *British Institute of Industrial Art: Exhibition of Industrial Art of To-day: North Court, Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, September-October, 1923.*

¹⁴⁶ *Catalogue of the British Institute of Industrial Art Autumn Exhibition Illustrating British Industrial Art for the Slender Purse: North Court, Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, 9th November to 18th December, 1929.*

¹⁴⁷ 'Woodcuts for Modern Homes', *Ideal Home*, June 1924, p. 482.

was still largely dominated by 'olde Englishe' styles.¹⁴⁸ However, Flight's interest in house furnishing was greater than that demonstrated by woodcut printmakers, and he even proposed a standardised scheme of furnishing for the general public which seems to have predicted the Utility Furniture Scheme, which was carried out by the government around the time of the Second World War.

in fact, I see no reason why standardized furniture and hangings for the masses should not in the immediate future be made to fit standardized rooms, and why, if the designs are created by thoughtful artists, as is the case for example at the Bauhaus at Dessau, these designs should not bring beauty to the humblest homes.¹⁴⁹

It is possible to think that Flight envisaged the supply of colour linocuts as part of such a scheme, which was never to be realised.

The colour prints the supply of which the printmakers tried to promote through these institutions and schemes are, however, presumed to have been consumed by a limited range of people. In spite of their emphasis on the cheapness of their prints, the prints, which cost a few guineas on average, must have been still beyond the reach of the lower-middle and working-class people.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, although colour prints were promoted for lightly or brightly coloured interiors, such rooms were limited to the houses of the better-off people. The houses of the

¹⁴⁸ Barrett and Phillips, *Suburban Style*, pp. 125-167.

¹⁴⁹ Claude Flight, 'A Few Suggestions for Interior Decorations', *Architectural Association Journal*, vol.44, no.504, February 1929, p. 308.

¹⁵⁰ In 1937, the Council for Art and Industry esteemed the prices of essential furniture and equipment for working class houses, of which the most expensive furniture such as wardrobes, cupboards and tables was estimated at three to four guineas. Council for Art and Industry, *The Working Class Home: Its Furnishing and Equipment* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1937).

lower-middle class people in the 1920s and 1930s were still characterised by mid-Victorian taste and 'the overwhelming darkness of the interior.'¹⁵¹ The same characteristic was also pointed out by the Council for Art and Industry in its report on the colour schemes which prevailed in working-class homes.

We have been especially concerned by the tendency towards dull and heavy colour schemes, both among individuals and local authorities who are responsible for decoration in the new estates. We were advised on several occasions that the general choice of colour tended towards brown or towards a set of colours which has been described as 'gravy' colour scheme. Apparently this range is less likely to show dirt or wear than others. It is one that is more easily matched up and managed and the colour is durable in the sense that when it fades it does not look much different from its state when new. The choice of stained furniture of a dark hue is also prevalent for somewhat similar reasons.¹⁵²

Also, judging from the contemporary literature, it is possible to presume that even among the people who could afford to buy prints or to decorate their homes in fashionable colour schemes the reproductions of paintings by well-known artists were very popular. Among such reproductions, 'Sunflowers' by Vincent Van Gogh was particularly popular, provoking complaints from Roger Smithells and S. John Woods. (Figs. 113,114)

Prints of all types of pictures may be obtained at prices varying from

¹⁵¹ Mark Turner, 'Decoration' in *Little Palaces*, pp. 31-42 (p. 33).

¹⁵² *The Working Class Home: Its Furnishing and Equipment* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1937), p. 44.

fourpence to as many pounds. The only quarrel with these prints is that they concentrate too much on certain pictures, always considerably behind contemporary movements (Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" appears with unhappy monotony, excellent though the picture may be) which leads to a fixation in the mind of the public and makes the lot of the living artist harder than ever.¹⁵³

Heal's also sold reproductions of paintings by modern masters including Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, Claude Monet, Maurice Utrillo, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, Duncan Grant and many others along with original prints. Some of these reproductive prints were displayed at exhibitions in the Mansard Gallery and sold for similar prices to those of original prints.¹⁵⁴ (Fig. 115) The catalogue of one of the exhibitions explained,

The colour prints are chiefly remarkable for the technical perfection of the process employed which reproduces, with extraordinary fidelity, not only the colours but even the minutest details of handling and brushwork and further – by some miracle – captures to a large extent the vitality of the originals, so enabling the art lover to enjoy the works of great masters at a cost within reach of the most modest purse.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Smithells and Woods, *The Modern Home*, p. 100 Osbert Lancaster also described the 'cultured cottages' occupied by 'writers, film stars, barristers, artists and B.B.C. announcers' whose walls were decorated by 'expansive reproductions of those ubiquitous sunflowers'. Osbert Lancaster, *Homes Sweet Homes* (London: John Murray, 1939), p. 62.

¹⁵⁴ The following exhibitions displayed colour reproductions. Modern Colour Prints & Decorative Glass (1926), Small Statuary & Colour Prints (1929), Modern Glass by Capelin of Murano and Colour-prints of Works by Modern Masters (1930).

¹⁵⁵ It is rather ironic that in the same year Claude Flight and Heal's mentioned about the influence of Cezanne on modern interior decoration for different reasons. Claude Flight insisted that original colour prints as well as other furnishing

There were also some dealers and publishers which dealt with reproductions of paintings by well-known artists. Medici Society, for example, sold 'reproductions in colour of the GREAT MASTERS of all schools and of all ages'¹⁵⁶ and had advertisements in almost every issue of *Ideal Home* in the 1920s, in which the enlightening effects of the reproductions of masterpieces on people's taste were stressed.¹⁵⁷ Frost & Reed also proclaimed its aim 'to reproduce the best works (by Famous Artists of Great Britain) that are rich in colour, or have a definite decorative value, as required for the MODERN HOME.'¹⁵⁸ It published catalogues entitled *Homelovers Book of Etchings, Engravings and Colour Prints*, in which a number of facsimiles of paintings produced by photographic methods were shown. (Fig. 116) The printing processes were supervised by the artists themselves at various stages and early proofs were signed by them, which, they claimed, would increase their market values in future. Reproductions of paintings by British artists with nostalgic subjects such as topographical, marine, animal and sporting ones must

equipments of the room should be considered in terms of the 'proportional relations', the movement toward which he believed to have been first led on by Cezanne. Heal's catalogue, on the other hand, implied that the reproductions of the very paintings that induced this movement should suit the modern interiors by writing, 'It is hardly necessary to remark how admirably these pictures link up with modern schemes of decoration: indeed the present-day trend of decorative ideas derives so strongly from the masters here represented [i.e. Cezanne, Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, etc.] it would be surprising if it were otherwise.' *Exhibition of Small Statuary and Colour Prints* (dealer's catalogue) (London: Mansard Gallery, 1929), n. p., Claude Flight, 'A Few Suggestions for Interior Decorations', *Architectural Association Journal*, vol.44, no.504, February 1929, pp. 306, 308.

¹⁵⁶ *Ideal Home*, February 1925, p. xxxv.

¹⁵⁷ For example, comments by some of its celebrity customers were quoted in the advertisement in the November 1929 issue of *Ideal Home*, such as 'Mr. Arnold Bennett says: "I have been a buyer of them ever since the Society began business. I think it is doing an excellent work for the spread of taste of the graphic arts."' and 'Sir Edwin Lutyens, R. A. says: "I have always appreciated the work your Society has done and is doing, and I consider it one of public service, making accessible to all, through their sincerity and fidelity, the masterpieces of the world."' *Ideal Home*, November 1929, p. lxvii.

¹⁵⁸ *Homelovers Book of Etchings, Engravings and Colour Prints* (Bristol: Frost & Reed, 1934), p. 2.

have had the same attraction to people as that of the woodcuts by the printmakers of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour which looked as if they were original watercolours and depicted idyllic landscapes and wild lives. As Susan Lambert remarks, prints had always been seen as cheap alternatives to paintings and, in England, especially from the eighteenth century, reproductive prints of paintings by famous masters became increasingly popular for the decoration of the houses of the emerging nouveau riche, for whom the 'style and tastes of gentlemen were made more and more generally available.'¹⁵⁹ This tradition still lingered in the inter-war years.

It is ironic that original colour prints which had originally emerged as reaction against reproductive prints and were promoted in a new market for home decoration among the new middle class were competed, again, by reproductive prints even in this new market. In spite of the efforts of the printmakers to establish a new form of art as 'art for the people', many of the people among whom they tried to create demands for their prints still opted for interiors of mid-Victorian taste or the prints as substitutes for original paintings which used to adorn the walls of large estates of better-off people in the past. However, it should be noted that in promoting their prints as part of the domestic interior for ordinary people the printmakers who had absorbed the techniques of Japanese printmaking also reinterpreted the original Japanese contexts in which *ukiyo-e* prints were produced, appreciated and used. The impact of *ukiyo-e* printmaking in Britain still lived on in the inter-war years, changing its shape according to the British contexts in which it was appropriated.

¹⁵⁹ Lambert, *The Image Multiplied*, pp. 183-185.

Conclusion

After the interruption by the Second World War, the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour sought to reactivate colour woodcut printmaking movement. However, its activities were forced to end, probably in the early 1950s, failing to catch up on the new artistic tastes in the post-war era.¹ The linocut movement also lost impetus in the late 1930s as the sale of linocuts dropped and Flight's disciples began to move in different directions, and the outbreak of the war and Flight's deteriorating health gave the final blow to the movement.²

We have seen that from the 1890s to the 1930s they developed their own styles of printmaking, appropriating various aspects of traditional Japanese prints and printmaking, as part of the artistic revival of printmaking in Britain. In fact, at almost the same time, there also emerged in Japan comparable movements in printmaking. Now, before ending this thesis, I would like to glance at how the British audience reacted to these Japanese movements, as it makes an interesting comparison to the British response to the representation of 'Japanese art' at the Japan-British Exhibition, 1910, and epitomises the interactions and discrepancies between what the Japanese presented as 'Japanese art' and what the British perceived as 'Japanese art'.

¹ Chapman, 'John Edgar Platt and the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour', pp.155-157.

² Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, pp. 21-22.

In the Meiji Period, western methods of reproduction such as lithography and photography came to be widely used in Japan. As in many other countries, the introduction of photography was especially crucial in compelling printmakers to reconsider the *raison d'être* of prints now that the traditional method of printmaking had lost its position as the primary means of reproducing images. Under this circumstance, some artists who worked with western media such as western-style painting and wood engraving and were receptive to western aesthetic ideas, including Yamamoto Kanae and Ishii Hakutei, began to promote printmaking as a form of art from the mid-1900s. This was to develop into the *Sōsaku Hanga* [Creative Prints] Movement. In his article entitled 'Seiyō Mokuhan ni Tsuite' [On Western Wood Engraving] in 1905 Yamamoto wrote,

The photomechanical processes have gradually become predominant these days, which overwhelmed woodblock printmaking and deprived it of future prosperity....Therefore, I readily dismiss the woodblock prints for practical use as obsolete and aim to make the artistic printmaking last forever by developing the creative merit peculiar to it, that is, carved lines.³

Yamamoto's woodcut, 'Gyofu' [Fisherman] (1904), is an example of his attempts to create a print as an artistic form of expression, as its 'carved lines' clearly show the quality of being carved as the product of the creative process of printmaking.(Fig. 117) As is evident from the fact that Ishii wrote particularly about the deterioration of reproductive wood engraving and the subsequent revival of original printmaking

³ Yamamoto Kanae, 'Seiyō Mokuhan ni Tsuite' [On Western Wood Engraving] *Heitan*, no. 3, 1905, quoted in Nishiyama Junko, '1900 Nendai no Sōsaku Hanga: Yamamoto Kanae no "Tōsen" o Chūshin ni' [Sōsaku Hanga in the 1900s: With Special Reference to "Engraved Lines" by Yamamoto Kanae] in *Nihon no Hanga I*, ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art, pp. 24-29 (p. 25).

in nineteenth-century Britain in the section of western woodblock printmaking in the encyclopaedia, *Bungei Hyakka Zensho*, they were well aware of the artistic revival of printmaking in Britain.⁴ They must have regarded their revival of printmaking as a parallel movement to the British precedent.

Ishii also criticised the 'reproductive prints', especially the reproduction of paintings as had been produced by Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin, as the epitome of the deterioration of Japanese woodblock printmaking. On the other hand, he praised the traditional *ukiyo-e* printmaking as in the following remark:

The reason why works of ukiyo-e, especially ukiyo-e prints, are admired by foreigners may be not only because they attract them with their curiosity but also because they impress them with their peculiar aesthetic quality. Traditional Japanese prints were reproductive, but they also had considerable aesthetic quality proper to prints.⁵

It is interesting to note that Ishii and his circle of artistic and intellectual friends such as Kinoshita Mokutarō, Takamura Kōtarō and Nagai Kafū revived the *nanban* taste [the taste for western things which was prevalent in Japan from the late Muromachi Period to the early Edo Period] through which they imported the western taste for *ukiyo-e* prints along with other western ideas. In other words, they rediscovered *ukiyo-e* prints through what they regarded as the western taste.⁶ Ishii

⁴ Ishii Hakutei, 'Hanga' [Prints] in *Bungei Hyakka Zensho* [The Encyclopaedia of Arts and Letters], ed. by Waseda Bungakusha (Tokyo: Ryūbunkan, 1909), pp. 382-388 (pp. 386-387).

⁵ Ishii, 'Hanga' in *Bungei Hyakka Zensho*, ed. by Waseda Bungakusha, pp. 387-388.

