The Development of Tsukicka Yoshitoshi's Modern-traditional Style Prints and their Relationship to the Nihonga Movement in Japanese Art During the 1880s

A Thesis

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by

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To My Parents,
Richard and Anna Fay
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INTRODUCTION

Tsukioka (Taiso) Yoshitoshi (1839-1892) was the leading woodblock print artist of the late Meiji period (1868-1912) and one of the great masters of the late Ukiyo-e tradition. (See figs. 1-2) This is not a new judgment made by recent scholars. In 1885, the first prints for the series One Hundred Aspects of the Moon (Tsuki no hyakushi), took the market by storm, and two sources from that year document his success. One, the popular magazine Tokyo ryūko saikenki (Tokyo Vogues in Detail), lists Yoshitoshi as the highest ranking Ukiyo-e artist in Tokyo. The other, the Kōkoku shoga meika ichiran (Survey of Master Artists of Imperial Japan), ranks him among the top five print artists of the Meiji period. He maintained his leading position for the next seven years, but in 1892, at the height of his career and in the midst of completing a major print series, New Forms for Thirty-six Ghosts (Shingata san jūrokkaisen), Yoshitoshi suddenly fell ill. He died several weeks later.

Many factors contributed to Yoshitoshi's success. From the start, he was armed with a vivid imagination, great versatility, inexhaustible energy, and a strong willingness to take risks. In order to stay on top, he had to be innovative, maintain the highest quality in all his works,
and be prepared to respond, at a moment’s notice, to radically different tastes and interests among the general public. His success is firm evidence of his ability to meet the challenge of rapid change, and he was truly resilient. His style and thematic approach to dramatic illustration accurately reflects trends and ideas current in Meiji art, society, and politics. He had introduced new ideas to the field well before his success of 1885. For instance, in the mid-1870s, he became one of the first Ukiyo-e artists to work as a newspaper print illustrator of current newsworthy items, and, in the late 1870s, he was the first to introduce Ukiyo-e enthusiasts to rekishi-e, the new genre of historical battle prints.2 

Starting in 1878, he captured the attention of his audience with a style and presentation inspired by both the modern spirit of nationalism and reverence for the ancient heritage of Japan. He introduced them to his modern-traditional style prints, unique in the way he defamiliarized popular images and themes by covering these time-worn ideas with a thin veil of modernity. The primary goal of this study is to show that it is no mere coincidence that Yoshitoshi's mature, modern-traditional style prints bear a striking resemblance to the ideals associated with the Nihonga (Japanese Painting) Movement in the arts. During the 1880s, the Nihonga ideal dominated the art scene and affected the style and content of the pictorial arts.
Therefore, in keeping with the Nihonga ideal, Yoshitoshi's mature works exhibit a skillful fusion of ideas drawn from the past, the present, the East, and the West. This new dialectical approach to dramatic illustration revitalized the sinking spirit of the Ukiyo-e tradition, returning it to an important position in Japanese art—one of Yoshitoshi's great contributions to the field.

Stylistic and thematic evidence clearly reveals that attracting and holding the attention of the print-buying public was Yoshitoshi's constant stimulus for growth and change, and the leading cause behind the development of his modern-traditional style print. The secondary goal of this study, therefore, is to link the major changes in his print style with corresponding developments in the public's attitudes toward art and the West and with the effects of certain government programs and reforms in education and the arts during the Meiji period. An examination of the influences and developments in his early and middle career provides ample proof of the artist's need and ability to keep abreast of the latest trends. The connection between his mature works, which date between 1878 and 1892, and the ideas inspired by the awakened spirit of Japanese nationalism, which found expression in the Nihonga (Japanese Painting) movement of the 1880s, has been previously unexplored. The present study attempts to fill this gap in our knowledge by firmly establishing the important
relationships between nationalism, *Nihonga*, and Yoshitoshi’s mature work.

The *Nihonga* movement was directed to saving traditional Japanese art from continued disinterest and neglect, and was essential in the revival of traditional art during the 1880s. Apart from the work of the movement’s founder, Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), a young American scholar from Harvard University, one of the most important contributors to the dynamics of the movement was Fenollosa’s pupil, colleague, and friend Okakura Kakuzô (1862-1913, also known as Okakura Tenshin). Okakura’s theory on modern Japanese art and aesthetics provided artists with a workable solution to style aimed at reconciling the differences between the two conflicting poles of thought in the arts expressed by stubborn traditionalists and impatient modernists. Central to his theory, which is outlined in his ‘Six Principles of *Nihonga*’ (later discussed in detail), was his belief that the adoption and careful application of select Western ideas could be useful in preserving traditional Japanese art by making familiar images and themes relevant to the needs, tastes, and interests of a modern society. It will be shown that Yoshitoshi certainly accomplished this goal.

It is especially important that upon Fenollosa’s arrival in Tokyo in 1878 and the initiation of his campaign to preserve traditional Japanese art, we find a drastic change in Yoshitoshi’s style and thematic approach which
bears a strong resemblance to Okakura's theories on modern Japanese art. Scholars in the field of Japanese painting have long recognized the all-pervasive power attained by the Nihonga movement in its domination of the style and content of the visual arts during the 1880s. But few scholars in the field of woodblock prints acknowledge the direct and continued connection between this movement and the stylistic and thematic developments in Yoshitoshi's works from 1878 to 1892.

Essentially, Yoshitoshi was an illustrator of the human condition, so most of his works display profound expressions of emotion. In contrast to his more direct approach of the 1860s and early 1870s, which catered to the audience's avid interest in current affairs and a taste for graphic portrayals of violence and murder, his later works are mellower in tone, traditional in subject matter, and show a careful restraint in the portrayal of violence. Indeed, his later works are even more effective in evoking strong feelings from the viewer through the masterful application of classical Japanese aesthetics and pictorial techniques. In these works, he drew upon the power of suggestion to create suspense and convey intense psychological conflict, achieving such effects through a skillful integration of Eastern and Western pictorial conventions which resulted in a hybrid style, at once traditional in subject matter, medium, and techniques, and modern in appearance or spirit.
The works presented in this study represent only a fraction of Yoshitoshi's expansive thematic range and output, and were chosen as representative examples of the changes in his print style and thematic approach over the course of his career.

Before and after the 1885 release of *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*, Yoshitoshi produced many successful works which stand as major achievements in the field and demonstrate his development as a dramatic illustrator. His career can be divided, in general, into three major stylistic periods. His early period is marked by such works as the series *Twenty-eight Infamous Murders with Accompanying Verses* (*Rimei nijûhasshu*), which was published in 1867. The graphic portrayals of violence comprising the designs for this series display a unique and sustaining characteristic of his thematic approach—his interest in creating emotional realism. During this stage of his development, he relied heavily on the traditional graphic techniques established by his precursors.

This is not the case with his works of the mid to late 1870s, which mark the second stage of his artistic development. For example, his documentary spread on the Satsuma Rebellion, published in 1877, is one of the first print series in Japanese history to depict a contemporary battle, and unlike his earlier period, his style leans heavily on Western pictorial techniques and narrative ideas.
rather than traditional conventions. More importantly, he abandoned the use of graphic details of violence and gore as a means to express the emotional content. This shift from a traditional mode to a westernized one is most important, for it reflects the print-buying public's general fascination for "things Western," especially illusionism.

The third stage of Yoshitoshi's career begins in 1878 with the series A Mirror of Famous Generals of Japan (Dainippon meishō kagami), where we see another shift in his approach to dramatic illustration: his designs now show an emphasis on pictorial and thematic elements associated with classical Japanese art and aesthetics. This new-found interest in the classical tradition was inspired by the awakened spirit of nationalism and patriotic pride among the general public and the desire to preserve the Japanese artistic heritage through the revival of traditional art. In response to these sentiments, Yoshitoshi developed his modern-traditional print style, seen for the first time in this series, and is the style for which he is most noted.

Once we have established the relationship between Yoshitoshi, public spirit, and the Nihonga movement, we can take time to analyze the particular elements comprising his modern-traditional print style. We will look at works that exhibit his fully mature print style and demonstrate his vast range of techniques for dramatic illustration. His last series, New Forms for Thirty-six Ghosts (Shinkei
Sanjūrokkaizen), begun in 1887, was chosen as a prime example of his modern-traditional style prints in which he emphasized classical Japanese pictorial techniques, themes and aesthetic ideas. This series was an unprecedented best-seller by the time the last print was issued, posthumously in 1892, and among all of his later works, New Forms for Thirty-six Ghosts best documents this artist's close ideological ties with Nihonga-style painting."

Another important series from this period that deserves mention but will not be discussed at length is Thirty-two Aspects of Women (Fūzoku sanjūni-sō), published in 1888. It recalls the tradition of Utamaro and is considered by many to be his crowning achievement in the area of traditional bijinga (beautiful women pictures). This fine series has received serious consideration by other scholars, and in a study dealing with an artist whose output and range was astounding, it is impossible to give all of his masterworks equal emphasis, so we will look at only one example from this series.

The modern English-language studies listed in the bibliography help reconstruct the context of Yoshitoshi's life and career within the Japanese culture. Japanese scholars have considerably enriched our knowledge and appreciation of Yoshitoshi's work through the translations of the Western scholars cited in this study. To date, the most important work to narrow the gap between Japanese and
Western scholarship is Segi Shin'ichi's lavishly illustrated book, *Yoshitoshi, the Splendid Decadent* (1985), translated by Alfred Birnbaum. Segi presents an in-depth survey of the artist's career and the times in which he lived, and I cannot overstate how important his ideas were in guiding my research.

For most scholars in the field, the primary source on Yoshitoshi is the catalog *Yoshitoshi no zemboten* (The Complete Works of Yoshitoshi), published in 1977, which gives a detailed account of the collection in the Seibu Museum of Art (Seibu no Bijutsu Kan) in Tokyo. This major work, edited by Takahashi Sei'ichiro, a leading authority on Yoshitoshi, comprises the backbone upon which all recent scholarly studies have been based. The two works mentioned stand side by side as the most comprehensive studies to be published thus far. A close second, in terms of its contribution to our understanding and appreciation of Yoshitoshi's works, is the catalog (co-authored by Roger Keyes and George Kuwayama) to the 1980 exhibition *The Bizarre Imagery of Yoshitoshi, The Herbert R. Cole Collection*, held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. While the exhibit focused on Yoshitoshi's images of the supernatural and the macabre, the text presents the important developments in his career and some discussion of the possible clues to his personality that may be reflected in specific works.
John Stevenson's books, *Yoshitoshi's Thirty-six Ghosts* (1983) and *Yoshitoshi's Women, the Woodblock Print Series* "Fuzoku sanjūnisō" (1986), are equally valuable contributions to the field because each study reproduces the print series in its entirety, and the author provides a general overview of Yoshitoshi's career. In this same vein is the exhibition catalog to the entire *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* (*Tsuki no hyakushi*) series, published in 1992 by Asia House Gallery of New York City. In dealing with an artist such as Yoshitoshi, this singular approach helps to clarify certain ideas inherent in his work at given times, but it also tends to limit our full appreciation of this artist's invaluable contribution to Ukiyo-e. To avoid this limitation, I have chosen an approach that will demonstrate the artist's full range of techniques and his major contributions to the field.

Yoshitoshi's major works have been exhibited throughout Japan, Europe, and America. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam own excellent collections of his works, but one of the most extensive collections is owned and occasionally exhibited by the Allen Memorial Museum at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. One show, in particular, held in the fall of 1991, displayed many prints from his early series, *One Hundred Warriors in Battle* (*Kaidai hyaku sensō*), issued between 1868 and 1869, as well as numerous single issue prints, triptychs, and
diptychs that spanned most of his career. The catalog to the 1971 exhibition, *Taiso Yoshitoshi, Ein Holzschnittmeister an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit*, from the Museum of East Asian Art (Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst der Stadt Köln) in Germany, is another important work on this artist, for it presents a sampling from each period of Yoshitoshi's artistic development and includes a complete list of works in their collection.

Joan Scott Hall's article "Last Swell of Ukiyo-e," in the September 1976 issue of *Orientations* magazine, was most important to this study because it not only provides an excellent introduction to Yoshitoshi's later works, but challenges the negative views held by earlier scholars who were quick to point out the less savory aspects of his works, while neglecting to mention the more positive aspects. For example, to support his premise that Yoshitoshi's work was uneven and often tasteless, Muneshige Narazaki, in his book *The Japanese Print: Its Evolution and Essence* (1966), refers us to the artist's early works but fails to mention the later works for which he is most noted. By examining the chronological development of Yoshitoshi's style and thematic approach, this present study attempts to avoid this kind of misjudgment.

A number of important historical and sociological studies provide us with a detailed account of the forces behind the awakening of Japanese nationalism during the
1880s; other works deal specifically with the changes in Japanese art during that period. Two books, in particular, discuss the impact of nationalism on Japanese art and the Fenollosa-Okakura model for modern Japanese painting. The first, Michael Sullivan's *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art from the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day* (1988), recognizes the dominant position of *Nihonga* when ultranationalism and patriotic fervor which emerged among the wider public during the 1870s and 1880s. The second, Ralph Croizier's *Art and Revolution in Modern China* (1988), which may appear unrelated to our concern, discusses the impact of nationalism on the modern art movement in Japan during the 1880s to the early 1900s, and its extended affect on the arts of modern China. Other studies, important for their contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the changes in Japanese society and art brought about by the imperial restoration, are Kenneth Pyle's *The New Generation in Meiji Japan, Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895* (1969), Julia Meech-Pekarik's *The World of the Meiji Print, Impressions of a New Civilization* (1986), and Irokawa Daikichi's *The Culture of the Meiji Period* (1985). These and many other studies mentioned in the bibliography form the basis upon which this present study is founded.

Since the 1960s, the general works on Japanese woodblock prints usually provide some discussion of Yoshitoshi's contribution to *Ukiyo-e* and/or the context for

These studies on Japanese woodblock prints form a general consensus regarding Yoshitoshi's high standing in Ukiyo-e during the late Meiji period, and discuss the artist's consummate sense of design, his masterful techniques in the woodblock print medium, and his general contributions to the field. But, apart from mentioning Yoshitoshi's participation in the first official national exhibition of Japanese painting, held in 1882 (an event organized and juried by Ernest Fenollosa), and the fact that a triptych by Yoshitoshi, *Fujiwara Yasumasa Playing the Flute by Moonlight* (1883), was based on one of the paintings that was shown in the exhibition, there is no attempt to relate his other works to the Nihonga movement. For one thing, outside of his style and thematic approach, there is
no other documented evidence of his continued involvement in the movement. After mentioning this important event, scholars drop the subject altogether and turn to a brief discussion of the revival of traditional art and its impact on Yoshitoshi's later style. For lack of solid, documented evidence, scholars are reluctant to classify Yoshitoshi's modern-traditional style prints as Nihonga-style prints. It is my contention that the evidence for his continued relationship with the Nihonga movement and its associated ideals lies in the specific nature of his print style and in the subjects he chose to depict from 1878 to 1892.

In order to demonstrate this relationship, this study is presented in two parts which are themselves subdivided into separate subject headings. Part One is comprised of three major topics. The first establishes the context of Yoshitoshi's early style through a brief discussion of the primary stylistic and thematic sources for his early works. By doing this, we can recognize the similarities and differences between Yoshitoshi's style and the style formulated by his precursors. The second topic establishes Yoshitoshi's absolute dependence on attracting and maintaining public appeal. This is an especially important point to keep in mind, for these concerns were a constant stimulus for the artist. Since his dependence on public appeal never subsided, we can view this relationship as substantial evidence for his connection with the Nihonga
movement in the arts during the 1880s. While this section deals with some of the difficulties Yoshitoshi faced in trying to please the print-buying public during the late 1860s and early 1870s, the third topic demonstrates his ability to adapt to the new demands placed on him during the early years of the imperial restoration and shows how he exceeded those demands by introducing new ideas to the print medium to create new kinds of prints reflecting the spirit of the modern age in Meiji society.

Part Two also is divided into three major sections. The first section picks up where we left off in Part One. We will take a brief look at the rise of nationalism in Japan during the late 1870s and 1880s and its impact on the form and content of the new Japanese art as expressed by Ernest Fenollosa and Okakura Kakuzō. The second section deals with the correlation between Yoshitoshi's mature print style and the ideals associated with Nihonga as expounded by Okakura in his theory of modern Japanese art. Here we will examine the primary evidence of Yoshitoshi's direct involvement in the Nihonga Movement in 1882, and analyze the characteristics of his modern-traditional style of the early 1880s. With his participation in the Nihonga Movement firmly established, we can focus on identifying the various techniques Yoshitoshi developed and used in his creation of some of the most poignant portrayals of drama in the history of Japanese art. The works presented in this third and
final section date between 1885 and 1892, and they perfectly demonstrate Yoshitoshi's skillful integration of Western ideas with ideas drawn from the classical Japanese artistic tradition.

In the conclusion to Part Two, we will compare a print designed by Yoshitoshi in 1890 with a similar print designed by Hokusai, one of his precursors. In so doing, we will recognize and understand the major differences between the Ukiyo-e art of Hokusai's day and the tradition during Yoshitoshi's day. Following this discussion, we will compare Yoshitoshi's work with an oil painting done in 1889 by another artist whose style and subject matter also reflect the ideals of Nihonga.
PART ONE
The Wellepring of Artistry, 1850-1877

Swimming in the Mainstream

As an Utagawa School artist, Yoshitoshi inherited many elements of style and thematic presentation popularized by his predecessors, namely: the founder of the Utagawa School, Toyoharu (1735-1814), a noted eclectic credited with introducing Western pictorial conventions into Japanese landscape prints in the 1770s and 1780s (figs. 3-4); his son, Toyokuni (1769-1825), who is noted for refining his father's style and raising the status of the School with prints such as Ebb Tide at Shinagawa (fig. 5); and his teacher Kuniyoshi (1798-1861), a virtual genius at adaptation who went on to become one of the leading artists of his day, and, by the 1850s, elevated the school's status and reputation to a dominant and highly influential position in Ukiyo-e circles.

Under Kuniyoshi's tutelage Yoshitoshi acquired skills in graphic design, color harmony, and techniques of dramatic illustration, and gained versatility by emulating Kuniyoshi's approach in a wide range of subjects. Apart from landscape prints—which Kuniyoshi favored and Yoshitoshi apparently ignored—there is no significant
difference in the subjects they chose to depict. Their stock-in-trade included themes drawn from famous myths and legends about fearless warriors, vengeful ghosts, and hideous monsters. Famous tales about terrible crimes of passion and greed were popular subjects for late-Tokugawa and Meiji period artists, and, while a brief comparison of a few of their works will demonstrate their stylistic ties, it will also illuminate basic differences in their approach to dramatic illustration.

In Yoshitoshi’s early works, one similarity is his use of a Kuniyoshi design technique—that of fracturing the picture plane with a dramatic array of bold diagonals or arcs—as seen in the triptych The Spirit of Minamoto no Yoshihira (1140-60) Appearing as the Thunder God at Nunobiki Falls (fig. 6). This technique appears in two of Yoshitoshi’s early triptychs, namely: In 1185 the Heike Clan Sank to Their Doom in the Sea (Bunji gannen Heike no ichimon horobi kaichū ni ochi-izu), dated 1850 (fig. 7); and Masakiyo’s Difficult Battle in the Taiheiki (Taiheiki Masakiyo nansen kore zu), dated 1866 (fig. 8). In all three works, the compositions are so crowded with details it is difficult to distinguish one image from another, and we will see that as Yoshitoshi matured he opted to use simplification as a means to achieve greater visual clarity.

There also is a definite link between their figure style and compositional arrangements. In comparing
Kuniyoshi's print "Unuma" (fig. 9), from his series Sixty-nine Stations on the Kisokaido of 1850, with some of Yoshitoshi's designs for his first major series, Twenty-eight Infamous Murders with Accompanying Verses (Bimei nijūhasshoku), completed in 1867 (figs. 10-12), there is no doubt about Yoshitoshi's artistic loyalty to his teacher. Aside from their keen interest in portraying gruesome subjects, their arrangement of the figures is similar and their treatment of form relies on the use of simple yet definitive contour lines. At this point in time, the major difference in their work is the degree of violence.

Kuniyoshi's approach is obviously less gory and he freezes the action in the scene before the fatal blows are unleashed, while Yoshitoshi's extremely gory depiction is designed to shock our senses and engender empathy with the characters--the knife is cutting, the blood is gushing out. This difference in approach also is seen when we compare one of Kuniyoshi's most effective portrayals of the supernatural, the triptych, Old Imperial Palace at Soma, issued in 1858 (fig. 13), with a rare, undated painting by Yoshitoshi entitled, An Apparition (fig. 14). The central and most frequently published panel of Kuniyoshi's triptych, commonly referred to as "Ghost Skeleton," presents an ominous skeleton looming up to play witness to a heinous execution below. The theatrical posturing exhibited in this print is unmistakable, and it is easy to imagine a scene
similar to this one being performed on a Kabuki stage using the latest in set design and stage lighting. Yoshitoshi's *An Apparition* demonstrates that something very different is going on in the younger artist's work. Realism and the use of color as an expressive device play a much greater role in Yoshitoshi's design. His powerful image of this ghostly vision is a brutal one indeed. The young woman's garment is stained with blood and she clasps the frail body of her dead infant to her breast. Even though we are unfamiliar with the details of the story, her pathetic form and obvious grief elicit sympathy as well as revulsion from us. As with all Japanese ghosts, she has no feet, floats in mid-air, and is at once transparent and substantial suggesting her transitory nature. There is a universality about this image that will remain an important aspect of Yoshitoshi's style, and he captured the intense mood of the scene by limiting subsidiary or background details. Placing the ghostly figure of the woman in isolation, makes the spectre appear all the more provocative and ethereal.

Much of the credit for Yoshitoshi's energetic figure style cannot be given entirely to Kuniyoshi. For this influence we must look to Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) of the late Tokugawa period, who was one of the most prolific and influential artists in the history of the Ukiyo-e tradition. His figure style was especially emulated by other artists, including Kuniyoshi, who passed this
preference on to Yoshitoshi. His influence is definitely seen in both artists' use of exaggerated foreshortening, but Yoshitoshi continued to adapt and perfect this old master's techniques.