⁶ Yamada Toshiyuki, 'Han "Meiji" to shitenō "Edo Shumi": Hanga to Bungaku no Meiji Matsu' ["Edo Taste" as Anti-"Meiji": Printmaking and Literature in the Late Meiji Period] in *Sōsaku Hanga no Tanjō: Kindai o Kizanda Sakka Tachi* [The Birth of Creative Prints: the Artists Who Carved Out Modernity], ed. by Shibuya-ku Shōtō Museum (Tokyo: Shibuya-ku Shōtō Museum, 1999), pp. 13-19 (p. 13).

drew designs for a series of prints 'Tokyo Jūni Kei' [Twelve Views of Tokyo] as homage to *ukiyo-e*. (Fig. 118)

From the 1910 to the 1930s, the Sōsaku Hanga Movement was promoted by the artists who were receptive to various contemporary western aesthetics such as Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism and Dadaism. They also experimented with various methods of printmaking such as woodcut, lithography, linocut and etching. (Figs. 119-127) Moreover, with their belief in the importance of creativity and original expression, many of the artists in the Movement undertook the whole process of designing, carving and printing under the famous slogan of *jiga jikoku jizuri* [self-drawn, self-carved and self-printed]. It should also be noted that many of the Sōsaku Hanga artists found inspiration from the works by the western artists who were more or less influenced by *ukiyo-e* prints such as William Nicholson, Aubrey Beardsley and Henri Rivière in the early development of the Movement. Although obscured by its introduction of western avant-garde aesthetics and its slogan of '*jiga jikoku jizuri*', the Sōsaku Hanga Movement was influenced directly or indirectly by the western interest in *ukiyo-e* prints at some stages of its development. The Movement was consolidated with the establishment of the Nihon Sōsaku Hanga Kyōkai [Japan Creative Print Society] in 1918, which was reorganised as the Nippon Hanga Kyōkai [Japan Print Society] in 1931.⁷

Shortly after the birth of the Sōsaku Hanga Movement, another movement, which retained the traditions of *ukiyo-e* printmaking in a more conspicuous way, was pioneered by the publisher of prints, Watanabe Shōzaburō. Watanabe began to

⁷ *Nihon no Hanga II: 1910-1920: Kizamareta "Ko" no Kyōen* [Japanese Prints II: 1910-1920: The Feast of Carved "Selves"] (Chiba: Chiba City Museum of Art, 1999), *Nihon no Hanga III: 1920-1930: Toshi to Onna to Hikari to Kage to* [Japanese Prints III: 1920-1930: The City, Women, Lights and Shadows] (Chiba: Chiba City Museum of Art, 2001), *Nihon no Hanga IV: 1930-1940: Munakata Shikō Tōjō* [Japanese Prints IV: 1930-1940: The Advent of Munakata Shikō] (Chiba: Chiba City Museum of Art, 2004), all edited by Chiba City Museum of Art.

work for the section of export antique *ukiyo-e* prints at the antique shop run by Kobayashi Bunshichi in 1902 and had his own *ukiyo-e* print shop from 1906.⁸ As he became involved in the business of export *ukiyo-e* prints, he came to have concerns about the lack of interest in *ukiyo-e* prints among the Japanese. He feared that all the *ukiyo-e* prints remaining in Japan would be drained abroad unless something was done to awaken the Japanese to the beauty of *ukiyo-e* whose essence was most eminently expressed in the form of prints. In order to make masterpieces of *ukiyo-e* prints widely known to the general public, he began to produce reproductions of antique *ukiyo-e* prints by employing professional craftsmen, based on his thorough research about technical and historical aspects of *ukiyo-e* prints with the emerging group of Japanese scholars of *ukiyo-e* from the mid-1910s.⁹ It is interesting to note that, in reproducing the masterpieces of *ukiyo-e* prints, photographs were pasted onto woodblocks as guidelines for carving, the technique which had been first introduced by Kokka-sha.¹⁰ Such attempts by Watanabe to reproduce the masterpieces of *ukiyo-e* prints can be seen as parallel to the reproductions of the National Treasures and equivalent works of art by Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin. However, there was a fundamental difference between them – Watanabe's was intended first of all to show to the domestic audience the branch of art which had been neglected in the government policies on 'Japanese art' and had been becoming increasingly difficult to see in Japan because of its massive drain abroad, while Kokka-sha and Shimbi Shoin's publications were strongly connected to the

⁸ Kobayashi Bunshichi, who used to work with Hayashi Tadamasa, founded his own antique shop in Tokyo with the assistance of Yoshida Kinbei in the late 1880s. He was to become a major collector of *ukiyo-e* paintings. Ishida Yasuhiro, 'Watanabe Shōzaburō Den' [Biography of Watanabe Shozaburō], in *Watanabe Shōzaburō*, ed. by Watanabe Tadasu, pp. 89-173 (pp. 96, 112-113).

⁹ Ishida, 'Watanabe Shōzaburō Den' in *Watanabe Shōzaburō*, ed. by Tadasu Watanabe, pp. 116-117.

¹⁰ Iwakiri, 'Watanabe Shin-hanga no Keisei', pp. 20-21.

government undertakings for presenting to the international community the prestigious works of 'Japanese art' most of which were difficult to be brought abroad due to the tightening policy of the protection of National Treasures.

Watanabe was not content just to reproduce antique *ukiyo-e* prints. He also embarked on the production of new *ukiyo-e* prints, employing the traditional method of *ukiyo-e* printmaking through the collaboration among designers, carvers and printers as had been done in the Edo Period. Watanabe worked as *han-moto* who supervised these artists and craftsmen and had them employ traditional techniques and materials, based on the thorough knowledge about *ukiyo-e* prints acquired through his attempts at reproducing antique prints. The major subjects of the prints also followed the traditional ones, such as beautiful women, landscapes and *kabuki* actors. However, he did not just follow the old prototypes but, like the advocates of the Sōsaku Hanga Movement, tried to promote printmaking as a modern form of artistic expression. He explained, 'Although the techniques of carving and printing were the same as before, the spirit of the artists is totally different. Our craftsmen collaborate to produce individual works of art, paying attention not to be bound by old prototypes nor to imitate paintings'.¹¹ Interestingly, the first artist to offer design for such prints was an Austrian, Fritz Capelari. The Japanese artists who followed came from diverse backgrounds. The artists such as Kawase Hasui and Itō Shinsui were from the school of Japanese-style painting while those including Hashiguchi Goyō and Yoshida Hiroshi were artists of western-style painting. Also, the British artists, Elizabeth Keith and Charles Bartlett, and the Dutch artist, Peter Irwin Brown, offered designs to be carved and printed by

¹¹ Watanabe Shōzaburō, 'Kawase Hasui Sōsaku Hanga Kaisetsu' [Explanatory Notes on the Creative Prints by Kawase Hasui], quoted in *Itō Shinsui Zen Mokuhanga* [Woodcut Prints by Itō Shinsui], ed. by Kōno Minoru and others (Tokyo: The Committee for the Exhibition of Woodcut Prints by Itō Shinsui, 1992) p. 257.

Watanabe's craftsmen. Even the artists of Japanese-style painting adopted elements from western art. Watanabe employed these artists in order to establish a new form of *ukiyo-e* prints as distinct from traditional ones.(Figs. 128-134) Although, after the financial crisis caused by the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake, Watanabe produced prints with more traditional and conservative designs which would suit the western demands in order to gain quick profits by increasing their export, prints from Watanabe's shop could be seen as his attempt at revitalising *ukiyo-e* printmaking in the modern age by incorporating elements of western art and modernity.¹² The style of prints published by Watanabe and followed by a number of other publishers was to be generally called Shin Hanga [New Prints].

How, then, were such modern Japanese prints received by the British in the same period? As Amy Reigle Newland remarks, the incorporation of modern and western elements into Shin Hanga perplexed the western reviewers.¹³ For example, William H. Edmunds, who wrote several articles on Shin Hanga for *Apollo* in England, explained,

although some of the moderns have gone too far in Europeanizing their beautiful art and reducing it to a mongrel state, or sought to utilize it for European and other foreign scenes, and to catch the atmospheric effects of other lands, yet there is, generally, evidence of a quiet restraint in the adoption of European principles, and the retention of true Japanese feeling,

¹² Nishiyama Junko, 'Watanabe Shōzaburō no Yume: "Shin Hanga" no Seiritu ni tsuite' [Watanabe Shōzaburō's Dream: the Establishment of "New Prints"], Takizawa Kyōji, 'Ukiyo-e Modan to Jidai Seishin: Taishō no Jojō kara Shōwa Modan e' [*Ukiyo-e* Modern and the Spirit of the Age: From Taishō Lyricism to Showa Modernity], in *Ukiyo-e Modan*, ed. by Takizawa, pp. 73-80, 81-87.

¹³ Amy Reigle Newland, 'The Appreciation of *Shin Hanga* in the West: The Interwar Years, 1915-1940', in *Onna-e: Kindai Bijin Hanga Zenshū* [The Female Image: 20th Century Prints of Japanese Beauties] (Tokyo: Abe Shuppan, 2000), pp. 24-30 (p. 26).

which it is to be hoped will never be supplanted.¹⁴

Malcolm Charles Salaman was the author of *The Studio* Special Number of 1930, *The New Woodcut*, in which he examined contemporary woodcuts from various countries. In the chapter on Japan, he dealt mainly with Shin Hanga artists such as Kawase Hasui, Itō Shinsui and Uehara Kōnen, and sought for 'something indigenously Japanese' about their prints, although admitting that they incorporated some western elements into their works.¹⁵

Urushibara Yoshijirō, who did not affiliate himself either to the Sōsaku Hanga Movement or to the Shin Hanga Movement but seems to have worked on both styles, working as a professional craftsman in collaboration with designers as well as producing original prints of his own design, was also praised by the British reviewers for the 'Japaneseness' or 'Orientalness' of his works. Salaman, admitting that Urushibara 'adopted certain principles of European design, perspective and lighting', found a relief in the fact that this 'never quite disturbed his Japaneseness'.¹⁶ Also, a reviewer in *The Times* wrote, 'Mr. Urushibara has an interesting woodcut, 'Old Mentone', in which a picturesque scene of the kind so commonly represented in water-colour is made to fit into an entirely Oriental convention'.¹⁷

Some reviews about Shin Hanga works can be found in the contemporary British magazines even though there was ambivalence toward its incorporation of modern and western elements. But there seems to have been hardly any response to the Sōsaku Hanga Movement, which more overtly discarded old conventions and showed its affinity to contemporary western avant-garde aesthetics. When it was

¹⁴ William H. Edmunds, 'Modern Japanese Artists: Kawase Hasui: an Appreciation', *Apollo*, vol. 10, no. 56, August 1929, p. 87.

¹⁵ Malcolm Charles Salaman, *The New Woodcut* (London: The Studio, 1930), p. 147

¹⁶ Salaman, *The New Woodcut*, p. 147.

¹⁷ 'Coloured Etchings', *The Times*, November 26, 1929, p. 9.

established in 1931, the Nippon Hanga Kyōkai stipulated four objectives of the society, in which 'holding international exhibitions' was included as the top of the list. Sōsaku Hanga prints having gained substantial reputation within Japan and having been accepted at the prestigious Teiten from 1927 onwards, the printmakers of the Sōsaku Hanga Movement began to embark on the international stage. From 1936 to 1937, the Nihon Hanga Kyōkai organised an exhibition of Sōsaku Hanga which toured to the United States, Britain, France, Poland and Germany. In Britain, this exhibition was held in London in January 1936 as the first opportunity to show a substantial number of Sōsaku Hanga prints to the British audience.¹⁸ However, no review about this exhibition has been found in major British art journals and newspapers published around this date.

It is possible to see such reaction to contemporary Japanese prints as parallel to the British response to the modern Japanese art works at the Japan-British Exhibition – once the Japanese started to adopt contemporary western art as competitors on equal terms, the modernity of 'Japanese art' was dismissed only as a failed attempt to outrival the still greater western art. For a substantial reputation abroad, the Sōsaku Hanga artists had to wait until the post-war years when the American audience greeted the prints from their diplomatic ally in the Cold War, seeing in their diversity the democratic ideals which the United States tried to

¹⁸ In order to show that Sōsaku Hanga was based on the tradition of incorporation of western elements into Japanese prints which could be traced back to the Edo Period, the exhibition consisted not only of 'Modern' Japanese prints represented by Sōsaku Hanga but also of 'Classic' Japanese prints such as *ukiyo-e* prints which adopted western perspectives or depicted western subjects from the Edo Period to the early Meiji Period. Kuwahara Noriko, 'Sōsaku Hanga no Kaigai Shinshutsu: 1930 Nendai no Nihon Gendai Hanga Tenrankai' [Sōsaku Hanga's Embarkment for an International Stage: the Exhibitions of Contemporary Japanese Prints in the 1930s], in *Nihon no Hanga IV*, ed. by Chiba City Museum of Art, pp. 23-30, *Exhibition of Classic & Modern Japanese Colour Prints, under the Patronage of the Japan Society by the Society of Graver-Painters of Japan (Nippon Hanga Kyōkai)*, (London: Arlington Gallery, 1937).

ingrain in Japan during its occupation from 1945 to 1952.¹⁹ On the other hand, the appreciation of Shin Hanga in the West, which began to grow in the 1920s and 1930s, was interrupted by the Second World War, when the 'romanticised' views of Japan expressed in Shin Hanga was marred by Japan's military actions in the eyes of westerners, and it was not revived until the 1980s.²⁰

It is also possible to argue that a context for the reception of contemporary Japanese prints was not yet nurtured in pre-war Britain. This thesis has examined how the British reception of 'Japanese art' was predicated on changing British contexts during this period. The Japanese themselves also tried to present 'Japanese art', appropriating some western elements, in order to achieve their most prioritised task of each period. However, from the 'Japanese art' thus presented by the Japanese, the British audience picked up certain aspects that would fit into the British contexts in each period. When the tide of Japonisme first swept western countries in the mid-nineteenth century, Japan was on its way to modernisation and industrialisation. The Japanese government, taking advantage of the popularity of Japanese arts and crafts, promoted the export of handicrafts to the West as part of the policy of *Shokusan Kōgyō*. In this process, the Japanese appropriated the western taste for 'Japanese art' by producing and exporting the kinds of 'Japanese art' envisaged by the west. In other words, the Japanese and westerners established a reciprocal relation from which both benefited – it satisfied the western imagination about 'Japanese art' while it offered the Japanese opportunities of gaining foreign currency. This relation was, however, dissolved from around the turn of the century. Having achieved modernisation and industrialisation to a

¹⁹ Alicia Volk, 'Japanese Prints Go Global: *Sōsaku Hanga* in an International Context', in *Made in Japan: the Postwar Creative Print Movement*, ed. by Alicia Volk (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Art Museum, 2005), pp. 5-21.

²⁰ Newland, 'The Appreciation of *Shin Hanga* in the West' in *Onna-e*, pp. 28-29.

certain extent, the Japanese government began to present what they claimed as 'authentic' 'Japanese art' as the epitome of Japan's civilisation, incorporating the western concepts regarding arts. However, as exemplified by the British reaction to the 'Japanese art' at the Japan-British Exhibition, the British audience did not respond to it as the Japanese government expected them to and only greeted the aspects of 'Japanese art' that would justify their current aesthetic ideas.

Throughout this period, *ukiyo-e* prints, on the other hand, continued to be ignored in the Japanese government's policies on 'Japanese art'. However, this officially neglected branch of Japanese art, sometimes utilised only as wrapping material for export handicrafts or means of reproducing National Treasures, was constantly appreciated and appropriated by the British audience well into the 1930s. Also, ironically enough, the official representation of 'Japanese art' such as that at the Japan-British Exhibition and the publications to present the government discourse on 'Japanese art' to the international audience including those by Shimbi Shoin and Kokka-Sha prompted the British appropriation of Japanese prints and printmaking in a rather unexpected way. From the 1860s the elements of *ukiyo-e* such as motifs, compositional devices and subjects were adopted by British artists, but the techniques of *ukiyo-e* printmaking were not taken up by them until the 1890s. The lack of knowledge about this aspect of *ukiyo-e* until the 1890s might have been one of the reasons for this. However, it must have been also true that the context which would make the knowledge about *ukiyo-e* techniques important for British artists had not been nurtured until then. As has been shown, not only the development of studies of various aspects of Japanese prints but also the artistic revival of printmaking and the emergence of the Arts and Crafts ideas in the same period encouraged some British artists to adopt the method of *ukiyo-e* printmaking. Even in the 1920s and the 1930s, their own understanding of Japanese printmaking

helped promote their prints in the changed contexts of the interwar years. It should also be remarked that even among various aspects of *ukiyo-e* printmaking, they picked up or reinterpreted certain aspects to develop their own styles of printmaking to express the qualities such as 'originality', 'Englishness' and 'modernity'.

Their appreciation and appropriation might have been 'a great misunderstanding, a great exaggeration, or some strong emphasis'.²¹ However, their 'misunderstanding' prompted all kinds of flowerings of art on the British soil. The meaning of a thing varies according to the context in which it is understood. To the Japanese, it might have looked like a 'misunderstanding', but it was the kind of 'understanding' which was needed in a British context during different periods. 'Japanese art' as envisaged by British audiences has been the product of a series of appropriations which they made according to the changing aesthetic ideas, scholastic interest and popular imagination of each period.

²¹ William Giles, 'The Colour Print of Allen W. Seaby', *Original Colour Print Magazine*, no. 1, June 1924, p.8.