One particular element of Hokusai's style that appealed to Yoshitoshi is the unique way in which he enlivened his landscapes and figures with carefully selected touches of Western realism. Hokusai explored the visual and expressive effects achieved through foreshortening in his treatment of the human form. Two drawings taken from his sketch books (Hokusai manga), published in fifteen volumes between 1814 and 1849 (figs. 15-16), are prime examples of his approach. His treatment of the swimmers makes them appear quite buoyant as they twist and turn in every conceivable direction, struggling to remain submerged. Line, posture, and gesture work in harmony as the primary vehicle for dramatic and artistic expression. The boldly executed calligraphic contour lines used to define the forms also serve as a communicative device in that the forms themselves exhibit physical anomalies manifesting emotional or spiritual states of being. This is clearly seen in two additional sketches from his Manga, "Seated Figures" of 1819 (fig. 17), and "Facial Studies" of 1834 (fig. 18). His animated, slightly exaggerated treatment of the human form makes a strong showing in Yoshitoshi's early figure style, such as the triptych depicting Masakiyo in battle (fig. 8),
and a print, completed in 1873, from *A Yoshitoshi Miscellany of Figures from Literature (Ikkai zuibutsu)*, depicting a battle between two staunch adversaries (fig. 19). In each example Yoshitoshi used the expressive potential of line and "brushwork" to imbue his figures with dynamic energy and movement. Facial expressions are equally emphatic in Yoshitoshi's designs.

While Hokusai's figure style played an important role in developments seen in Yoshitoshi's works, his influence went beyond this to include many of the themes Yoshitoshi chose to depict. A glance at one of Hokusai's most compelling portrayals of the popular story about the ghost, Kohada Koheiji (fig. 20), reveals the close artistic relationship between these artists in terms of their choice of subject matter. Hokusai's gaunt, hollow-eyed spectre is shown peering ominously over the mosquito net at his adulterous wife who is fast asleep beside her partner in murder. He presents the point in the story where the ghost is about to take revenge on the unsuspecting evil-doers, but since the audience was familiar with this story, he allowed them to imagine the final details. There is no movement in the scene, no blood, gore, or guts, but the spectre is still quite threatening without these explicit details.

In his treatment of the narrative, Hokusai's style is usually characterized by some degree of subtlety and restraint or understatement such as that we see here, but
this tendency toward "holding back" emotional expression and merely alluding to the story's climactic event was not necessarily a characteristic of all nineteenth-century Ukiyo-e prints from Hokusai's day. The public's tastes could be far more brutal than his works indicate. For instance, a print from 1846 (fig. 21), by Hirosada Konishi (fl. ca. 1820s-60s) depicts the actor Onoe Kikugorō III as the outlaw Shirai Gompachi in the suicide scene from the play Fifty-three Stages of the Plum Tree's Journey. The figure is drenched in blood as he uses his last bit of strength to hurl himself from the boat. The mood and graphic details are very similar to Yoshitoshi's approach in Twenty-eight Infamous Murders.

As we will see, elements of Hokusai's figure style are always reflected, to some degree, in Yoshitoshi's figures. Therefore, it was possible for him to retain certain ties to his precursors while making radical changes in his own approach to narrative illustration. We will look more closely at these particular developments shortly, but up to this point, we have traced Yoshitoshi's artistic heritage to the Utagawa School style in the days of Kuniyoshi, and established his indebtedness to his master as a constant source for thematic and compositional ideas and techniques. The close relationship between Yoshitoshi and his teacher is further borne out when we trace the common origin of their figure style in that of Hokusai. To briefly summarize the
points made above, from the achievements of these artists, and many more who cannot be mentioned here, Yoshitoshi inherited the following elements of style: 1) a firm grasp of linear perspective and shading techniques; 2) the use of exaggerated foreshortening for dramatic effect; 3) an effective synthesis of Eastern and Western pictorial modes; 4) an extensive repertoire of images and themes to draw ideas from; and 5) a consummate sense of design, composition, and color harmony. These elements of style played a vital role in his approach to dramatic illustration, but he continued to adjust and adapt them in accordance with the demands of the public and the market sense of his publishers.

Also, by comparing some of Kuniyoshi's and Hokusai's works to Yoshitoshi's early prints, we were able to distinguish the characteristics that set his works apart from these earlier influences, and suggested that these differences are a reflection of the attitudes toward art held by the Japanese print-buying public during the late 1850s and 1860s to the early 1870s. Yoshitoshi also was well aware of and influenced by the works of past masters like Shiba Kōkan (1747-1818)—a popular Ukiyo-e artist and Western-style painter who studied under Harunobu, and Hiroshige (1797-1858)—another Utagawa school artist famous for his atmospheric effects. To the list of elements above, Yoshitoshi added one important convention—realism,
and this would prove to be the distinguishing characteristic of his style and approach throughout his career.

From Riches to Rags: Catering to the Demands of the Market, 1868–1872

Yoshitoshi struck out on his own in 1865, and marked this year with the publication of his first two major print series: Biographies of Modern Heroes (Kinsei kyōgiden), and One Hundred Ghost Stories of Japan and China (Wakan hyaku monogatari). One print from each series is reproduced in figures 22 and 23. Warrior prints (musha-e) and supernatural themes such as these comprised two of the most popular categories of nineteenth-century Ukiyo-e and happened to be Yoshitoshi's forte.10 His imaginative designs like the ones shown made both productions very successful and he topped these series off with numerous single-issue warrior prints. His first releases immediately grabbed the public's attention, and his success that year was recognized in the 1865 edition of the Edo saiseiki (Edo Almanac) where he is ranked as the tenth most popular artist in Tokyo.11 In 1867, he stepped up in rank with the success of Twenty-Eight Infamous Murders (figs. 10–12), a collaborative effort in which he and Yoshiiku (1833–1904) each contributed fourteen designs.12
The explicit violence depicted in the prints above had a great deal to do with making Twenty-eight Infamous Murders a best-seller. Yoshitoshi's portrayals are, to say the least, extremely disturbing, and gut-wrenching, torturous images of murder and mutilation are not what we, in the west, have come to associate with traditional Ukiyo-e fare. It also is doubtful that the Japanese audience of the 1860s found them any less jolting, but herein lies their novelty. His particular way of "staging the scene" by depicting the most violent moment of the story, that moment when the fatal blow is being struck, distinguishes these works from those of his immediate predecessors. Kuniyoshi did not go to such extremes in depicting the details of the horror, nor did Hokusai. The popularity of his works completed between 1865 and 1867 attests to the widespread appeal of this type of imagery and theme, and the same approach distinguishes the designs for his series One Hundred Selections of Warriors in Battle (Kaidai hyaku senshō), completed in 1868-69. One print, entitled, "Torii Hikoemon Mototada Dies with Honor," is reproduced in figure 24.

The audience's fascination for such themes was not confined to Ukiyo-e prints; it was equally evident in Kabuki drama and popular literature. It was to satisfy this craving for intense displays of human emotion that Yoshitoshi created the ghastly images found in Twenty-eight Infamous Murders and One Hundred Selections of Warriors in
Battle (*Kaidai hyaku sensō*). Murder and other bloody crimes of passion or revenge, gaping wounds and horrid severed heads or limbs, were all standard fare in his works just as such concerns everywhere permeated popular entertainment." We must keep in mind that each design had to be approved before publication, meaning the publisher was in full support of his pursuit of novelty."

Much has been written about Yoshitoshi's predilection for portraying the macabre or perverse aspects of humanity. Some authors even attempt to use works such as these as evidence of the artist's own sado-masochistic tendencies." This approach treads on shaky ground since it fails to consider all the parties responsible for the creation of these designs—the print-buying public, the publisher, the woodblock carver, the printer, and the shopkeepers who peddled the prints. What do these works reveal to us about the inner workings of their minds? Yoshitoshi's designs were popular at that time for the very same reasons that millions of people today enjoy such fare as Alfred Hitchcock's movie *Psycho* or the latest movie adaptation of Stephen King's thrillers, *The Shining*, *Misery*, and *Cujo*. Like these movies, Yoshitoshi's explicit portrayals fed the audience's escapist fantasies; while the scenes he depicted are horrid, they surely are less gruesome than today's popular cinema. It cannot be said with any certainty that any of Yoshitoshi's works reveal specific aspects of his
personality, and any attempt to assess the "sanity" of the artist based on the nature of his prints is unlikely to produce convincing results.

In addition to emotional realism, another important element of style seen in his early works is his use of brilliant, often gaudy colors. These colors entered the art scene as soon as the Tokugawa period ban on the importation of western aniline dyes was lifted, and this brighter palette characterizes many Japanese works of the early and middle decades of nineteenth century. For Yoshitoshi, the color red was an especially effective device used to shock the viewer and draw attention to essential elements in the scene. Good examples of this dynamic use of red as an expressive device are the painting, *An Apparition* (fig. 14) and the print "Torii Hikoemon Mototada Dies with Honor" (fig. 24), from *One Hundred Selections of Warriors in Battle* (1868-69). Where red represents blood he enhanced the visual effects by mixing glue and alum into the pigment resulting in an eerie, lustrous effect of a blood-red. In the past, Ukiyo-e prints were colored with pigments made from vegetable extracts and minerals which produced soft earth tones and pastel hues; however, during Kuniyoshi's day, the use of imported aniline dyes became quite popular and Yoshitoshi continued to explore their expressive potential throughout the 1870s and early 1880s."
There are a number of reasons for the audience's new interest in brilliant coloration, the least of which is concerned with aesthetics. Politics and sociological concerns played a vital role in their acceptance into popular art. Up until the nineteenth century, the Tokugawa shogunate had enforced sumptuary laws restricting the importation of Western pigments and the use of certain colors among the populace. When these laws were amended, bold colors, readily associated with "things Western" and believed to be an emblem of modernity and social distinction, began to appear regularly in Ukiyo-e prints. In the past, color was a symbol of rank; in the Meiji period, color was for everyone. One of Yoshitoshi's important contributions to Ukiyo-e is his use of color as an expressive device, and as we will see, even in his mature period, he used this deep blood-red and discordant color juxtapositions to intensify the dramatic effects.

The decisive role played by the print-buying public in determining the style and subject matter of Yoshitoshi's prints cannot be overstated. The need to meet the demands of the market was a constant pressure which fueled Yoshitoshi's willingness to venture into new territory. No Ukiyo-e artist could survive in the field without, as Segi Shin'ichi so aptly put it, "indulging the savage appetites" of the public; truly, the reality of the day was "adapt or perish." The extent of Yoshitoshi's dependence on public
appeal is revealed when we look at the serious effects of three consecutive market failures, namely, the previously discussed series One Hundred Selections of Warriors in Battle; the series Raving Beauties at Tokyo Restaurants (Tōkyō ryōri sukoburu beppin), completed in 1871; and A Yoshitoshi Miscellany of Figures from Literature, completed in 1872.

Since the series Twenty-eight Infamous Murders, published in 1867, was a market success, one wonders why his designs for One Hundred Selections of Warriors in Battle, which bear a strong resemblance to the previous year's work, were so poorly received.23 It appears that this decline in sales followed on the heels of the imperial restoration. As the 1870s approached, the popularity of Ukiyo-e prints, especially such violent depictions and gruesome images as Yoshitoshi's, began to taper off. This series, then, is the last one in his career to display such extremes in violence and cruelty. When public response to this series fell short of expectations, he turned, in 1871, to the Ukiyo-e theme of beautiful women (bijinga) for the series, Raving Beauties at Tokyo Restaurants (Tōkyō ryōri sukoburu beppin), which was probably designed to function as a guide to the popular restaurants.24

Sources indicate that Yoshitoshi's models for the series were the women who actually worked at the restaurants. For example, the model Suzukiyama Okiku, who
worked at the Shōeitei Restaurant in Tokyo, appears in the print "Shōeitei" (fig. 25). But the image is not a portrait of the woman. His figure is based on a standard type which is depicted in a conventionalized pose, gesture, and compositional arrangement. In stark contrast to his previous works, "Shōeitei" is totally devoid of emotional expression. The series failed to attract attention, and we can probably attribute this to the artist's lack of daring in his presentation of the subject, something the public had grown to expect from Yoshitoshi. It is possible too that conventional designs such as this could no longer compete against the growing popularity of Western-style oil painting (Yōga) during this period. The lack of any overt references to Western art, beyond the use of vanishing point perspective, may have had a direct bearing on the series' poor reception.

The third failure came in 1872 with the series A Yoshitoshi Miscellany of Figures from Literature (Ikkai zuihitsu). It is interesting to find that his designs for this series owe much to his teacher's style. One print in particular (fig. 26), "Oniwaka Seeks Revenge on the Great Carp" (Seitō no oniwakamaru), bears a striking resemblance to Kuniyoshi's work of 1827 entitled, "Tamejiro Dan Shogo Grappling with an Adversary Underwater" (fig. 27). This reversion to his teacher's style was even less favored by the public than his previous two works, and within the span
of seven years Yoshitoshi went from prosperity and fame to bankruptcy and near anonymity. The financial hardships he faced as a result of these three major setbacks threw him into a period of serious emotional depression. The specifics concerning his illness are not known in any detail, but the event was debilitating enough to seriously curtail his output between 1872 and 1873. Something had radically affected the audience's appreciation of his works, and that something was modernization.

When Japan finally opened her doors to the outside world in the early 1850s, it was generally believed that the only way for Japan to compete with and protect herself against the encroachment of the Western powers was to be as they were—modern and technologically advanced. In the beginning, Meiji leaders believed modernization could be accomplished by simply adopting Western learning in mathematics, science, engineering, and mapmaking. Many people felt that the only way for Japan to build a modern nation was to accept and assimilate all aspects of Western culture, including art, religion, and the humanities. During the 1860s and 1870s, Western studies comprised the curriculum at all government-sponsored schools, to the exclusion of all Confucian-based studies. Western learning and culture were seen as definitive models for progress, while the native traditions were seen as backward and inadequate. A growing disdain for Japan's past opened
the way for artists to seriously pursue Western-style oil painting, and they achieved a fair amount of success during this period.

In *The New Generation in Meiji Japan*, Kenneth Pyle examines the impact of the Meiji government's modernization programs on Japanese youth from the 1870s to the late 1880s. His findings shed some light on the possible reasons for Yoshitoshi's brief spell of financial and emotional ruin. In one passage he states:

> It was the historical predicament of youth to be caught in a confrontation of circumstances that intensified the awareness of their heritage and at the same time stigmatized it. Their formal education and their advancement in the world were almost entirely bound up with the acquisition of technical skills and ways of thought adopted from an alien culture.... Traditional skills became outdated; old ways of organizing and viewing social life became problematic and controversial. This process, entailing as it did a sudden loss of trust in the immediate world and its transmitters and interpreters, left Japanese youth with no sure sense of their identity. 3

Based on this passage, we can assume that adults had as much, if not more, difficulty accepting the radical changes imposed on them by the new government. Yoshitoshi also was having a hard time coping with change and this certainly
contributed to his bout with depression between 1872 and 1873.

The public's disinterest in traditional art and culture drove Yoshitoshi to innovation and experimentation, and upon his recovery, he adopted the name Taizo meaning "great rebirth," venturing into unexplored territory, at least for an Ukiyo-e artist.32 In 1874, Yoshitoshi became one of the first Ukiyo-e artists to be commissioned to produce nishiki-e (full-color or "brocade" prints) supplements for a fledgling newspaper.33 This brings us to another important stage in Yoshitoshi's artistic development.

Yoshitoshi's "Great Rebirth", 1874-1877

The foundation and widespread acceptance of the new media in Japan went hand-in-hand with the Meiji government's decision to lift the old Tokugawa ban on the depiction of current events.34 When, in 1874, Yoshitoshi was hired by the newspaper Meiyo Shindan (New Tales of Honor), it is likely that he was aware that this new medium offered him the greatest opportunity to gain public exposure for his work and wider appeal, since the idea of holding public exhibitions of artist's works was just catching on in Japan.35 Yoshitoshi worked as a newspaper print artist for about fifteen years, and the frequency with which his works were published is a good indication of his success in this
field. Working for a popular newspaper also kept him abreast of current issues, political events, and the latest trends in the arts, which, during the 1870s, leaned heavily toward Western realism.  

As soon as the government lifted the ban on the depiction of current events, a newspaper commissioned Yoshitoshi, in 1874, to design a series depicting undisguised events in the lives of the last Tokugawa shoguns as they struggled to retain power, including Yoshinobu's (r. 1867) escape after the 1868 battle at Fushima.  One print from the series, The Battle of Sannō Shrine, is shown in figure 28. This series constitutes the first legally published prints to straightforwardly illustrate contemporary events. This new genre of historical prints, or to be more precise, docu-drama prints exhibit a westernized-traditional style.

This first battle-print series was a major success because he catered to the changed interests and needs of his modern audience by creating a new type of print with an up-beat style. It is no surprise to find him using a similar style for his newspaper print supplements, such as the one shown in figure 29, which portrays the valiant warrior Hirose Kazuma. In 1860, Hirose was killed outside the Sakuradamon Gate of Edo Castle in a futile attempt to protect his lord, Ii Naosuke (1815-1860) of Omi Prefecture (present-day Shiga Prefecture), during a fierce dispute with
imperial loyalists. The latter opposed Ii's decision to sign treaties with the Western powers which allowed the foreigners greater access to the riches of Japan's interior and protected them from civil and criminal prosecution under Japanese law. Yoshitoshi presents Hirose Kazuma in a positive light, and the popularity of stories such as this, enhanced by Yoshitoshi's dramatic illustrations, are a good indication of the public's sympathy for such valiant displays of honor, loyalty, and courage in the face of certain death. Likewise, the Meiji government viewed themes such as this as a way to quietly nurture the old values of filial piety and duty in the hope of redirecting these values toward the emperor.

"Hirose Kazuma" exhibits a new approach to dramatic illustration even though Yoshitoshi fell back on one of the visual devices he used in the mid-1860s, that of drenching the figure in blood. It is in his treatment of the setting surrounding the figure that we find a new effect of mood. The arrangement of the subdued colors is quite pleasing to the eyes, and there is a concerted air of tranquillity about the softly falling snow in a pastel blue sky, which sets a striking contrast to the swift, purposeful movement of the warrior in his desperate fight. The calm atmosphere actually intensifies the drama of the scene.

Since "Hirose Kazuma" and his designs for A Yoshitoshi Miscellany of Figures from Literature are comparable in
style and quality, one wonders why the earlier work was unsuccessful while this newspaper print supplement was so well-received. The reason must have something to do with the thematic differences exhibited in these works and the relative novelty of the subject depicted. A Yoshitoshi Miscellany of Figures from Literature presents ancient historical and fictional heroes depicted in a novel style; while "Hirose Kazuma" presents a novel theme—the depiction of a real, true-to-life hero of the recent past.

When we compare "Hirose Kazuma" with the ones for Twenty-eight Infamous Murders of 1867 (figs. 10-12), we can see at once the changes in his approach to the subject and compositional arrangement, the most important of which is the greater degree of restraint in his treatment of Hirose's story. The rebel is not shown being killed or even in the throes of death; instead, he is shown bravely standing his ground; his motion is frozen at the second just before he swings his sword at an unseen foe. Yoshitoshi immortalized and monumentalized the persona of Hirose by portraying him in his final "moment of glory." It appears that Yoshitoshi had begun to recognize that suggestiveness and restraint are extraordinarily effective techniques for intensifying the emotional impact of a dramatic scene.

In April 1875, he was contracted by the Yūbin Hōchi Shim bun (The Postal News) to design special nishiki-e supplements for the entertainment of subscribers and for the
purpose of expanding readership and sales of the
newspaper. Three examples are reproduced in figures 30-
32, and brief summaries of the events depicted have been
included in the List of Illustrations at the end of this
paper. In one print (fig. 30), which depicts the suicides
of two foreign embezzlers, one can see a crisp angularity in
the shadows and highlights defining the folds of the
figure's garments. This sharp-line effect, a result of his
attempt to model forms with color, is reminiscent of Hirose
Kazuma and the depiction of the incident at Sannō Shrine
(late-1874, fig. 28). As he subsequently developed new ways
to use Western-style coloring techniques, this harsh
linearization quickly softened, producing more subtle
transitions from one tonal gradation to the next. This
technique, called itabokashi, was developed and used
extensively by Hokusai and Hiroshige in their landscape
prints, but it was rarely used in figure prints. The
technique for creating subtle gradations of color in a
woodblock print is to vary the thickness or density of the
color applied to the block, which lends considerable mass to
the figures and depth to the background. The colors are
often applied layer upon layer until the desired effect is
achieved.40

One of his most important contributions to Japanese art
and history appeared in the form of a war print series or
rekishi-e that documents the fighting in the Satsuma
Rebellion of 1877. The series, entitled From the Chronicles of the Conquest of Kagoshima in Satsuma Province (Sasashō kagoshima seitōku no uchi), was released that same year and two prints are reproduced in figures 33-34. The rebellion swelled up in response to government reforms further limiting the power base of the aristocracy. One of the reasons this series is so invaluable is that Yoshitoshi's portrayals help to dispel the popular notion that the imperial restoration was a bloodless revolution, an essentially peaceful changeover brought about by a handful of high-minded aristocrats whose sole concern was the security and betterment of the Japanese nation. His documentary war print series, including depictions of the battles at Ueno and Fushima (discussed earlier) record the fighting but also stand as visual testimonials to the many brave souls who sacrificed their lives to protect and preserve the old order. They demonstrate that the Japanese elite did not relinquish their social and political standing without a whimper; it has been estimated that well over thirty thousand people lost their lives as a result of these and other disputes during the first decade or so of the Restoration period.

Responding to the public's taste for realism, which peaked during the 1870s, we can see in figures 33 and 34 a new emphasis on realistic visual effects and expressions of intense psychological turmoil. As in his early period,
where emotional realism was aimed at attracting the attention of the print-buyers, visual realism was directed at the public's continued fascination for Western art and its associated illusionism. To garner their interest in realism, Yoshitoshi began to explore ways to make his characters appear more believable and the emotions more intense through a unique blend of Eastern and Western pictorial devices. In these two prints we find the expressive power of calligraphic line drawing and Japanese subject matter integrated with Western devices such as linear perspective, foreshortening, and the expressive use of color and shading.