Illustrations

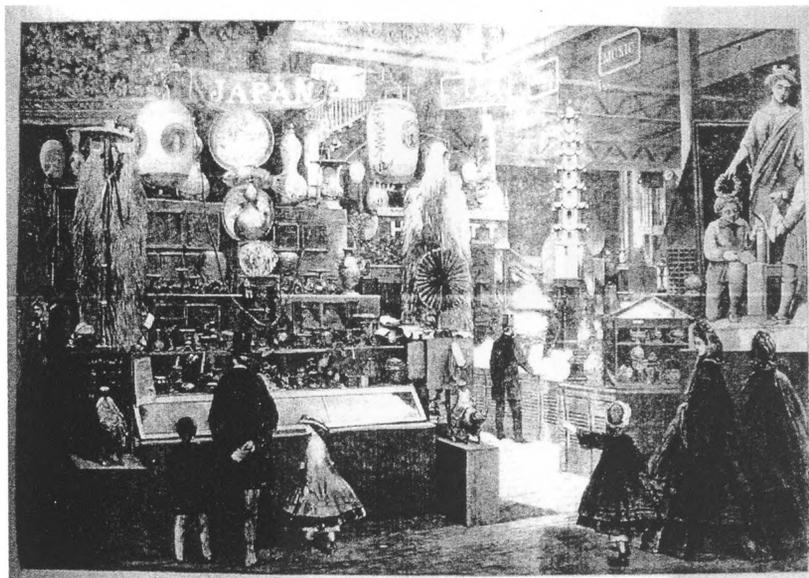


Fig.1: The Japanese section at the International Exhibition, London, 1862

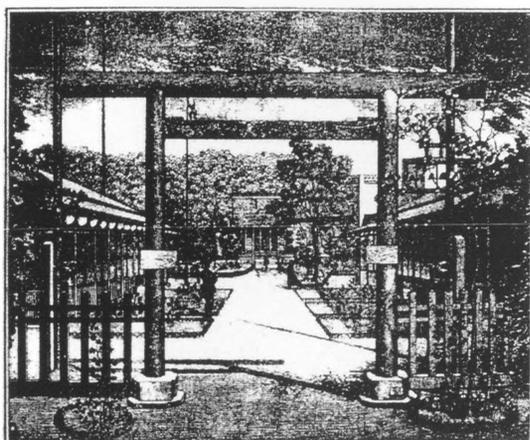


Fig.2: The Japanese garden and shrine at the Vienna Exhibition, 1873



Fig.3: A design for a vase produced by Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha



Fig.4: A design for a box produced by Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha

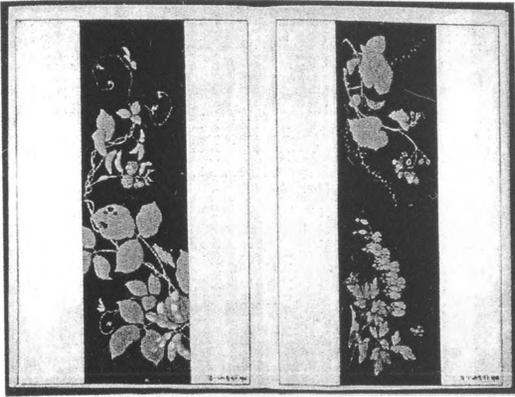


Fig.5: Designs for lacquer work from *Onchi Zuroku*

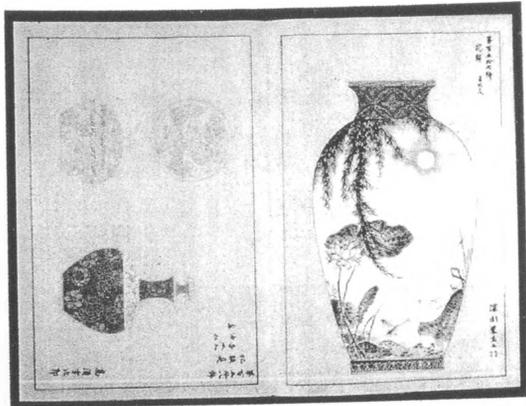


Fig.6: Designs for porcelain from *Onchi Zuroku*



Fig.7: A woodcut reproduction of the painting, 'Yama, the Punisher', attributed to the Buddhist priest Eri, in *Kokka*, no. 133, 1902 January

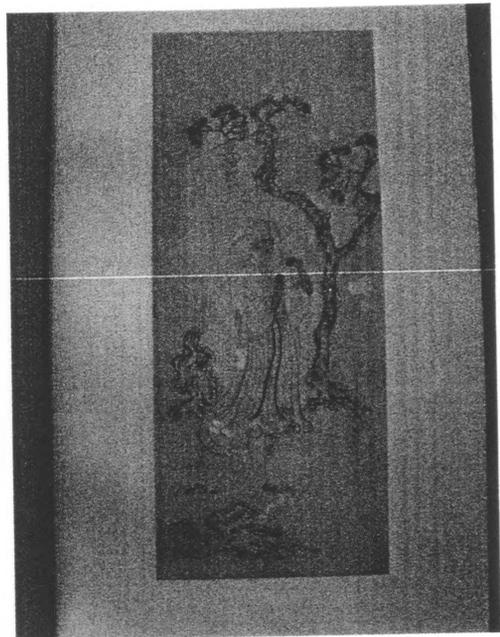


Fig.8: A woodcut reproduction of the painting, 'A Court Lady', artist unknown, the Nara Period, in Plate 10, *Masterpieces Selected from the Fine Arts of the Far East* vol.1

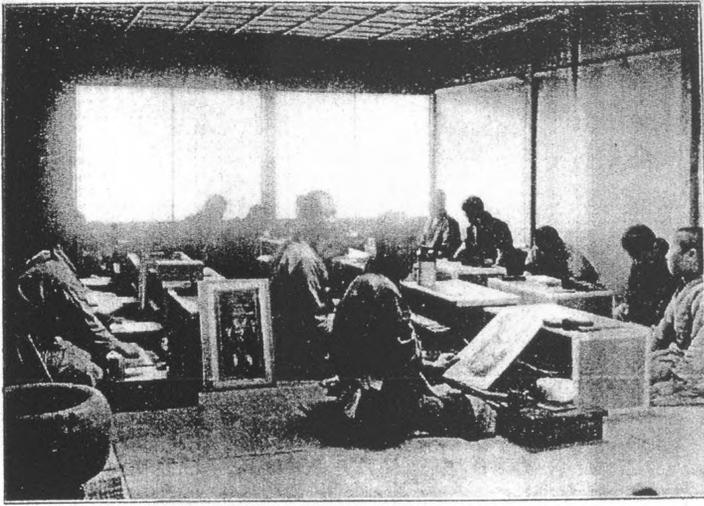


Fig.9: The workshop in Shimbi Shoin

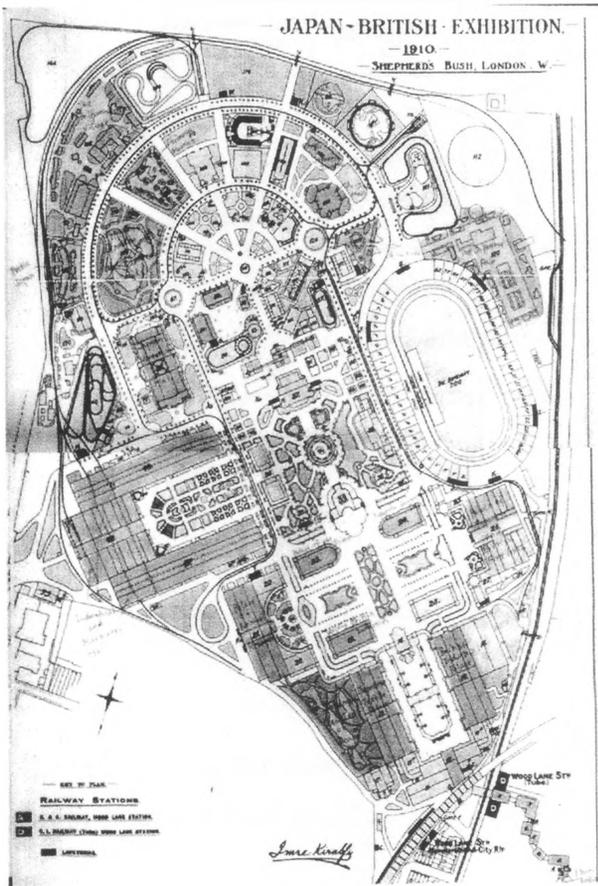


Fig.10: A plan of the Japan-British Exhibition
(pink: Japanese sections, yellow: British sections)

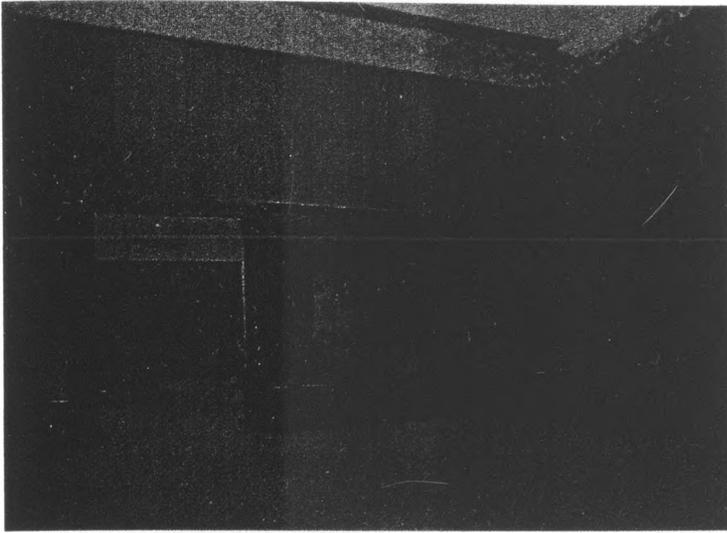


Fig.13: The Japanese retrospective art galleries



Fig.14: The ukiyo-e painting, 'Two Beauties in the Snow' by Kitagawa Fujimaro, displayed at the Retrospective Section

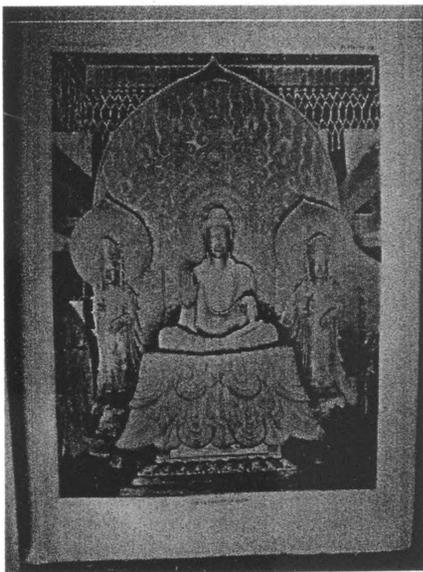


Fig.15: A collotype reproduction of 'Sakya Trinity of Kondo, Horyuji Monastery' in *Japanese Temples and Their Treasures*, plate 178

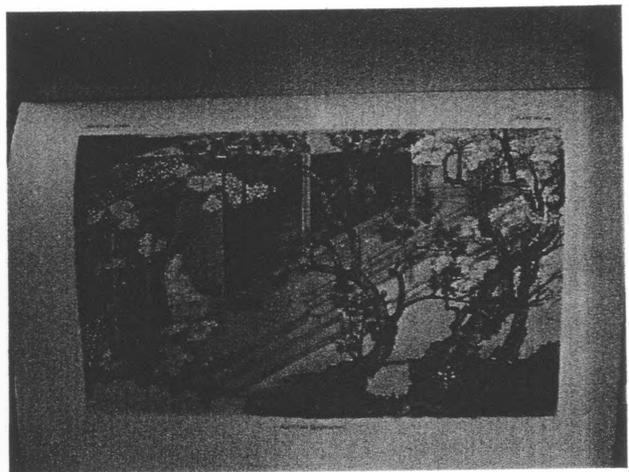


Fig.16: A woodcut reproduction of 'Matsuzaki Tenjin scroll' in *Japanese Temples and Their Treasures*, plate 469

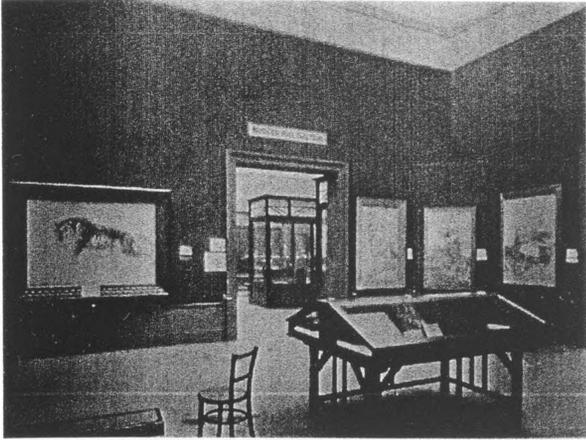


Fig.17: The Japanese modern art galleries

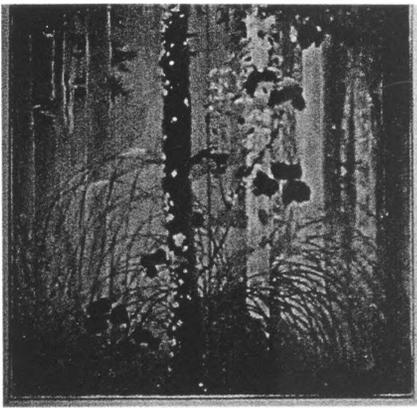


Fig.18: A prize-winning painting from Buntten, 'Konoma no Aki' [Autumn Forest] by Simomura Kanzan

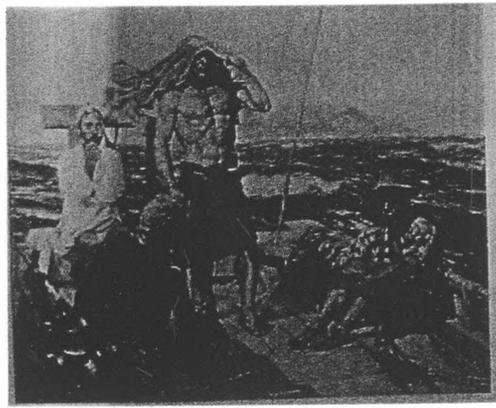


Fig.19: A prize-winning painting from Buntten, 'Nanpū' [Sea Breeze] by Wada Sanzō