Another example from this battle-print series (fig. 35) depicts the death of Murata Sansuke (the fallen soldier on the right) who served under Saigō Takamori (the subject depicted in figs. 33-34) in his effort to reunite Japan after the imperial restoration in 1868. Saigō also was responsible for the Satsuma Rebellion in which Murata took part and died. As with many prints depicting sensitive subjects such as this, Yoshitoshi demonstrates a quietly expressed sympathy for the rebel's cause by emphasizing the main character's strength of conviction and courageous determination—qualities the Meiji government wished to foster in the people. In his portrayal of Murata Sansuke's death, Western pictorial devices such as shading and spatial organization lend a touch of realism to the
work, and the action of the scene is remarkably fluid and graceful—like a choreographed dance on stage. He glorifies the battle and yet shows the pain of death on the battlefield. This expressive tension appealed to the public who were as deeply concerned for the future of Japan as the rebels in Satsuma Province. In one way, Yoshitoshi was serving the Meiji government by conveying to the public the obvious futility of opposing the new order. Although this was not an event to be celebrated, it certainly warranted (at least from the government's standpoint) serious commemoration.

Following the release of the Satsuma Rebellion series, he was called upon to design prints for the first issues of two other newspapers, the Masago Shimbun in 1878, and the Iroha Shimbun in 1879. He continued to accept commissions from various newspapers through most of the 1880s. Later prints of this genre, directly inspired by Yoshitoshi's creations, were produced by his more successful pupils Mizuno Toshikata (1866-1908) and Migata Toshihide (1863-1924), who respectively documented the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.

We have seen that Yoshitoshi's works catered, from the start, to the whims of his audience. This became particularly apparent when we considered the nature of the
changes in his style and thematic approach from the late 1860s to the late 1870s, where the public's interest in Western illusionism and oil painting was especially felt. Many of his newspaper prints and his documentary spread on the Satsuma Rebellion are prime examples of how he exploited the use of Western illusionistic devices. Meeting the demands of the public certainly was nothing new to Ukiyo-e circles, but what was new in Yoshitoshi's day was the make-up of his audience. While earlier Ukiyo-e artists catered to the elite members of society, such as the military, some sectors of the aristocracy, and wealthy merchants, Yoshitoshi had to appeal to a much expanded and diverse audience consisting of factory workers, office clerks, housewives, small neighborhood shopkeepers, and others of middle class society. As a newspaper illustrator, his audience included the affluent classes for one, as well as lower government officials, elementary school teachers, and merchants. It is important to point out that, in contrast to the prints produced in the early decades of the nineteenth century, where overt emotionalism is uncommon, Yoshitoshi's prints of the 1860s and 1870s tend to overflow with displays of intense emotion. This difference in thematic presentation signals a dramatic shift in the audience's aesthetic values and tastes and is an indication of the growing dominance of plebeian interests in the print market. Therefore, in Yoshitoshi's day, catering to the
special interests of the nobility and other elite members of Japanese society was no longer a primary concern for him.\textsuperscript{31}

Working under the pressure of having to constantly change one's style and approach could have serious effects on an artist's output and chance for success. Yoshitoshi's period of financial hardship and near ruin during the early years of the Meiji period, which had followed an initial period of success, attests to the rapid shifts in the tastes and interests of the print-buyers. Having to work under these conditions brought many lesser artists to the realms of mediocrity and repetitiveness. Even the greats, at times, succumbed to the ravages of overproductivity and suffered for lack of inspiration.\textsuperscript{32} Yoshitoshi, on the other hand, seemed tireless, and as the number of his commissions increased, so did the quality of his works. It must be stressed, though, that his success does not stem entirely from his own creative genius, for his publishers also played a key role in maintaining his successful relationship with his audience.

It was the publisher, more so than the artist, who held the deciding vote in determining the style, technical quality, and subject matter to be depicted in Ukiyo-e prints.\textsuperscript{33} An important aspect of the publisher's job was to assure the works to be published stayed within the censorship laws enacted by the Meiji government; otherwise everyone involved in the production of the work was subject
to stiff penalties. Given the problems with censorship and the difficulties in keeping up with the trends in the market, few Ukiyo-e artists were able to work independently, and the publisher acted as an artist-manager and agent. The wisdom and foresight of Yoshitoshi's publishers had a great deal to do with his success during the mid-late 1870s, and their recommendations, which were gauged according to the latest trends in art and society, are a key factor in determining the link between Yoshitoshi's later works and the Nihonga movement of the 1880s.

The 1870s were turbulent years wrought by radical shifts in government ideology that also affected the public's attitudes toward westernization. By the late 1870s, many people (including Westerners) began to express their doubts about the advantages of adopting Western culture and art wholesale. There was a growing concern that too much of a "good thing" (i.e. westernization) could spell disaster if Japan's revered institutions, values, mores, and customs were to disappear. This fear fostered a new distrust of Western ideas and systems, which, in the end, encouraged the Japanese to look for the seeds of modernization within their own culture. This whole period of introspection stimulated a new desire to preserve rather than reject the ancient heritage of Japan. One result of this redirection was the rise of Japanese nationalism and its associated impact on the arts. In Yoshitoshi's works of
1878, we see the effects of the public's renewed interest in and appreciation of traditional Japanese art and aesthetics.

As the 1880s approached, the government and the general public grew more and more receptive to traditional art and ideals, but there were many, including Yoshitoshi, who still believed that the differences between the two worlds, that is, the East and the West, could be reconciled. His early attempt to bring the two systems of representation into a working relationship, or better yet, partnership, is aptly demonstrated in his war print series of 1877. But, in the following year, two of Yoshitoshi's projects display yet another shift in approach, one that will eventually bring him into direct contact with the Nihonga movement in the arts. Without a doubt, the Fenollosa-Okakura model for Nihonga-style art was inspired by the sentiments discussed above, and Yoshitoshi's works from 1878 on mirror the same ideas expressed by Nihonga-style artists. So, considering his position within the mainstream of art, we are safe in assuming that Yoshitoshi and his publishers, as always, were simply responding to some general feeling in the air or the spirit of the times. It is no coincidence then that Yoshitoshi's works from here on out follow the same course as the Nihonga movement in painting.
PART TWO

Nationalism, the *Nihonga* Movement, and Yoshitoshi's Modern-Traditional Style Prints: 1878-1892

Japanese Nationalism and the Arts: The Birth of *Nihonga*

The Meiji period marks the rapid transformation of Japan from an old feudalistic society into a modern technologically advanced nation. As one would expect, the first decades of the imperial restoration were plagued by civil unrest. The Satsuma Rebellion of 1877-78 is just one example of the discontent, but this event proves that modernization was often a costly task. During the 1860s and 1870s, the government strongly urged the people to adopt new ideas and attitudes, based on foreign modes, in place of the old ways of thinking and acting. Iconoclasm in government, education, and the arts prevailed for most of the 1870s, but as the 1880s approached, many people grew concerned that the Japanese heritage would soon disappear. While the progressives stood firm in the conviction that modern and Western were synonymous, the conservatives were calling for the reassertion of native learning and a halt to the government's indiscriminate westernizing campaigns.

The conservatives won out in the end and, in the late 1870s, ushered in a period characterized by ultranationalism which bordered on xenophobia. This redirection
of Meiji ideology fostered the revival of long-neglected native traditions in art, literature, philosophy, and religion. One problem facing the new generation of Meiji leaders and thinkers, such as Kōda Rohan (1867–1947), Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), and Okakura Kakuzō (1862–1913) was how to continue Japan's forward progress without undermining everything uniquely Japanese.

In the art world, Okakura believed that since modern ideas and the new applications of old ones were being communicated to the public, the images depicted should look modern. Yet many of the ideas being communicated, such as loyalty to the emperor and nation, were based on the morals and values found in Shintō and Confucian ethics; therefore, he felt that while the appearance should be modern, the overall impression must be Japanese in essence and spirit. In the late 1870s, the Meiji government also took a stand against the further advancement of Western-style oil painting in Japan. After traditional arts and crafts were given a favorable reception at the Vienna Exposition of 1873, the government started to promote their production for export to the West in the hope that traditional Japanese art would achieve international repute and take its rightful place in world art.

With the hope of bolstering support for the emperor, the government was especially receptive of art forms which made clear references to the nation's ancient, divinely
mandated, imperial institution and also promoted Confucian ideas of self-sacrifice and devout loyalty to the emperor—the embodiment of Japan and the state—the "land blessed by the gods." The notion that traditional modes could be revitalized to meet the needs and spirit of the modern age and the goals of the restoration, without Western ideas and imagery playing the leading role, became the dominant mode of thinking. Mere imitation of the West was deemed inadequate and no longer acceptable as a means to modernity.\(^7\)

The government was successful in its efforts, which in turn, added fuel to the rising tide of nationalism and patriotic pride among the population. The renewed interest in the study and preservation of native learning and culture helped foster the foundation of the popular People's Rights Movement in 1874. The movement was quite forceful and, in response, numerous scholarly associations, business organizations, and private clubs sprang up all over Japan during the mid-1870s and 1880s.\(^8\) One influential group caught up in this conservative spirit of nationalism was the Dragon Lake Society (Ryūchikai), established in 1879 by three leading figures in society and education, Sanō Tsunetami, Kuki Ryūichi, and Kawase Hideharu, as a private club for like-minded aristocrats and art afficionados.\(^3\)

The Dragon Lake Society determined that for the sake of progress in science and industry it was necessary to adopt
Western illusionistic techniques to illustrate technical manuals, but without a firm grounding in all aspects of Western culture, including philosophy and religion, myth and symbolism, art history and aesthetics, the most a Japanese artist could hope to achieve was technical virtuosity without creativity. The only way for modern Japanese art to remain both creative and distinct from Western art was to generate support for studies in Japanese art history, connoisseurship, and conservation; sponsor public exhibitions of old and new traditional-style paintings; and attract government financial support for programs in the arts.

The Society found strong advocates in Ernest Fenollosa who had been invited, in 1878, by the Ministry of Education to chair the new departments of Political Economy and Philosophy at the Imperial University in Tokyo, and in his Japanese student Okakura Kakuzō who contributed much to the revival of traditional art and aesthetics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1882, they invited Fenollosa into their organization, and in a speech he presented on that occasion, Fenollosa voiced his concern over the rapid disappearance and degeneration of Japanese art and aesthetics. He had just completed a survey of old Japanese paintings, including the works of numerous Kanō and Tosa School artists, and concluded that Western art was detrimental to and entirely incompatible with Japanese art.
He expressed these sentiments in the following passage:

Japanese art is really far superior to modern cheap Western art that describes any object at hand mechanically, forgetting the most important point, expression of Idea. Despite such superiority Japanese despise their classical painting, and with adoration for Western civilization admire its artistically worthless modern paintings and imitate them for nothing. What a sad sight it is! The Japanese should return to their nature and its old racial traditions, and then take, if there are any, the good points of Western painting."

His words impressed members of the Society—one of whom was the head of the Department of Education. Within a few weeks, the government sponsored a program designed to identify and catalog all of the nation's art treasures."

Fenollosa openly criticized Western-style painting (Yōga) by pointing to works that displayed a distracting awkwardness in style, content, or techniques. In his view, foreign ideas should never dominate the traditional idiom, and for this reason he also disliked Nanga which had its roots in Chinese art and culture."

To him these foreign artistic modes were contaminants contributing to the death of "true Japanese art.""

His ideas were heard and acted on, for shortly after Fenollosa arrived in Tokyo, a new approach to traditional art, in which Western ideas are used
but do not dominate the expression, began to take hold in
Japanese painting and other arts.

Knowing what we do of Yoshitoshi's reputation for
attracting the public's attention and his dependence on his
publisher's keen sense of the latest trends, we should not
be surprised to find two of Yoshitoshi's major print series
of 1878 exhibit this new stylistic and thematic approach.
One is the series A Mirror of Famous Generals of Japan
(Dainippon meishō kagami), published at intervals from 1878
to 1882 (figs. 37-38). The other series is A Collection of
Desires (Mitate tai zukushi), completed in 1878 (fig. 39).
Both works offer a perfect reflection of the shift of
interest from Western-style art to traditional Japanese art,
and show his early formula for integrating opposing yet
complementary Eastern and Western pictorial conventions--the
crux of Okakura Kakuzō's theory of modern Japanese painting
and aesthetics as formulated in his "Six Principles of
Nihonga," which are outlined in the next section.

In contrast to his earlier works, which catered to the
public's disquieting penchant for graphic scenes of violence
and gore and generally depict the climax of the story--a
borrowing from Western drama--these two print series show
the first stage of his mature style, which is characterized
by a blend of Western pictorial devices with subtle,
suggestive expressions of human pathos that rely on
traditional Japanese aesthetic considerations and pictorial
techniques. Also, in keeping with the Japanese tradition, Yoshitoshi placed the emphasis on the moment just before the climactic event. The appearance of this new print style in his works of this year reassures us that he still was "swimming in the mainstream."

The designs from *A Mirror of Famous Generals of Japan* show the early stage in the development of Yoshitoshi's mature style. It is the first series in which he fully exploited techniques for conveying a specific mood or atmospheric condition through subtle gradations of color; clearly, his approach to the narrative is much less direct. The subtle coloristic effects, achieved through the *itabokashi* technique (see page 38), resemble watercolor washes that quietly suggest three-dimensional space and forms. The print shown in figure 37, depicts Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) at Honnō Temple, Kyoto in his fateful struggle of 1582 to retain the shogunate." For his treatment of Nobunaga, he relied on fine lines to delineate the overall figure and his costume, but in areas where contour lines dominate, they take on a rigorous, jagged quality designed to express the character's inner conflict rather than to merely define the form. The technique of using calligraphic line as an expressive device in figural art underlies the ancient Japanese pictorial tradition, and Yoshitoshi revived this familiar technique and applied it to new subject matter in *A Mirror of Famous Generals of Japan*. 
Line and color take on a whole new force in the designs for this series, and the print "Sachime Perishes in the Flames" (fig. 38), published in 1880, is a prime example. Western devices do not stand out or overwhelm the Japanese idiom. Yoshitoshi has achieved the union of two systems of representation into a working and complementary relationship, and the appearance of this hybrid style marks another shift in the balance between Eastern and Western elements. This time, in contrast to his series on the Satsuma Rebellion, the Japanese pictorial elements tip the scale. The designs for A Mirror of Famous Generals of Japan show a skillful but as yet immature integration of two and three dimensional elements, but unlike his work from the previous year, Western ideas do not stand apart.

The second work from 1878, A Collection of Desires (Mitate tai zukushi), responded to the public's renewed interest in traditional subjects and images and constitutes Yoshitoshi's first successful bijinga series.19 The print shown in figure 39, "I Want to be Massaged" (Oshite moraitai), is a fine example of this new dialogue. The series presents twenty beautiful women involved in their day-to-day activities, and recalls the tradition of Utamaro's famous bijinga series Ten Studies in Female Physiognomy (Fujin sōgaku juttai), in which each print is meant to convey a particular emotional state or personality-type through the figure's posture, gesture, glance, and
costume. \textsuperscript{13} But there are major differences between
Yoshitoshi's and Utamaro's treatment of the subject, which
reflect the times in which each artist worked.

Drawing from his experience as a newspaper print
illustrator Yoshitoshi placed the figure in the immediate
foreground and kept the background details to a minimum so
that the image would have a greater impact on the viewer.
The accompanying text, "I want to be massaged," and the
figure's posture (leans toward the viewer), gesture
(submissive), and manner of wearing her costume (partially
exposing her neck and shoulder) allude to sensual pleasures
through double entendre. In keeping with Utamaro's
tradition, Yoshitoshi's design is meant to convey the
character's unique disposition or personality, not the
outward appearance of the real person. \textsuperscript{20} Unlike Utamaro's
figures who usually seem unaware of the viewer's presence,
Yoshitoshi's figures often gaze directly out into the
viewer's eyes.

This intimacy makes Yoshitoshi's women seem more
accessible and alive to the viewer, and is a trait rarely
found in earlier bijin ga prints. His unique combination of
modern and traditional ideas distinguishes this bijin ga
series from those of his predecessors and the developments
seen in \textit{A Collection of Desires} were refined in his designs
for the bijin ga series \textit{Thirty-two Aspects of Women} (Fuzoku
sanjūnisha}, completed 1886-89, which is considered to be one of his finest works.

The success of *A Mirror of Famous Generals of Japan* and *A Collection of Desires* attests to his (and the publisher's) awareness of the new demand in the print market for a novel treatment of traditional subjects. When print-buyers began to show disinterest in gruesome portrayals of violence and death and turned away from gaudy, dissonant coloration, Yoshitoshi responded by substituting for these "outdated" elements the aesthetic values expressed in *Yamato-e* or classical Japanese art. The new balance between Eastern and Western pictorial modes and techniques seen in the series *A Mirror of Famous Generals of Japan*, and the fresh approach to the beautiful women prints in *A Collection of Desires* marks the beginning of his mature style, which places far more emphasis on traditional Japanese expressions, images, and themes. His innovative approach to these traditional subjects brought him extraordinary success. In 1877 he was the forerunner in *rekishi-e* or historical prints, and in 1878 he became the leading artist of modern-traditional style prints.21

In both of these print series, Yoshitoshi used color to define form and convey emotional expression. In his earlier works color was used merely to enhance the forms and provide limited emotional content. His experiment with *chiaroscuro* was a success. It enlivened his figures with the suggestion
of solid mass and volume, and his coloristic techniques, although fairly harsh and rigid in those earlier attempts, soon gave way to the wonderfully dramatic and subtle effects of mood, that we see in his later works. His exploration of color as an expressive device never diminished; in fact, he eventually perfected these techniques. This period in his career is of great significance, for it was during this time that Yoshitoshi established much of the groundwork for his modern-traditional style print, which finally brought him into direct contact with the Nihonga movement.

The Nihonga Ideal and Yoshitoshi’s Modern-traditional Style
Prints of 1883

Throughout the 1880s, Fenollosa and Okakura were very influential in many of the decisions made regarding the acceptance of Western ideas in Japanese art. Fenollosa, for one, was behind the decision to exclude all Western-style oil paintings and Manga-style works from the first official exhibition of modern Japanese painting held in the autumn of 1882 at Tokyo’s famous Ueno Park. Fenollosa helped organize this event and also served on the panel of jurors. Three paintings by Yoshitoshi (no longer extant) were selected for display in this important exhibition, along with works by: Toyohara Chikanobu (1838–1912), the teacher of Kunichika (1835–1900); and Kawanabe Kyōsai
(Gyösai, 1831-1889), a noted Kanô-style painter, print artist and illustrator who had studied under Kuniyoshi as a child.²⁴ Knowing Fenollosa's position on the acceptability of certain styles, the fact that Yoshitoshi's works were selected for display indicates that his style and subject matter paralleled the ideals associated with Nihonga. Yoshitoshi's triptych of 1883, Fujiwara Yasumasa Playing the Flute by Moonlight (Fujiwara no Yasumasa gekka rōteki zu), figure 40, is a print based on one of his submissions to the 1882 Exhibition for the Advancement of Pictorial Art.²⁵ For our purposes, it demonstrates (in terms of style, content, and mood) his ties to the movement. We will discuss this print in more detail shortly, but first, let us turn to Okakura Kakuzō's theories on the new Japanese art in order to compare his ideas with those found in Yoshitoshi's works of the 1880s.

Michael Sullivan describes the Nihonga style as characteristically decorative and realistic, technically brilliant, new, and Japanese in feeling. It seemed to be "an unanswerable reply to the challenge of Western art."²⁶ Okakura's opinion of the new style was equally positive, and his theories indicate that he was less skeptical than Fenollosa about the value of Western ideas in modern Japanese art, for he believed that Japanese artists would, one day, make their own significant contributions to the oil painting tradition. His ultimate desire was to create a
style of painting that was Japanese in subject matter, techniques, and craftsmanship yet incorporated touches of Western realism to make the style and its expression contemporary. The new style of painting associated with Nihonga relies on the ink and brush techniques developed by traditional Kanō and Tosa School painters, traditional aesthetics, and the integration of these elements with Western illusionistic techniques such as shading and linear perspective. Nihonga-style works were not limited to traditional brush and ink but also included oil paintings such as the one we will see later in this discussion. Okakura Kakuzō’s Six Principles of Nihonga, which are as follows:

1. If an artist draws from tradition or borrows ideas from the West, these should be assimilated so thoroughly as to become part of the artist’s being.

2. The successful artist must master ancient techniques.

3. The artist’s passion should breathe spirit into the work.

4. Originality is far more important than technical virtuosity, although in mastering techniques an artist can best express his/her ideas and feelings.

5. The art must be full of dignity and nobility.

6. Further advances must be made in Ukiyo-e (genre
painting in the traditional style) and historical painting.  

When one evaluates Yoshitoshi's later works against these standards, it is striking to discover that the same terms and standards apply.

An important outgrowth of the Nihonga movement and the public's renewed interest in traditional art, during the 1880s, was the revival of Noh drama and its related aesthetics. According to George Kuwayama, Yoshitoshi was the first Ukiyo-e artist to produce prints inspired by the Noh plays performed for the general public. Yoshitoshi's triptych Fujiwara Yasumasa Playing the Flute by Moonlight shows his early adaptation of the yūgen ideal in the woodblock print medium.  

Noh drama was very low during the early years of the Restoration, but in the 1880s, the majority of plays are concerned with the innate pathos in all things, especially life's impermanence (mono no aware), and is based on the aesthetic principles of yūgen. It is difficult to translate yūgen into precise terms, but it is generally characterized by the aesthetic experience of sabi (to cherish what is ancient and time-worn) and wabi (quiet taste or extreme subtlety and restraint). The quality of wabi is especially important in Noh performance, where extreme subtlety and restraint in the expression of emotion, and in the actor's movements across the stage, are primary characteristics. Each movement
comprises a carefully arranged choreography. These aesthetic principles find expression in nearly every Japanese art form, be it literature, painting, architecture, landscape gardening, flower arranging, or the art of drinking tea. It is not surprising, therefore, that the quiet, yet passionate, spectacle of Noh made an indelible impression on Yoshitoshi. Let us take a closer look at Fujiwara Yasumasa Playing the Flute by Moonlight.