Fig.20: View of the Japanese Textile Palace

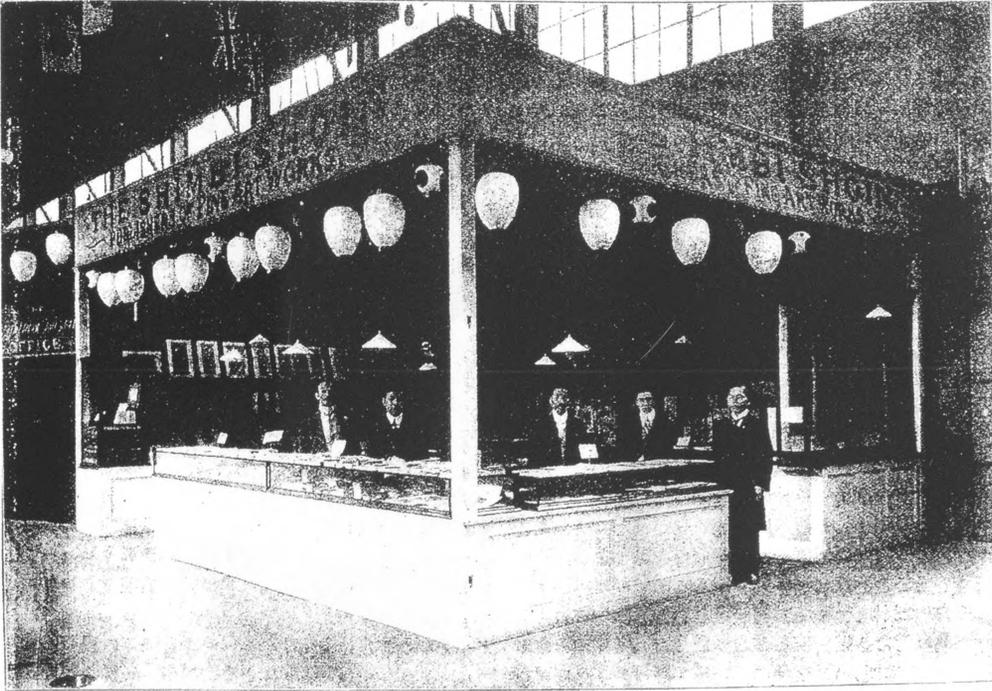


Fig.21: The stall of Shimbi Shoin at the Japan-British Exhibition

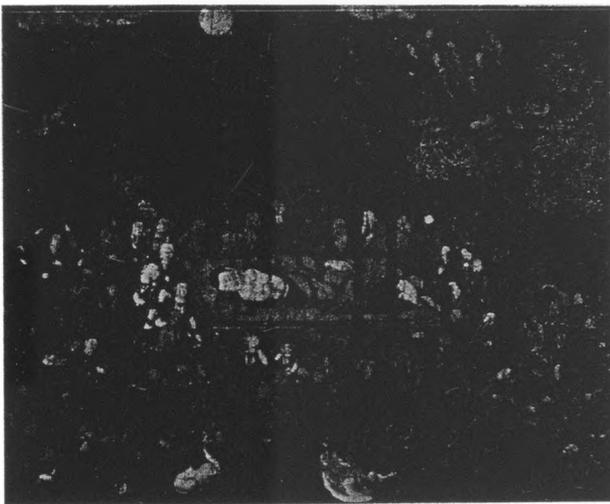


Fig.22: 'Nehanzu', Chionji [Nirvana, Chionji Temple]

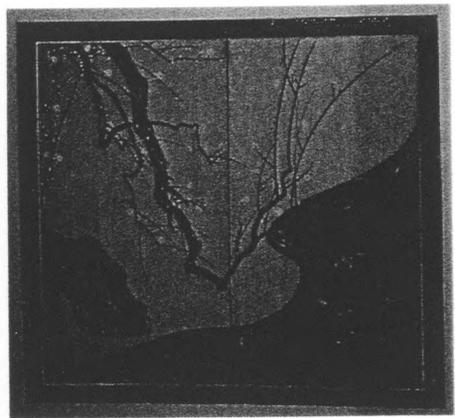


Fig.23: 'The Plum Blossoms'
(screen) by Ogata Kōrin

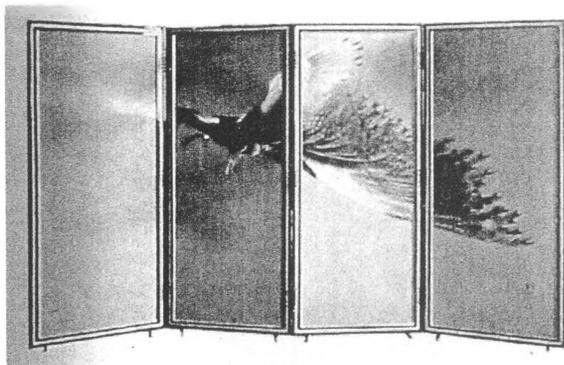


Fig.24: An embroidery screen
by Tanaka Rishichi

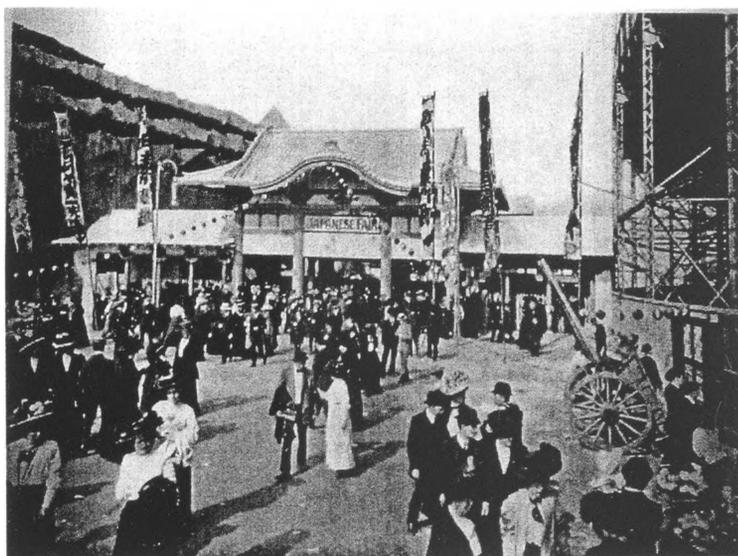


Fig.25: Entrance to Fair
Japan

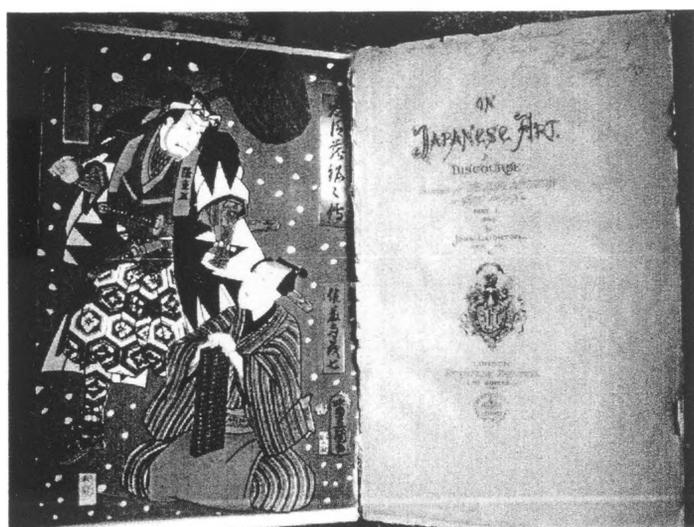


Fig.26: A Kunisada print pasted
into Leighton, *On Japanese Art*,
preserved in the National Art
Library, V&A



Fig.27: Whistler, 'Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen' (1864)

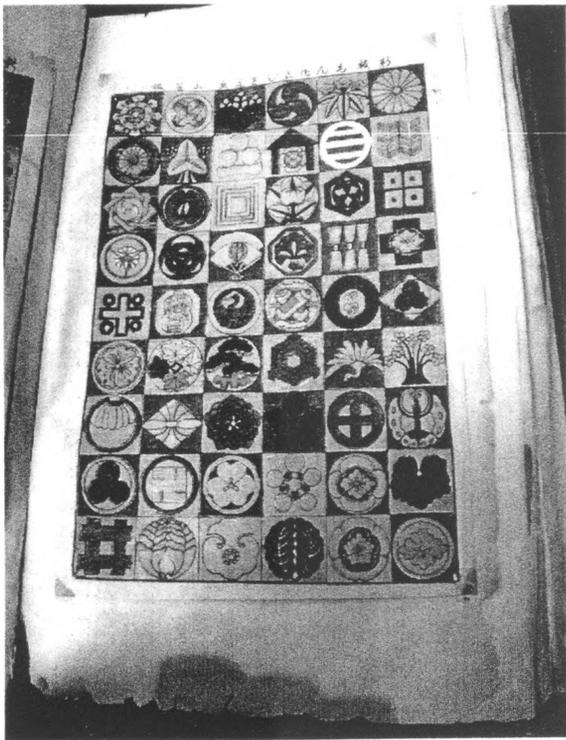


Fig.28: A Japanese print pasted into Burges's scrapbook



圖るたき開をアダンレカ形宛

Fig.29: A calendar published by Hasegawa

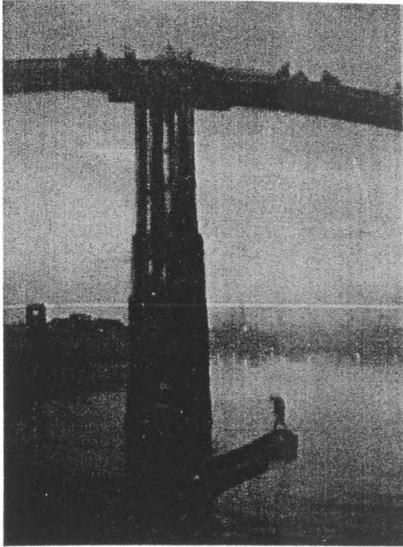


Fig.30: Whistler, 'Nocturn: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge' (c.1872-75)

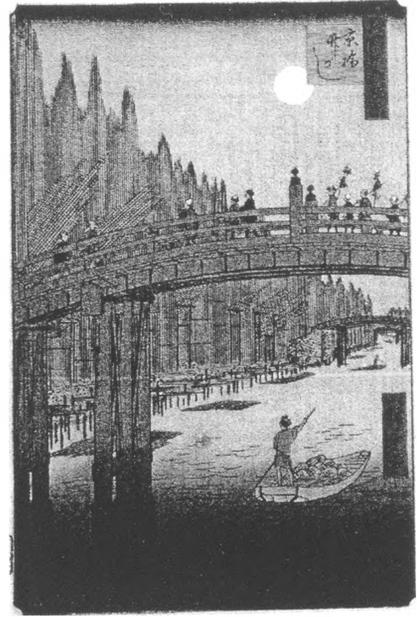


Fig.31: Utagawa Hiroshige, 'Meisho Edo Hyakkei: Kyōbashi Takegashi' [A Hundred Views of Edo: The Riverside Bamboo Matket at Kyōbashi] (1857)

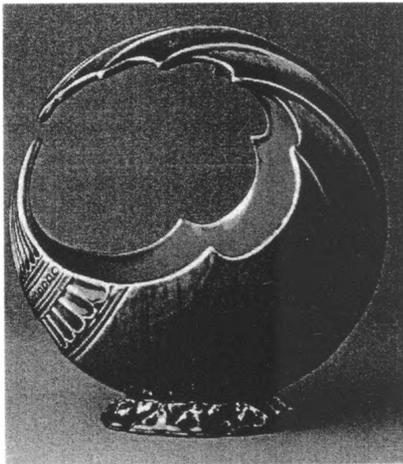


Fig.32: Vase 'Hokusai's Wave' (1879-82) by Christopher Dresser

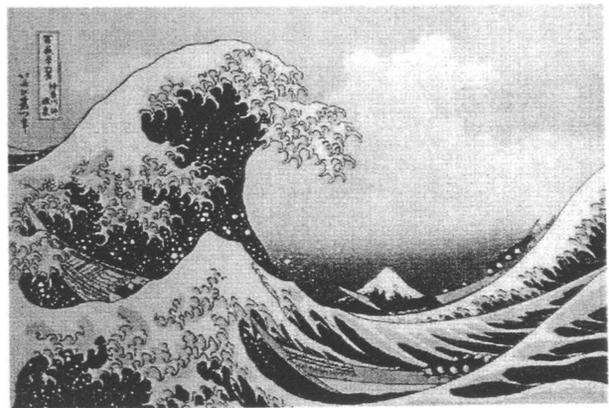


Fig.33: Katsushika Hokusai, 'Kanagawa-oki Nami Ura' [The Great Wave off Kanagawa] (c.1831)



Fig.34: 'Queen Victoria' (1897), a hand-coloured woodcut by William Nicholson



Fig.35: Katsushika Hokusai, *Wakan Ehon Kai* (1836)



Fig.36: 'Hercules' (c.1496-97), a woodcut by Dürer

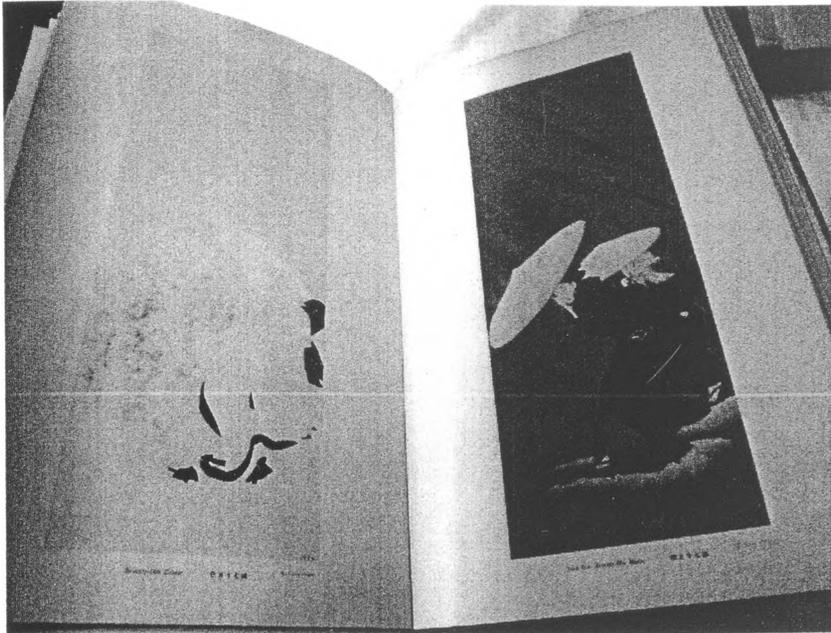


Fig.37: *Process of Wood-cut Printing* (c.1910) by Shimbi Shoin

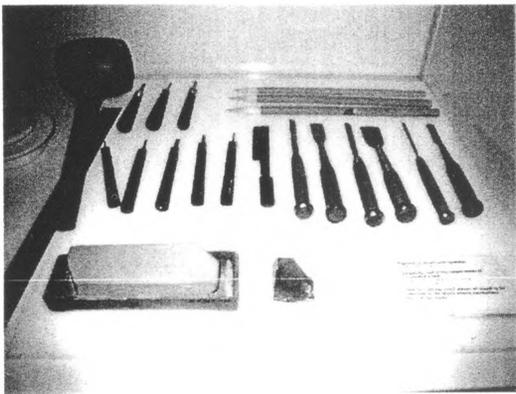


Fig.38: Tools for Japanese printmaking at the V&A

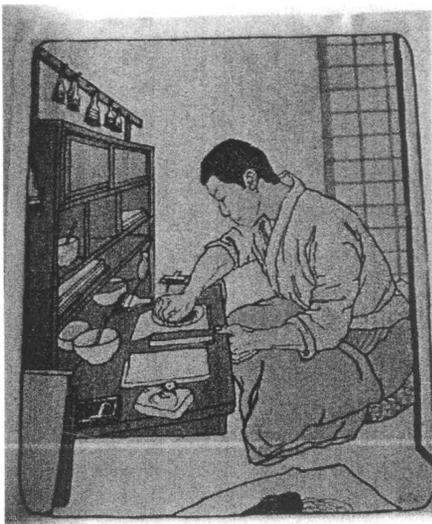


Fig.39: Emil Orlik, 'A Japanese printer' (1901)

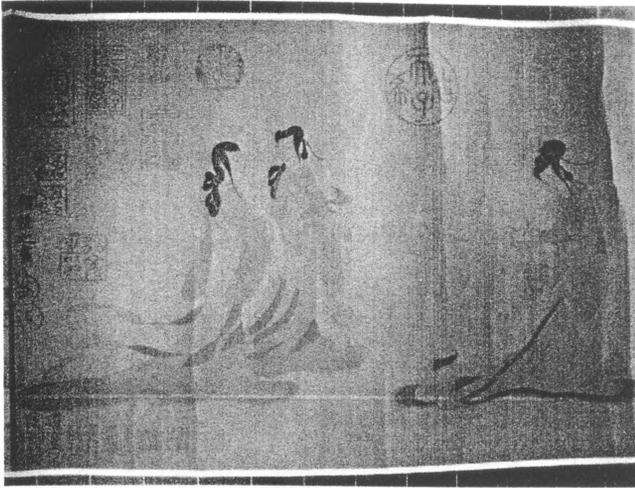


Fig.40: A woodcut reproduction of 'Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace'