The print depicts an episode in the life of this legendary Heian court nobleman, poet, and flutist who lived from 958-1036 and is mentioned in the twelfth-century anthology, Konjaku monogatari (Tales of Times Now Past). The stalking figure is the notorious highwayman Hakamadare Yasuke, who has just emerged from his hiding place in the tall grasses on the moor. He sneaks up behind the great lord, who seems (to Yasuke) oblivious to the danger, intent on robbing the nobleman of his warm winter coat. As the story goes, just as Yasuke prepared to attack, he was suddenly and inexplicably captivated by the overwhelming beauty of the nobleman's melody and his obvious lack of fear. All through the night, the mesmerized bandit followed the music of the flute across the cold, moonlit moor. He trailed Yasumasa to his grand manor, and upon their arrival, the great lord removed his coat and presented it to the bandit. From that time on, Hakamadare Yasuke became Yasumasa's most loyal vassal.
Yoshitoshi's figure style and compositional arrangement comprises a dialectic of Eastern and Western conventions. Specific Japanese pictorial devices, such as the use of calligraphic contour lines to define form and convey emotional expression, especially notable in the bold, exaggerated quality of the lines defining the nobleman's bright orange coat, are combined with specific Western devices, such as shading and foreshortening. The use of color and classical motifs to create mood and atmospheric effects is quite successful in this work. For example, the cloudy sky and misty landscape are rendered in softened shades of blueish gray. The full moon, which occupies one entire panel of the triptych, and the tall, wind-blown grasses of the open moor combine to create an eerie yet lyrical air of quiet mystery and restrained suspense—the hallmark of Noh drama.

The flattened appearance of the figures results from the use of dynamic calligraphic contour lines to define the figures and the folds in their costumes. This two-dimensional technique is combined with the technique of foreshortening, which pushes the figures into the extreme foreground. The lower vantage point, which places the figures at eye level, heightens the drama and the viewer's sense of involvement. Although the work is striking visually, his style appears slightly awkward in its combination of Eastern and Western conventions. This
awkwardness does not stem from the combination of two and three dimensional elements but from the lack of cohesion between the two systems of representation. The bold linearity and broad areas of flat color defining the figures strike a note of visual discord against the realism of the background landscape. The dominance of linear elements makes the figures stand out like cardboard cutouts pasted in front of a naturalistically rendered landscape, which, in itself, could be easily translated into an actual stage backdrop. There are no smooth transitions from foreground to background details, so the distinctions between them are, perhaps, too well defined if naturalism was the artist's initial intention. Yoshitoshi effectively overcame this slight disunity in his style and compositional techniques in another work, later discussed, of 1883.

In spite of the minor areas of visual disunity, the design brought Yoshitoshi wide acclaim. When the prominent publisher Akiyama Buemon saw Yoshitoshi's painting of this character in the 1882 national exhibition, he commissioned the artist to design this print, which was published in February of 1883. In March, the popular actor Ichikawa Danjūrō IX created a new pantomime dance for the Kabuki stage based on Yoshitoshi's print design; and in June, a float depicting the scene with life-sized plaster images of the characters was designed for the Sannō Festival at Hie
Shrine. Yoshitoshi painted the figures and Ichikawa Danjūrō IX created the costumes.¹⁴

The flaws in his style, although not immediately apparent or distracting, are brought to the fore when the print is placed beside the other triptych of 1883 entitled, Famous Places in the East: The Ancient Incident of Umewaka and the Child Seller Beside the Sumida River (fig. 41). In terms of the figure style and compositional arrangement, there are no clear distinctions between Eastern and Western pictorial devices. These elements comprise, instead, a style soundly in tune with the concept of yin-yang or the harmonious union of opposites. It can be said that this print marks the final stage in the development of Yoshitoshi's modern-traditional print style, for he followed this course, with only minor changes, until his death. For our purposes, Umewaka and the Child Seller is the perfect example of Nihonga-style art, and a direct application of Okakura's Six Principles of Nihonga (see pages 58-59) will bear this out.

Okakura's first principle is apparent since the print is at once traditional in terms of its subject, medium, techniques, and decorativeness, yet modern in terms of the artist's refined assimilation and use of Western devices, which suggest the illusion of depth, mass, and volume. Yoshitoshi also hit upon a more effective blend of these complementary opposites. The second principle, which calls
for the mastery of ancient techniques, is evidenced by Yoshitoshi's handling of the "brush and ink" techniques inherent in calligraphic contour lines, and his unique adaptation of Japanese aesthetic qualities in the woodblock print medium. The third principle refers to the ancient concept of *ki* (called *qi* in Chinese), which forms part of all theories of art in Japan and China. When a work possesses *ki*, it is said to be imbued with life, a living spirit that is a reflection of the artist's passion for the subject. This triptych and all of the prints that we will examine, possess *ki* by meeting the requirements of the remaining three principles—originality, integrity of the image, and the further advancement of Ukiyo-e art.

Yoshitoshi's more refined synthesis offered the audience fresh images to a novel presentation of this well known legend. The print depicts a scene from the popular play about the legendary disappearance of a high-born boy named Umewaka whose fateful journey led him to the Sumida River, where, as one version goes, he died of exhaustion or illness. In the version treated by Yoshitoshi it is suggested that the boy was kidnapped by a ruthless child seller, Nobuo Toda, and sold into slavery.38 It is interesting that the Noh play focuses on the boy's mother who searched for him everywhere but only found his grave. Yoshitoshi, on the other hand, focused on the child's predicament36 Although not necessarily connected,
Yoshitoshi's directness rings of Western Romanticism similar to Edgar Allan Poe's approach in his short stories and poems, such as *The Pit and The Pendulum*, *The Tell Tale Heart*, and *The Raven*. In these works, the main character or narrator is the victim. This more direct treatment of the story line creates empathy with the subject by inviting the viewer to imagine all of the misery the child will suffer at the grisly hands of the child seller—a powerful dramatic technique that makes Yoshitoshi's presentation of the story intensely evocative.

Umewaka usually is portrayed as a fragile and hopelessly exhausted youth, but in Yoshitoshi's design he shows no sign of these conditions. It can be argued that Umewaka's beautiful clothes, healthy appearance, and refined features were the very things that caught the attention of the child seller. The child's sheer beauty makes his misfortune seem even more acute. The subtle gradations of softened colors enriches the lyrical image of beauty and sorrow that is expressed by motifs such as the rain and cherry blossoms falling against a cloudy moonlit sky. Without a doubt, this image possess all the suggestive powers of a *Haiku* verse, and aptly reflects the current interest in traditional art and subject matter.

Through the remainder of the 1880s, the *Nihonga* movement steadily grew to dominate the arts of Japan, and it
was not until the late 1890s that Western-style oil painting was once again allowed to flourish. The impact of nationalism and the dominance of the Nihonga movement is clearly indicated when we consider that, in the summer of 1883, the Dragon Lake Society sponsored the first official Paris exhibition of modern-traditional Japanese painting—Nihonga—and invited Fenollosa to join the selection committee. In keeping with the spirit of the 1882 exhibition, Yōga and Nanga style works were excluded from the show. Also, it is important to note that the Western art division of the government funded Technical Art School was closed that year for lack of enrollments. In the following year, Fenollosa established the Painting Appreciation Society (Kanga-kai) with the aim of sponsoring lectures on painting and holding exhibitions of works by contemporary traditional painters and old paintings in private collections. He also belonged to an official committee chosen by the Meiji government to assess the quality of art education in Japanese schools; whereupon, he summarily dismissed Western-style painting and recommended that the traditional brush and sumi ink should replace pencil and oil paint in the schools in order to preserve the ancient artistic heritage of Japan.

While Fenollosa and Okakura continued their efforts, the Nihonga-style dominated the world of painting and Yoshitoshi's modern-traditional style dominated the world of
Ukiyo-e prints. His repertoire of dramatic techniques was extensive, and in the last seven years of his life, he created some of the most horrific and sublime expressions of human pathos in the history of Japanese art. Now that Yoshitoshi's stylistic and thematic ties to the Nihonga movement have been established, and we recognize the powerful influence of public tastes and interests on the nature of his works at various times, let us examine his primary techniques of dramatic illustration in several of his later masterworks.

Yoshitoshi's Range of Techniques in Dramatic Illustration, 1885-1892

The following works exhibit the characteristics of his refined mature style and thematic approach in dramatic illustration. Moreover, they demonstrate his greater dependence on classical Japanese aesthetics and pictorial conventions, as well as his full range of ingenious techniques for portraying different subjects. The last print chosen for discussion also is compared to a similar print by Hokusai and then to a Nihonga-style painting by one of Yoshitoshi's contemporaries, Harada Naojirō, who belonged to the "new generation" of modern Japanese artists."

As stated earlier, after the release, in 1885, of the first prints for the series One Hundred Aspects of the Moon,
Yoshitoshi became the top-ranking print artist in Tokyo. We will look at a couple of examples from this series shortly, but he also produced two single issue prints that year which are well worth mentioning. The first one is the vertical diptych, *Two Valiants in Combat atop the Hōryūkaku Pavilion* (*Hōryūkaku ryōyū uguoku*), figure 42. In this print we can see how far Yoshitoshi's style has evolved beyond that of his teacher and his early works when we compare their designs for the same subject in which two warriors, Inuzuka Shino and Inukai Gempachi, confront each other in battle. When Yoshitoshi's work is placed beside Kuniyoshi's version (fig. 43), the differences become quite apparent.42

First of all, Yoshitoshi used a realistic approach by placing the viewer on the roof with the warriors to treat us to a close-up view of the action as it unfolds. Kuniyoshi, on the other hand, placed the viewer below the roof line so that the scene is witnessed from a greater distance. Yoshitoshi's approach, therefore, creates a more intimate and immediate effect and mood than his teacher's design, and his use of a sharp angle of view for dramatic effect reminds one of the techniques developed by Alfred Hitchcock, who was noted for using highly dramatic and innovative camera angles in his action-suspense movies.

Secondly, in contrast to Kuniyoshi's print, Yoshitoshi tends to be less decorative by limiting the number of distracting patterns and depending more on broader areas of
flat color to provide definition. This added visual clarity makes it easier to take in the entire scene at a glance, thus heightening the emotional impact on the viewer. While many of these techniques are firmly grounded in Western art, in Yoshitoshi's handling, there are no clear divisions between Eastern and Western elements—one system does not subordinate the other. This work also shows that he had continued to stay away from the brilliant palette characteristic of his early works in deference to a much softer mood and delicate coloration.

The other print from 1885, the diptych The Hag of Adachigahara (Oshō adachigahara hitotsuya no zu), figure 44, stands as one of Yoshitoshi's most startling portrayals of the macabre, and demonstrates his remarkable capacity for shocking the viewer with a harrowing vision right out of the worst nightmare, without showing a single drop of blood. This special skill, the mark of a true master of dramatic illustration, capitalizes on the notion that it is not what is depicted that necessarily moves one to intense emotions, but the implication of what is to come that leaves such an indelible impression on the mind. By relying on the viewer's imaginative powers, he draws the viewer into an active involvement with the entire story, similar to his approach for Fujiwara Yasumasa Playing the Flute by Moonlight and Two Valiants in Combat atop the Hōryūkaku Pavilion. This technique imbues his images with a dynamic
sense of stage-presence. Without a doubt, this print stands in stark contrast to the subtle expressions of beauty, passion, or the sympathetic treatment of certain characters as seen in the triptych *Umemaka and the Child Seller*.