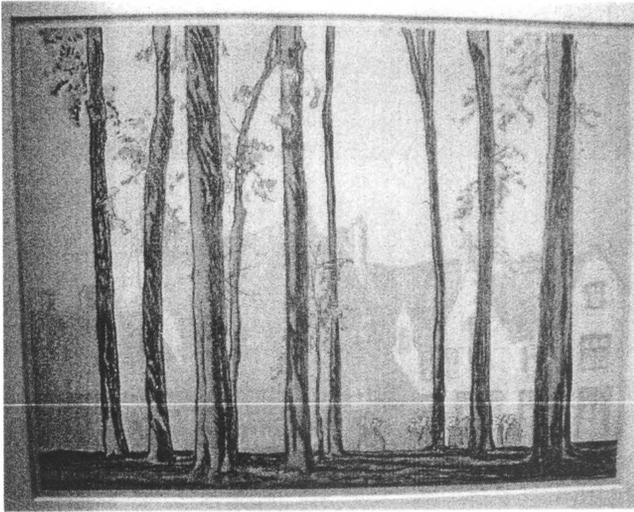


Fig.41: 'A scene in Flandres', a woodcut designed by Frank Brangwyn and cut and printed by Urushibara Yoshijirō



Fig.42: 'Stonehenge by Day', an original woodcut by Urushibara



Fig.43: A page from *La Mer des Histoires* (Paris : Pierre Le Rouge for Vincent Commin, 1488-89), a copy of which was owned by Morris



Fig.44: A page from Kelmscott *Chaucer* (1896) with illustration by Burne-Jones



Fig.45: An illustration for *Daphnis & Chloe* (1893) by Ricketts and Shannon



Fig.46: 'Death of Dragon' (1896) by Sturge-Moore

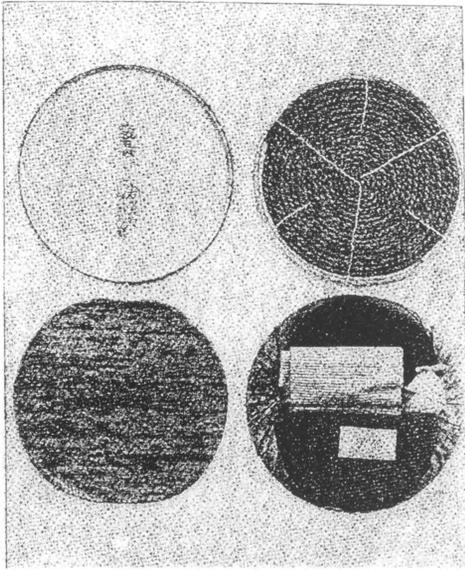


Fig.47: 'Baren and Its Parts', an illustration from Tokunō and Koehler's report

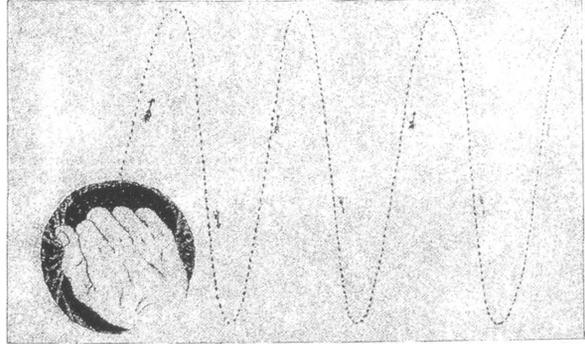


Fig.48: 'Method of Using Baren', an illustration from Tokunō and Koehler's report



Fig.49: 'Japanese Wood-cutter at Work', an illustration from Tokunō and Koehler's report



Fig.50 'A European Wood-cutter of the XVI Century', an illustration from Tokunō and Koehler's report

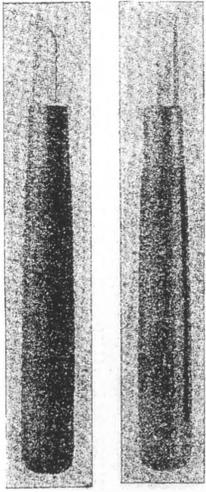


Fig.51: 'Japanese Wood-cutter's Knife', an Illustration from Tokunō and Koehler's report



Fig.52: 'The Knife Used by Papillon (a European wood-cutter)', an illustration From Tokunō and Koehler's report



Fig.53: 'Eve and Serpent' (1895) by Batten and Fletcher

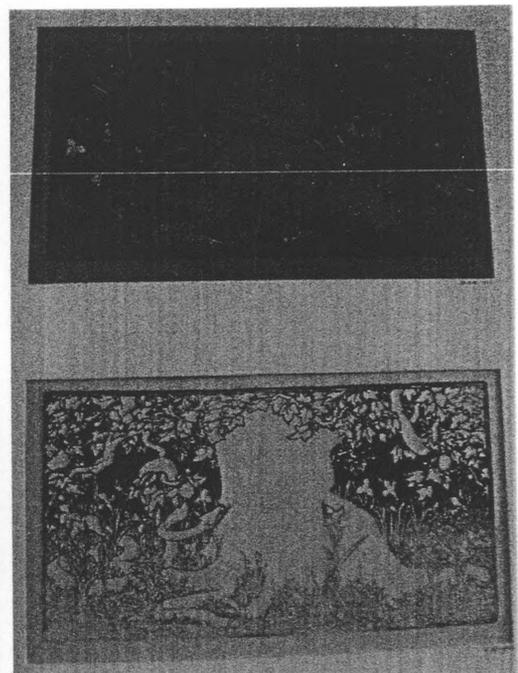


Fig.54: The drawing (top) and proof (bottom) for 'Eve and Serpent'

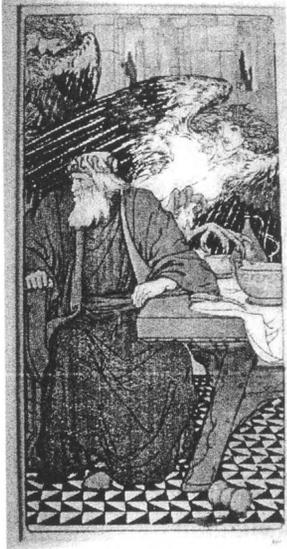


Fig.55: 'The Harpies' (1897) by Batten and Fletcher

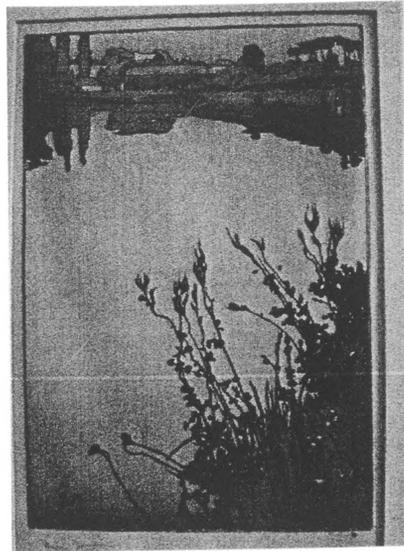


Fig.56: 'Meadowsweet' (1896) by Fletcher

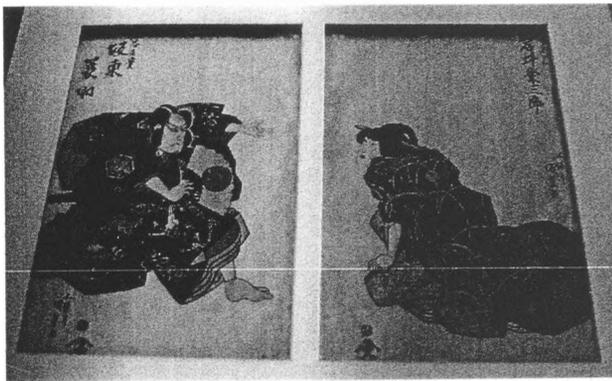


Fig.57: 'Kumagai Naozane' (1830) by Utagawa Kunisada as a teaching example at the Central School of Arts and Crafts



Fig.58: 'Shuttlecock and Battledore' (1888) by Kobayashi Eitaku as a teaching example at the Central School of Arts and Crafts

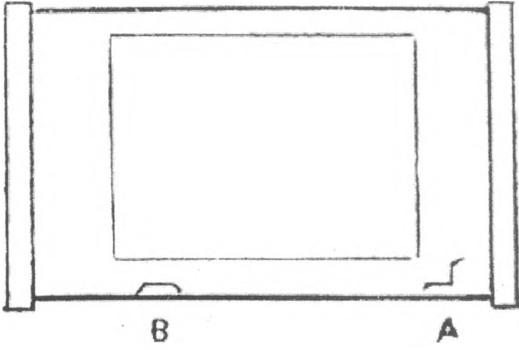


Fig.59: 'Position of register marks', an illustration from *Woodblock Printing* by Fletcher

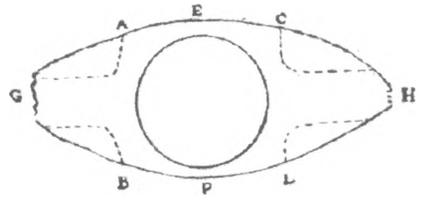


Fig.60: 'Method of re-covering baren', an illustration from *Woodblock Printing* by Fletcher



Fig.61: An original print pasted into *Woodblock Printing* by Fletcher

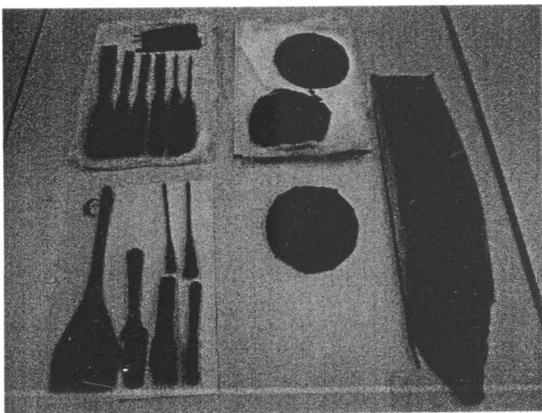


Fig.62 Japanese printmaking tools preserved in the Typography Department, Reading University



Fig.63: A woodblock preserved in the Typography Department, Reading University



Fig.64: 'The Fawn' by Kathleen Hale in the portfolio of prints by Seaby and his students



Fig.65: 'East Gate, Seoul, Sunshine' by Elizabeth Keith'

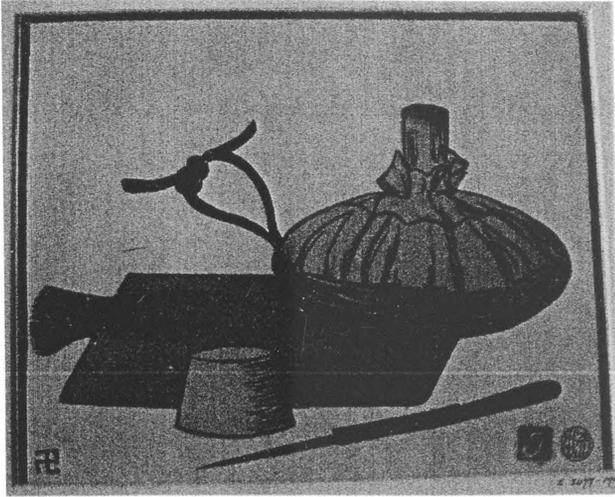


Fig.66: 'Outil de Graveur' by Isaac, Chadel and Urushibara

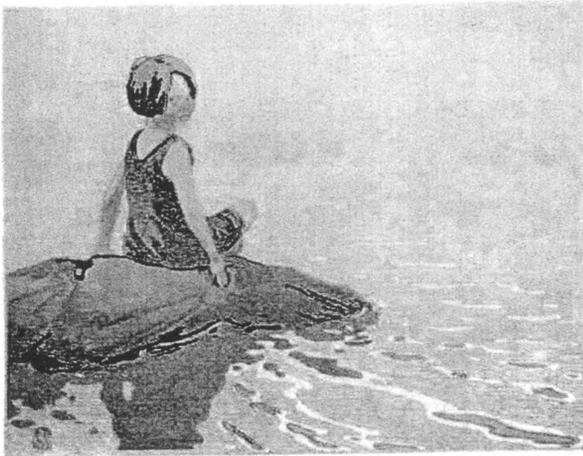


Fig.67: 'Summer' by William J. Phillips

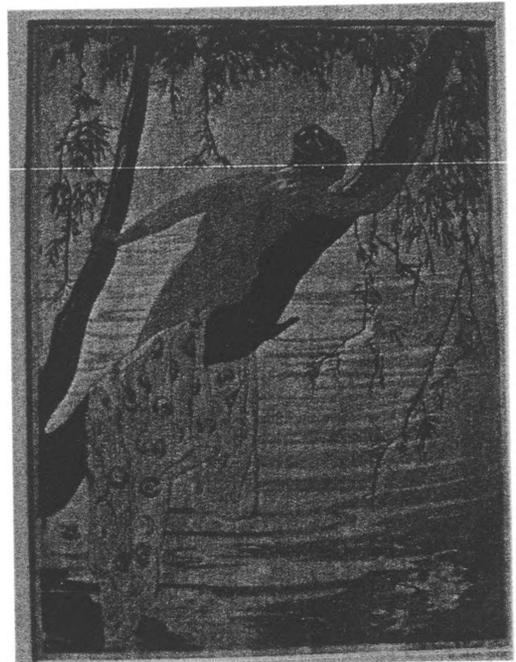


Fig.68: 'The Bather' by Mrs. E. Garrett Rice

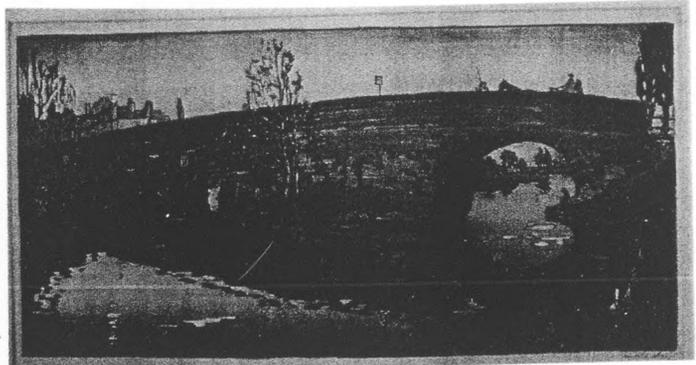
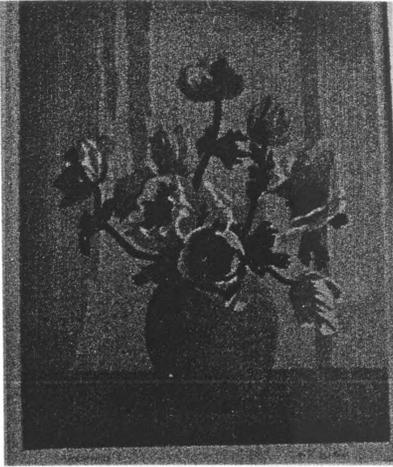


Fig.69: 'Anemones' by Eric Slater

Fig.70: 'The Bridge' by Allen W. Seaby

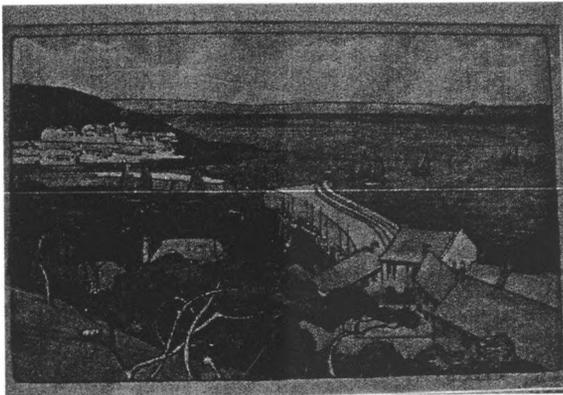


Fig.71: 'Mounts Bay, Cornwall' by Ethel Kirkpatrick



Fig.72: 'Blackcock and Greyhen' by Allen W. Seaby



Fig.73: 'Venantius of Ravenna'(1916) by John Edgar Platt

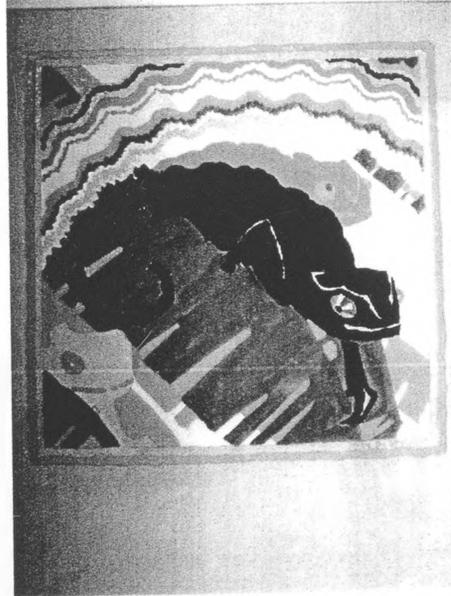


Fig.74: 'Chameleon. For the zoo... alight at Camden Town' by John Edgar Platt

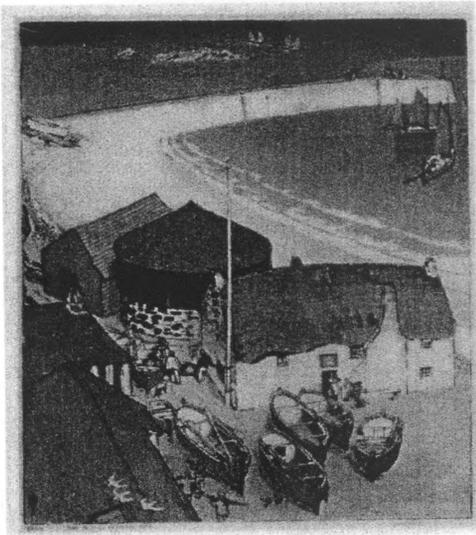


Fig.75: 'The Jetty, Sennen Cove' (1921) by John Edgar Platt

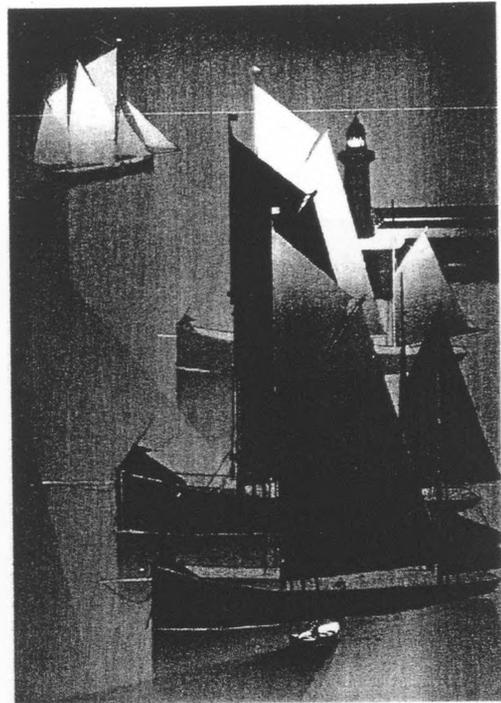


Fig.76: 'Sails' (1933) by John Edgar Platt

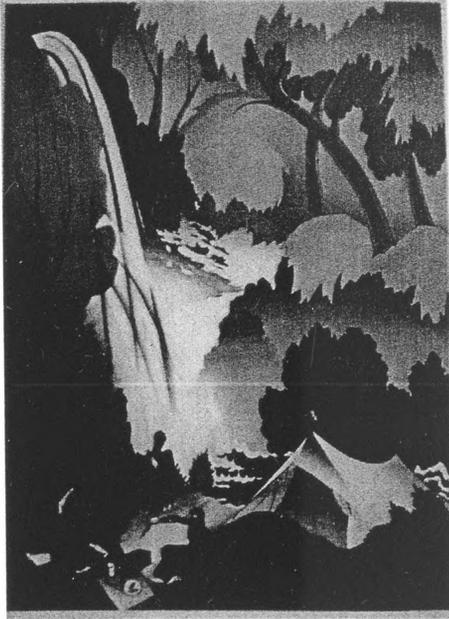


Fig.77: 'Campers' (1934) by Ian Alec Johnson Cheyne



Fig.78: 'Wrestlers' (c.1914) by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska

DIMANOME A L'OMISPE
 Un Militaire au pompon rouge
 Aimait la bonne su café.
 Le cafetier flanelle bouge
 Au milieu des cafés au lait
 Je mets de l'eau dans mon vin
 Et du sucre dans mon café
 Le ténor à l'oreille frisque
 Il tei manque un tambour de basque
 Laconique du bout des doigts
 Comme la mouche autour de moi
 Ma plume joue aux quatre coins
 Mes idées à cetin maillard
 Sur le papier sans savoir
 A votre aise
 Donnez vous la peine d'entier
 Dans mon intimité
 Pour voir
 J'ai fait un trou dans le noir.

EMILE MALESPINE (Lyons).

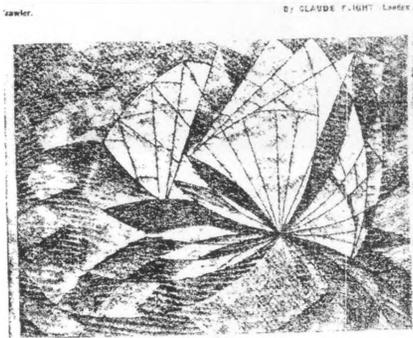


Fig.79: 'Trawlers' by Claude Flight in *Ray*, no. 1, 1927

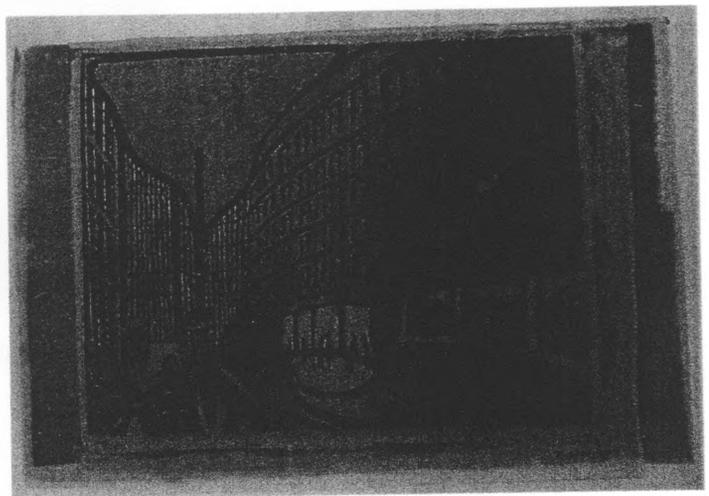


Fig.80: 'Speed' (c.1922) by Claude Flight



Fig.81: 'Whence & Whither?' (c.1930)
by Cyril E. Power

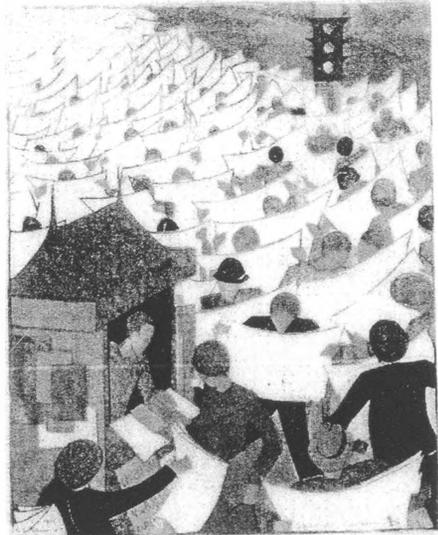


Fig.82: 'Special Edition' (1936) by
Ethel Spowers

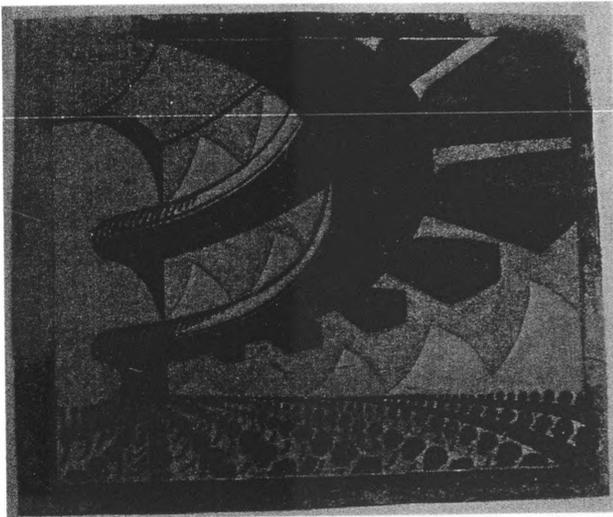


Fig.83: 'Au Theatre' (1929) by Sybil Andrews

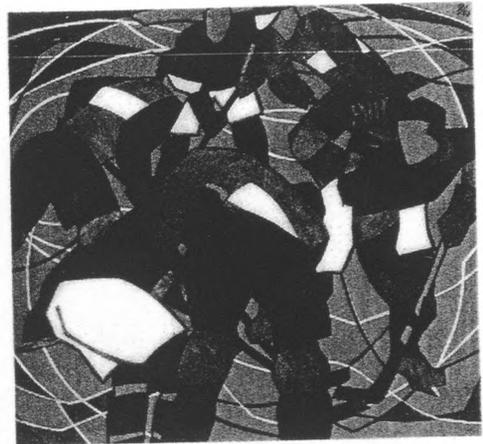


Fig.84: 'Ice Hockey' (1933) by Lill Tschudi

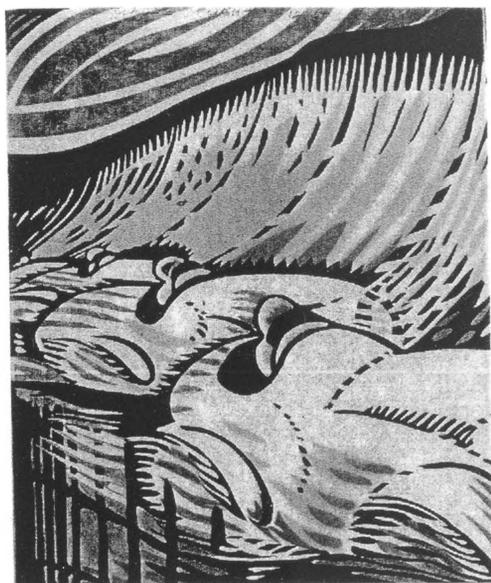


Fig.85: 'Brooklands' (c. 1929) by Claude Flight

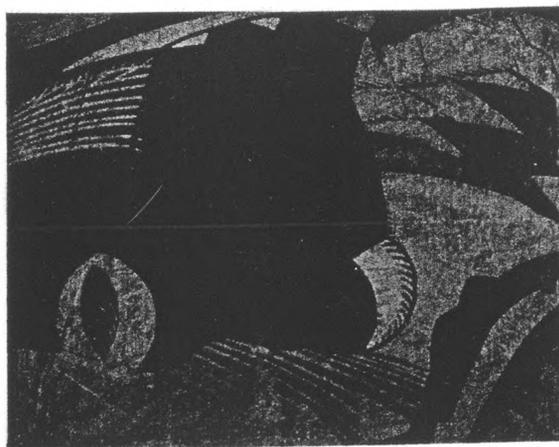


Fig.86: 'Paris Omnibus' (1923) by Claude Flight

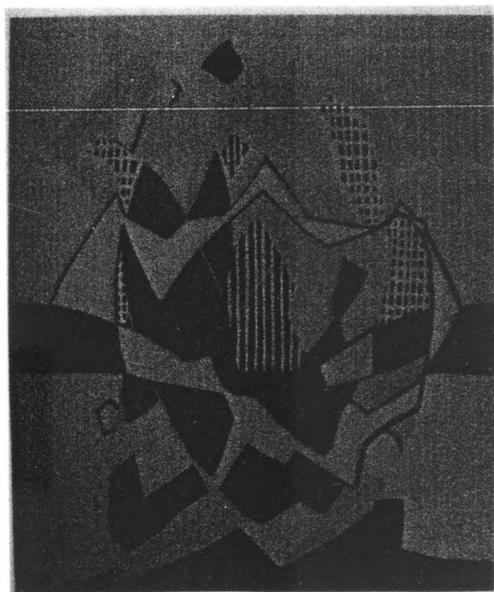


Fig.87: 'Abstract Dancing' Claude Flight

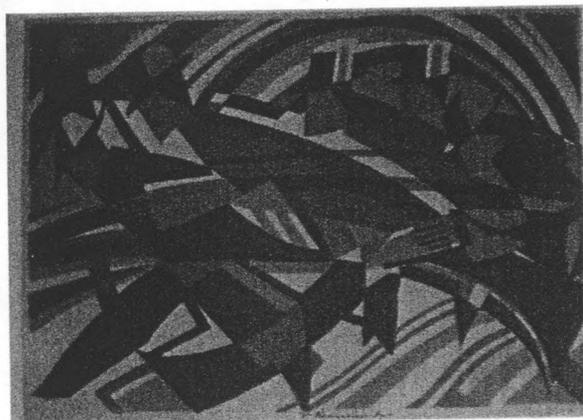


Fig.88: 'Rush Hour' by Leonard Beaumont

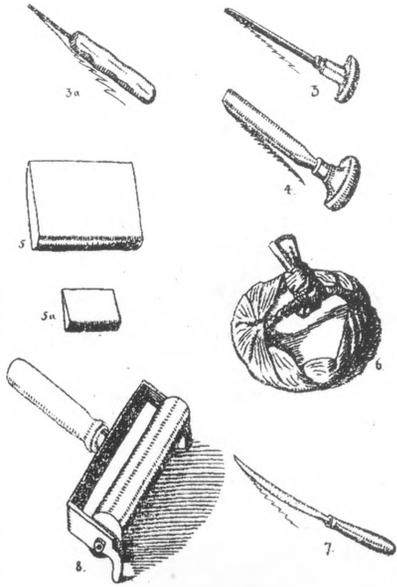


Fig.89: An illustration from Flight, 'Linoleum-cut Colour Printing'

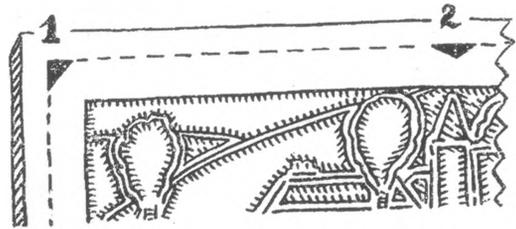


Fig.90: An illustration from Flight, 'Linoleum-cut Colour Printing'

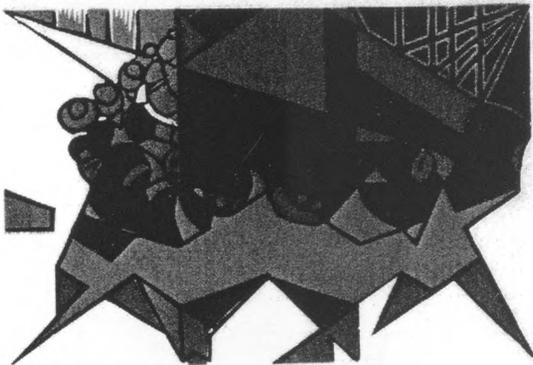


Fig.91: 'Crossing the Road' (1926) by Claude Flight

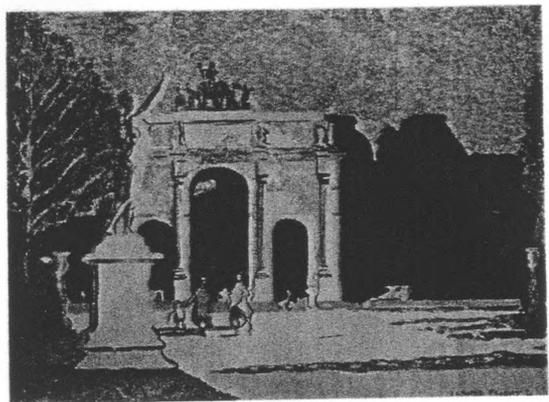


Fig. 92 'L'arc de Triomphe de Carrousel and Louvre' by Claude Flight

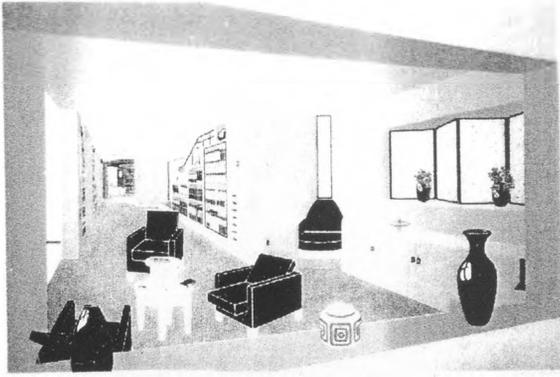


Fig.93: A plate from *Intérieurs en Couleurs*, published for l'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, Paris, 1925



Fig.94: A plate, 'MODERN PAINTING IN A PERIOD ROOM' in Patmore, *Modern Furnishing and Decoration*



Fig.95: A plate, 'BUILDING A SCHEME ROUND A PICTURE' in Patmore, *Modern Furnishing and Decoration*

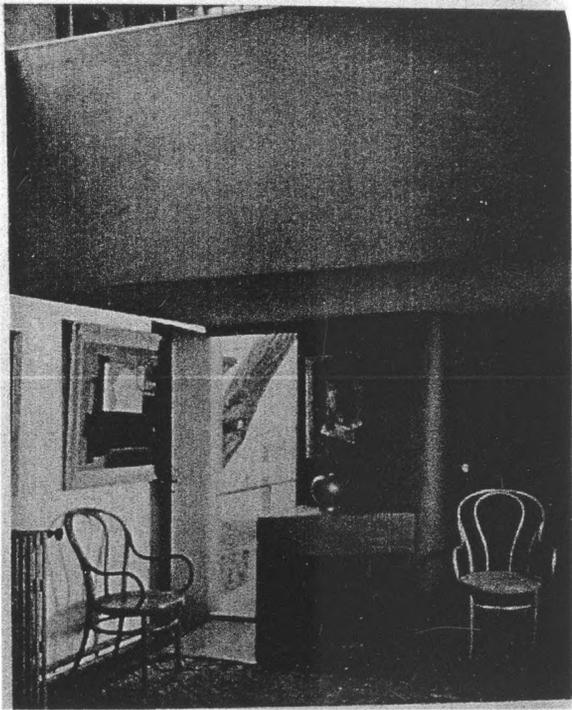


Fig.96: A room by Le Corbusier

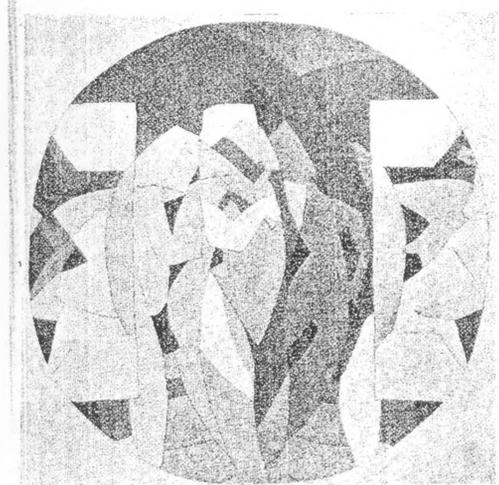


Fig.97: An appliqué work designed by Flight and executed by Lawrence

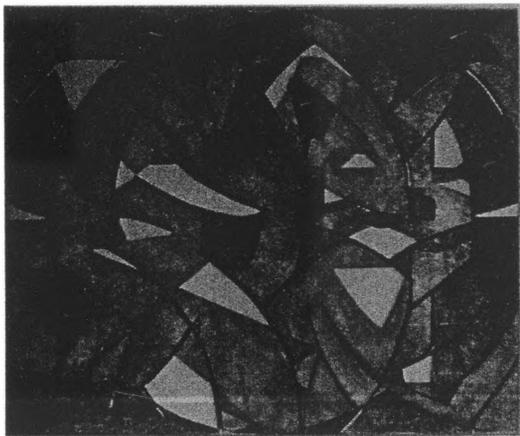


Fig.98: 'The Seasons, Summer' by Claude Flight



Fig.99: The drawing room of Flight's sister in Hampstead Garden Suburb

The corner-cupboard is a particularly useful piece of furniture, and the bureau is essential.

The delightful woodcuts of Mr. Hall Thorpe are a perfect means of introducing a good splash of colour into any room.



istic charm of the past, yet in no way ignoring the labour-saving demands of the present.

And so we catch a first glimpse of the parlour—a stone floor, much massive timbering and a Tudor fireplace. The goodly supply of thick Oriental rugs with their well-blended colourings bids fair to compensate for the stone floor ;

Fig.100: Prints by Hall Thorpe in a cottage room

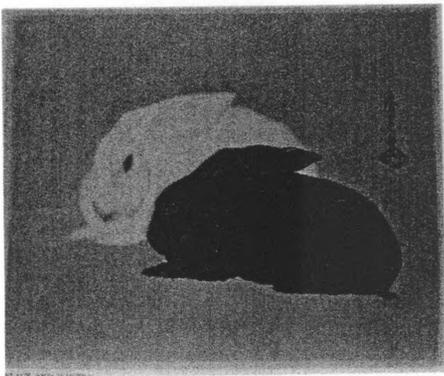


Fig.101: 'Black and White' by Urushibara Yoshijirō



Fig.102: A print by Urushibara in a dining room

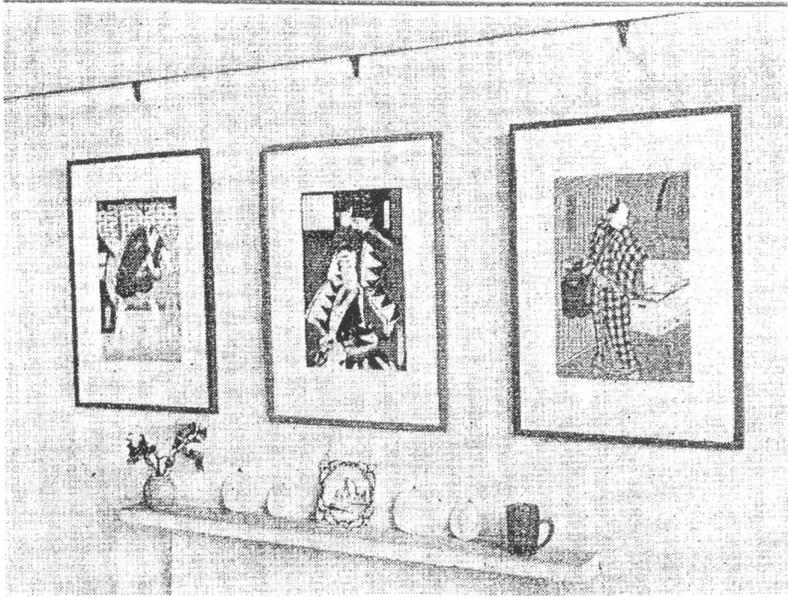


Fig.103: Ukiyo-e prints as wall decoration



Fig.104: An ukiyo-e print as wall decoration

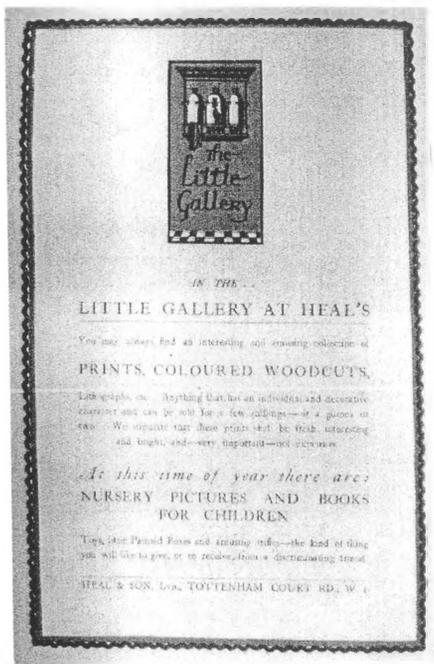


Fig.105: An advertisement for the Little Gallery at Heal's



Fig.106: Prints by Hall Thorpe in a bedroom designed by Heal's



Fig.107: 'Trees in Moonlight' by Urushibara Yoshijirō

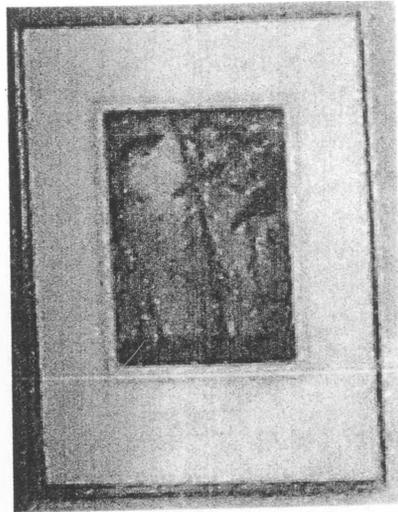


Fig.109: An enlarged image of the print on the wall in Fig. 108

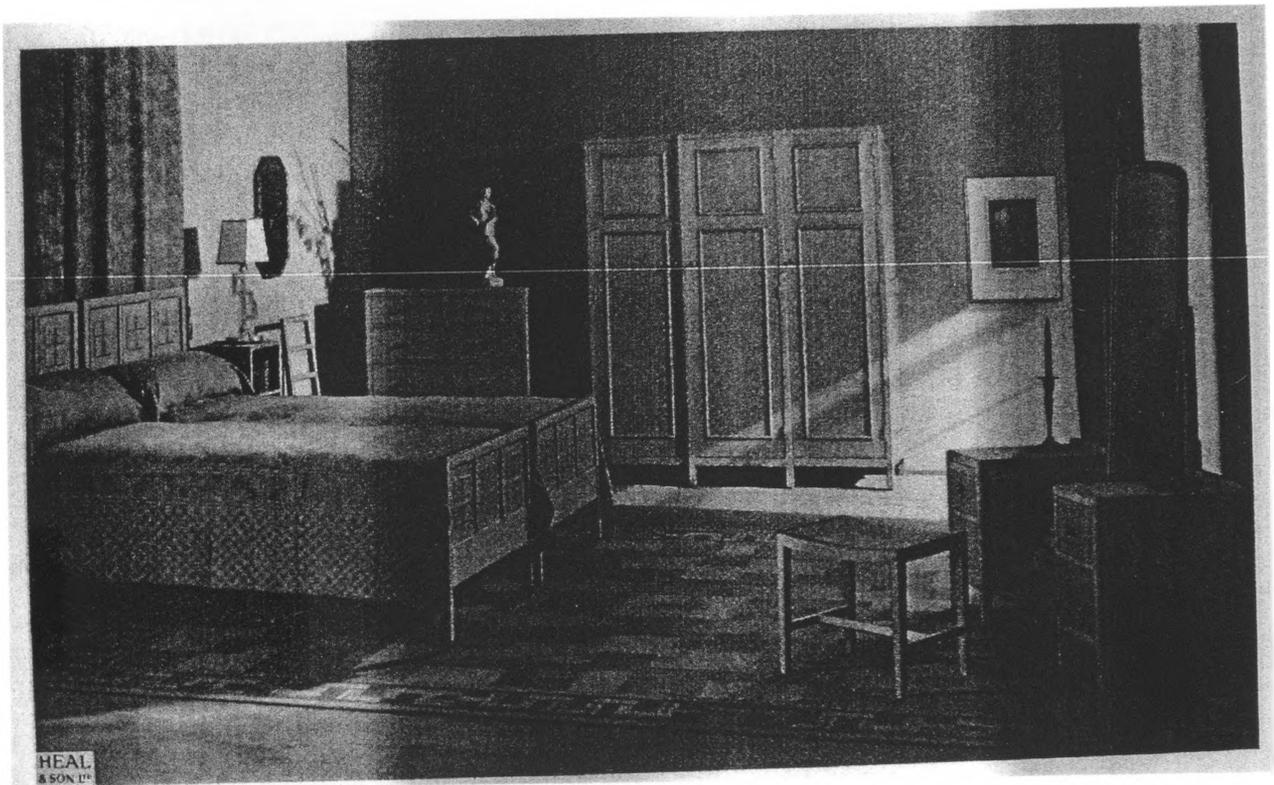


Fig.108 : A print by Urushibara in a bedroom designed by Heal's



Fig.110: The Little Gallery in the 1930



Fig.111: An invitation card for the exhibition at the Mansard Gallery, 'Modern Ceramics & Colour Prints', 1928

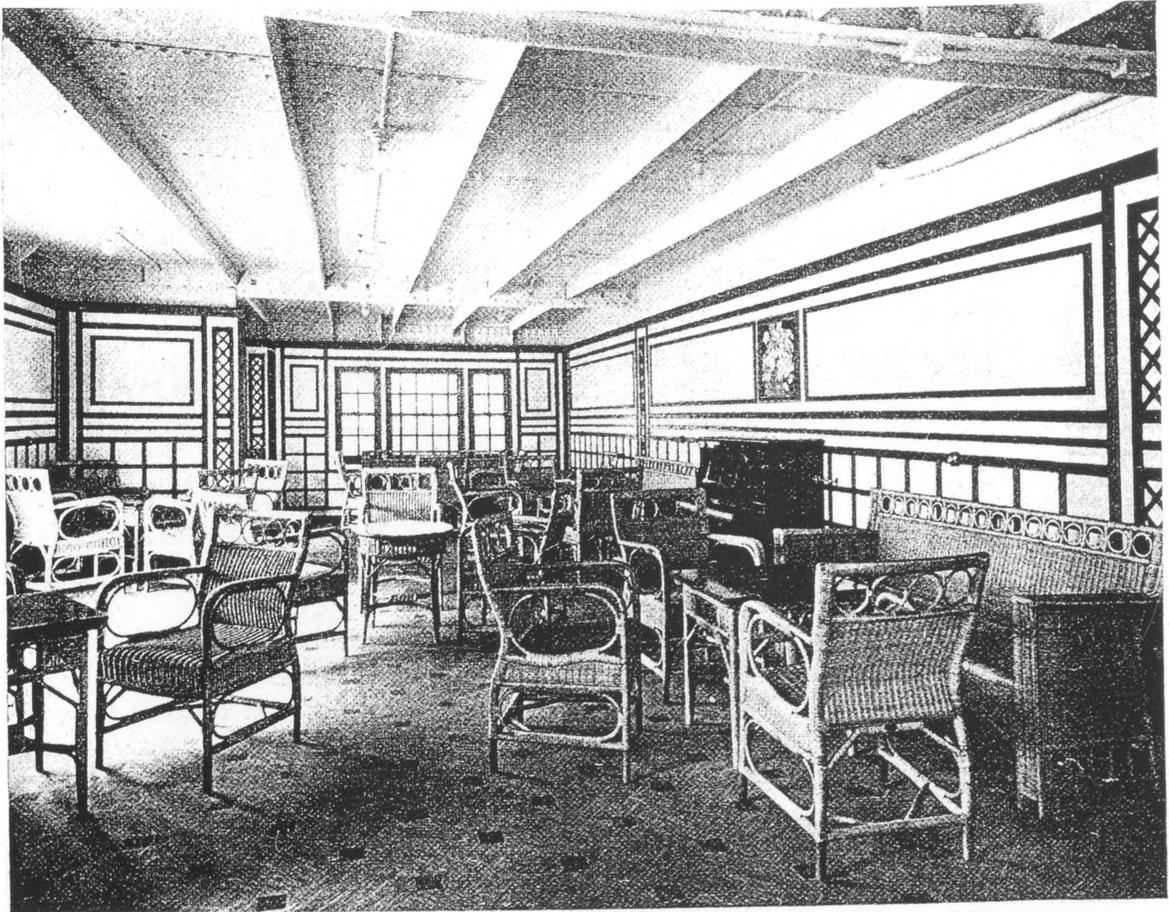


Fig.112: A print by Hall Thorpe in the café featured in the DIA yearbook



Fig.113: A reproduction of 'Sunflowers' by Vincent Van Gogh in a room in the 1930s



Fig.114: A reproduction of 'Sunflowers' by Vincent Van Gogh in a 'cultured cottage'

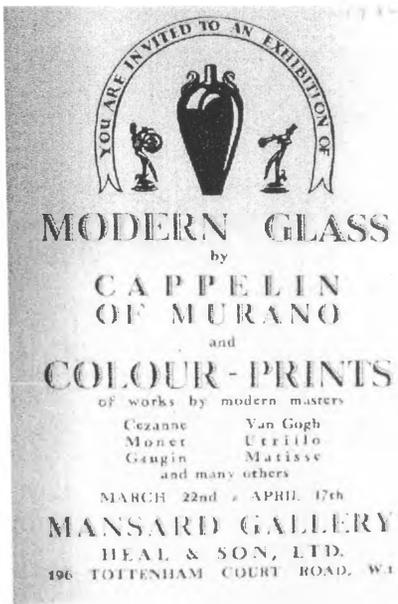


Fig.115: An invitation card for the exhibition at the Mansard Gallery, 'Modern Glass by Capelin of Murano and Colour-prints of Works by Modern Masters', 1930

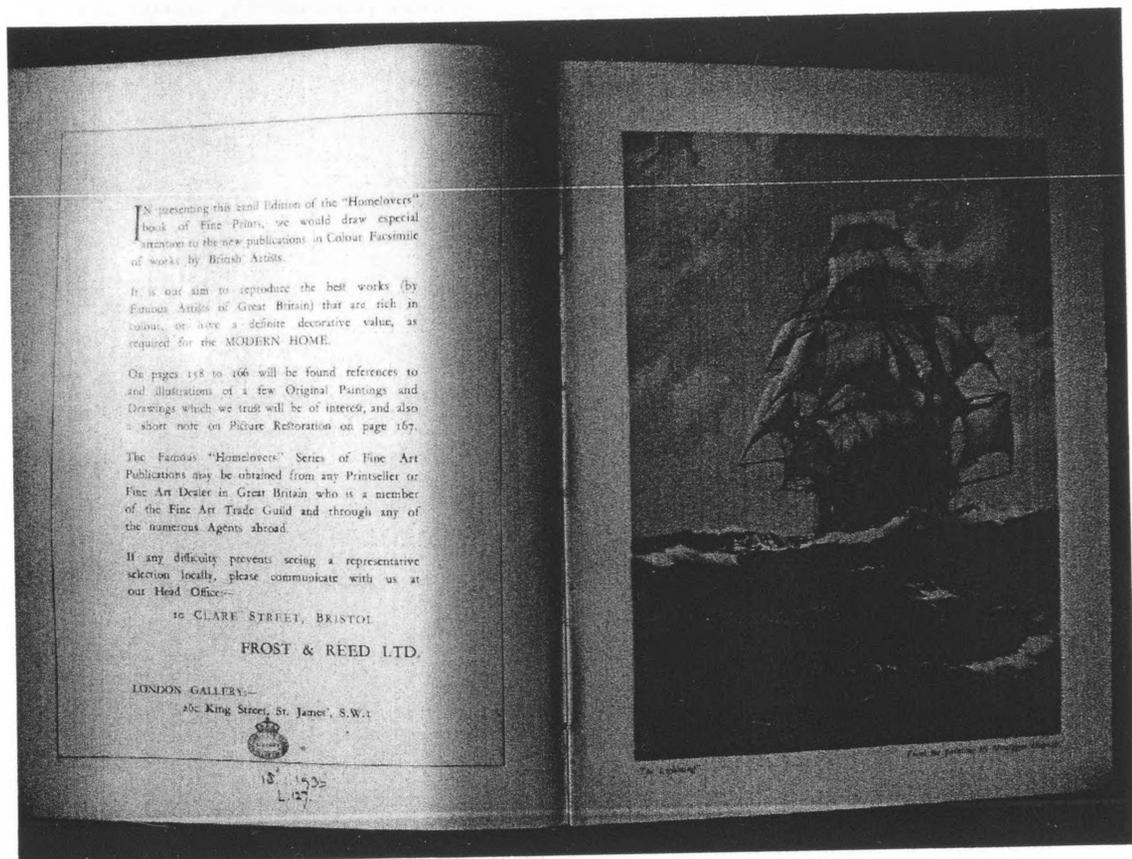


Fig.116 : *Homelovers Book of Ethchings, Engravings and Colour Prints* by Frost & Reed

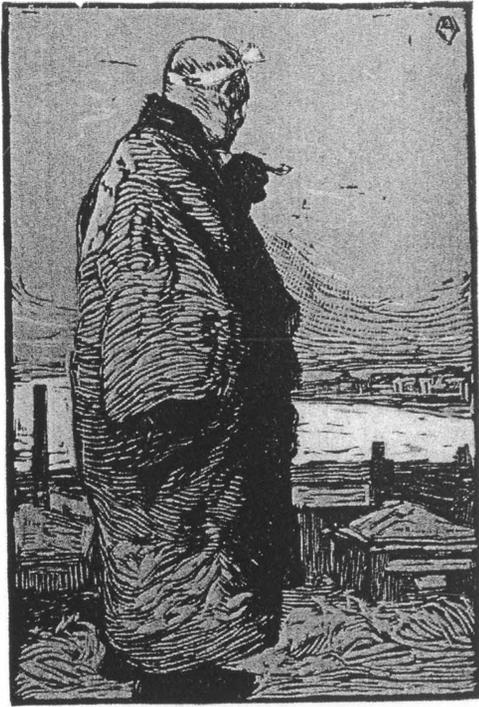


Fig.117: 'Gyofu' [Fisherman] (1904),
a woodcut by Yamamoto Kanae



Fig.118: 'Tokyo Junikei: Yanagibashi'
[Twelve Views of Tokyo: Yanagibashi]
(1910), a woodcut by Ishii Hakutei



Fig.119: 'Fukei' [Landscape] (1911),
a woodcut by Minami Kunzō



Fig.120: 'Awosora' [Blue Sky] (1915),
a woodcut by Tanaka Kyōkichi

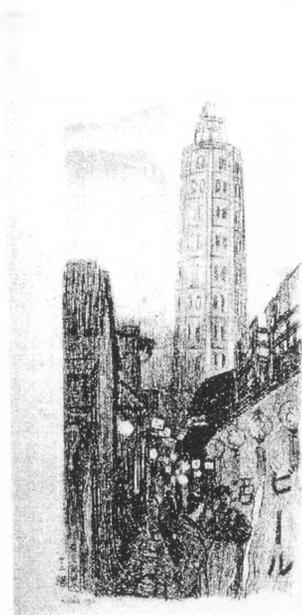


Fig.121: 'Jūnikai' [A Twelve Storied Building] (1916), a lithograph by Oda Kazuma



Fig.122: 'Machi' [Street] (1920), a woodcut by Kawanishi Hide

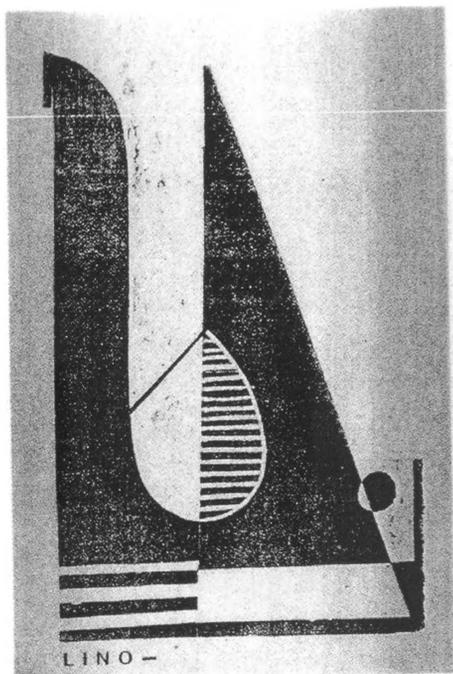


Fig.123: 'Lino-' (1925), a linocut by Okada Tatsuo

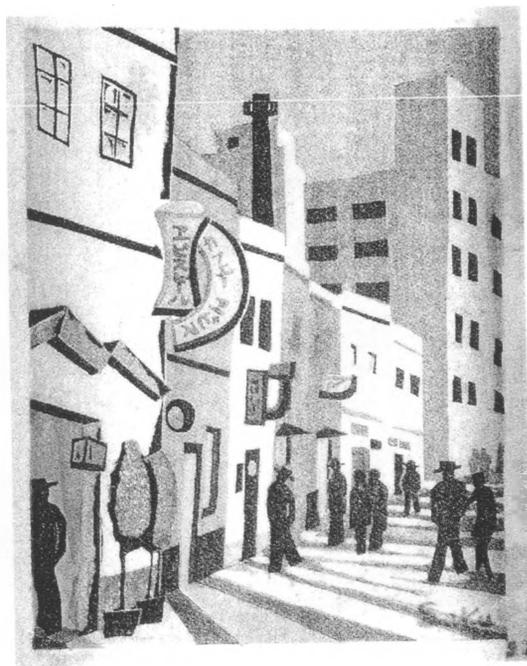


Fig.124: 'Shin Tokyo Hyakkei: Shinjuku Kafe Gai' [New Hundred Views of Tokyo: Café Street in Shinjuku] (1930), a woodcut by Fukazawa Sakuichi

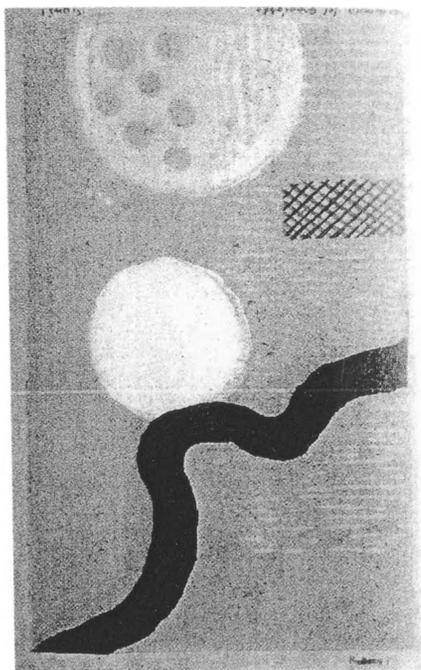


Fig.125: 'Ongaku Sakuhin ni yoru Jojō: No. 3 Roberu "Dōkeshi no Asa no Uta" [A Lyric by a Piece of Music: No. 3 Ravel, 'Alborada del Gracioso'] (1933), a woodcut by Onchi Kōshirō

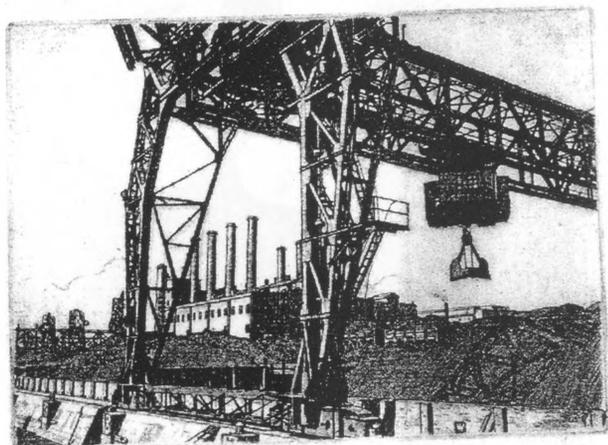


Fig.126: 'Jūkōgyō' [Heavy Industry] (c. 1940), an etching by Kon Junzo



Fig.127: 'Shubodai' [Subhuti] (1939), a woodcut by Munakata Shikō



Fig.128: 'Rain-time, Japan' (1915), a woodcut by Fritz Capelari



Fig.129: 'Taikyō' [Before the Mirror] (1916), a woodcut by Ito Shinsui



Fig.130: 'Shodai Nakamura Ganjiro no Kamiya Jihei' [Nakamura Ganjiro the first as Kamiya Jihei] (1916), a woodcut by Natori Shunsen



Fig.131: 'Kyoto' (1916), a woodcut by Charles Bartlett

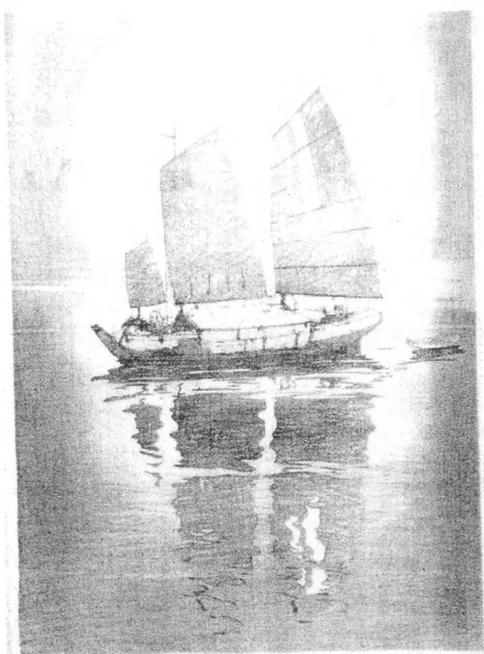


Fig.132: 'Hansen: Asahi' [Sailing Boat: Morning Sun] (1921), a woodcut by Yoshida Hiroshi



Fig.133: 'Odori: Shanhai Nyū Kāruton Shōken' [Dancing: A Scene in Shanghai New Carlton] (1924), a woodcut by Yamamura Kōka



Fig.134: 'Magome no Tsuki' [The Moon at Magome] (1930), a woodcut by Kawase Hasui

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