The scene depicts an episode from the popular Noh play *Kurozuka*, an eerie tale about a wicked old woman who lures young, unsuspecting pregnant women into her house on the moor so that she can murder them for the blood (or liver) of their unborn babies. This gruesome tale is especially disturbing as it was once the custom in Japan for women to return to their paternal home to give birth even though they often had to travel a considerable distance.  

Aside from the realistic appearance of the figures and their environment, what makes this image so acutely dramatic is the way in which the artist used the powers of suggestion and restraint to hint at the young mother's inevitable demise. The old hag is shown with an evil, glaring face; a ragged, withered body and sagging lifeless breasts; all of which combine visually to create an aura of outward femininity sucked dry to the bone by her own heinous deeds and desires. Segi describes the hag's appearance as androgynous, but this is accurate only to a certain extent.  

It is my observation that Yoshitoshi intended to convey much more than this, since, in this case, androgyny would tend to have had a neutralizing effect on the old crone's evil persona.
A clue to his intentions lies in the fact that in many of his works, even before the 1880s, the way he treated a figure often conveys aspects of the character's inner spirit, be it innocent or evil. For example, this haggard image of spent femininity stands in stark contrast to the youthful, smoothly rounded features of the young woman. Soft, sensuously curving lines define the contours of the young woman's body, while harsh, scratchy lines define the hag's body and facial expression. Energetic contour lines function in this scene as an expressive device that heightens or emphasizes the emotional and visual impact. Line quality expresses the inner character of the subject; truly, the deformed appearance of the hag's limbs and torso combine to make ugliness the personification of evil. In his treatment of the young woman, the lines delineating the folds of her skirt resemble streaks of blood, and its telltale blood-red color stands out like an ill omen.

The only movement in the scene is the implied motion of the hag as she sharpens her knife with a skilled hand, and turns momentarily to gaze up, wickedly, into the face of her intended victim. The uncomfortable stillness created in the scene is shattered in our minds by the imagined sound of metal against stone, the crackling noise of the fire, and perhaps, even the sound of the hag breathing as she prepares for the feast. One of the remarkable qualities reflected in this print is Yoshitoshi's keen sensitivity to the
profoundest of human emotions—the anguish and numbing grief felt by those whose child or loved one might suffer a similar fate, and he conveys these emotions with extreme simplicity. Compared to this print, his earlier works seem quite tame.

Yoshitoshi depicted this story many times, but never achieved a more startling image; the government censorship committee expressed their concern that this print was far too disturbing and realistic and suppressed its release. Censorship was a difficult obstacle to fight in Meiji times; so in a later version, done in 1888, for the series One Hundred Aspects of the Moon (fig. 45), he all but eliminated the implicit violence, and left far more of the story to be completed by the viewer.

While The Hag of Adachigahara represents one extreme in Yoshitoshi's repertoire for the portrayal of human emotion, another print shows that he was equally skilled in depicting a positively heartwarming theme. One of the most pleasant designs from One Hundred Aspects of the Moon was released in September 1886 (fig. 46). This print exhibits qualities rarely recognized in Yoshitoshi's oeuvre—meditative calm, unspoken passion, and sweet nostalgia. The title, which is a poem, reads as follows:

Pleasure is this:
A Cool Evening,
An Arbor of Yugao Flowers,
A Man in Underwear,

A Woman in a Slip."
The words so aptly express the mood of this quiet scene of middle-aged complacency, comfort and ease between two people who have chosen to grow old together. Compared to the disturbing mood he created in The Hag of Adachigahara, this one seems uncharacteristically serene and inviting.

Aside from his portrayals of the macabre, the perverse, and the sublime, in keeping with the spirit of the Nihonga movement and the revival of traditional art in the 1880s, Yoshitoshi revived the bijinga print genre with his masterwork Thirty-two Aspects of Women (Fûzoku sanjûnisâtô), completed in 1888. Like his earlier series, A Collection of Desires, it is strongly reminiscent of Utamaro's style and quality yet displays attributes telling of Yoshitoshi's era. The series presents an historical chronology of the changing fashions of Japanese women from various backgrounds during the 1800s." The print, "Looking Smokey: The Appearance of a Housewife of the Kyowa Era, 1801-1804" (Kemu-so: Kyowa nenkan naihitsu no fûzoku), figure 47, is one of the most visually pleasing designs in the series. As in A Collection of Desires, the figure looks directly out at the viewer which makes her seem all the more seductive, and his choice of colors is quite pleasing to the eye. Especially noteworthy in "Smokey" is the suggestion of transparency in
the treatment of the smoke as it swirls up around the figure, enveloping her like a thin veil of mystery.

This quality of transparency also plays an important role in achieving the startling visual effects seen in his treatment of supernatural themes inspired by popular Noh plays. One Hundred Aspects of the Moon and New Forms for Thirty-six Ghosts (Shinkei sanjūrokkaizens), his last two series, show the greatest impact of Noh drama and its related aesthetics on his style and thematic approach, and both works stand as the culmination of his mature artistic development. Subtlety, tranquility, somber dignity and grace are the qualities found in these designs. They infuse these final works with a quietly arresting mood especially appropriate to depictions of the occult.

The ever-popular ghost story had a special place in Japanese art, literature, drama, and folktales, and it is interesting that, in this strictly male-dominated society, the female ghost was especially terrifying since she was usually the victim of some gross injustice or cruelty at the hands of a man whom she knew. The terror wrought by a female ghost takes many forms, the cruelest of which is unleashed vindictiveness and retribution. But not all of Yoshitoshi's female ghosts look frightening. In "The Spirit of the Komachi Cherry Tree" (Komachi-zakura no sei), from New Forms for Thirty-six Ghosts, issued October 7, 1889 (fig. 48), the palette is comprised of soft pastel blue and
lavender except for the minimal touches of blood-red for her undergarment, added for dramatic effect.45 The spirit resembles an elegant courtesan, a type depicted in countless Ukiyo-e prints and paintings except that she has no feet and is obviously transparent. Another fine example, from this series, of his use of a softer palette and gentler approach is "The Ghost of Okiku at Sarayashiki" (Sarayashiki Okiku no rei), issued August 1890 (Fig. 49).

In both of these works, the colors are even more subdued than the triptychs discussed previously, and the subtle gradations of color that define their costumes and the backgrounds further enhance the mood by creating an atmosphere of otherworldliness and the illusion of ghostly insubstantiality—so important to the overall impact of the images. Here, Yoshitoshi has presented us with visions of ethereal beauty, and the muted coloration, touched off with translucent effects, conveys well the sense of a ghostly presence shrouded in mystery. His handling of the subjects evokes sympathy from the viewer rather than dread, and, especially for the story of Okiku, this is not surprising. The little maid was falsely accused of breaking (or misplacing) one plate from an extremely valuable set of nine that her lord, with cruel intentions, placed in her safekeeping. As the story goes (and there are several popular versions), when she counted the plates and discovered that one was missing she committed suicide out of
shame and remorse by jumping down the well that is shown just behind her. In another version, she was thrown into the well by her husband (and lord) so that his insanely jealous lover could become first wife. In his treatment of Okiku, Yoshitoshi depicts her as young and frail, almost childlike in her quiet innocence, which makes her seem all the more pathetic and vulnerable.

The fundamentals of classical Japanese aesthetics underlie the forms and expressions in "The Spirit of The Komachi Cherry Tree" and "The Ghost of Okiku at Sarayashiki." This reference to the ancient tradition also is clearly exhibited in his portrayal of the Heian period prince Ariwara Narihira (825-80), whose poetry and amorous exploits form the basis of the *Ise Monogatari* (fig. 50). This is one of two prints in the series that bears a poem as its title---this one is by Narihira himself. The title reads:

The autumn wind blows,

There is nothing more to say,

Grass grows through the eye-sockets

of Ono's skull." --- Narihira.

Narihira and his presumed love affair with Ono no Komachi (c. 830-90/900), the only female member of the celebrated Rokkasen (Six Famous Poets) of the ninth century, was a popular subject for painting, woodblock prints, and Noh.
The poem-title creates the unsettling mood that speaks to us of loneliness and longing for a lost love. The rustic setting—a run-down thatched hut and long neglected garden—alludes to these feelings like a poem. Moreover, the setting finalizes the image and the meaning conveyed in the poem-title by enriching the scene with that element of sabi the Japanese find so aesthetically pleasing.

The entire story and its context are conveyed through this scene with utmost economy and directness. Here again, much of the story is left to the viewer's imagination, which is guided by masterfully handled suggestions designed to impact us visually, intellectually, and, most of all, emotionally. The more one studies this print, the more disquieting the total effect becomes. We cannot see the apparition Narihira's gaze is fixed upon; her presence is outside in the overgrown, abandoned garden. Knowing the mind's eye has a remarkable capacity for visualization, Yoshitoshi invites us to conjure up the image of the spectre for ourselves. The feelings of passionate and bitter longing are also suggested to the viewer through the impact of Narihira's poem, which sets the mood for Yoshitoshi's dramatic presentation. Once again, the breathless stillness of the scene intensifies the impact of the poem. Movement is left to the dancing flames of the torch in the left foreground and the wind-blown grass just outside the hut. Their movement suggests specific sounds that shatter the
stillness with an eerie yet lyrical melody. Where haiku uses words to suggest sounds, Yoshitoshi uses images. Since Ariwara Narihira is a classical character, Yoshitoshi treated him and the setting in a classical manner, maintaining a style appropriate to the figure's time and personality.

In contrast to this neo-classical approach, in one last print from New Forms for Thirty-Six Ghosts, Yoshitoshi used his modern-traditional style to depict the subject. "Shōki Capturing a Demon in a Dream" (Shōki muchu ni oni o toraeru no zu), issued April 12, 1890, (fig. 51), depicts the popular Chinese legend of Zhong Kui (Shōki in Japanese) of the Tang dynasty, who committed suicide after failing to pass his imperial examinations. When the emperor heard of this tragedy, he granted Shōki an honorable Buddhist burial; in deep gratitude, the Shōki's spirit vowed to the emperor that he would expunge every demon from the realm. When Emperor Minghuang was gravely ill and feverish, the demon queller's spirit appeared before him and destroyed the evil causing his illness. When the emperor awoke completely cured, he commissioned the master artist Wu Daozi to paint a picture of this strange demon fighter. The picture was then copied and distributed throughout the empire to act as a talisman.61

The story of Shōki had a long history in popular Japanese art and literature, and we can be certain that
Yoshitoshi's choice to depict this subject was inspired by
the public's renewed interest in and respect for the
folktales and legends of old Japan. However, in contrast to
the classical mood and poetic imagery in his depiction of
Ariwara Narihira, "Shōki Capturing a Demon in a Dream," is
one of the best examples of Yoshitoshi's ingenious
dialectical approach to representation in which a wide range
of ideas drawn from the past and present are adapted and
assimilated into one compatible system. Once again, his
design mirrors Okakura Kakuzō's principles of *Nihonga.*
First of all, it is traditional in subject, material, and
techniques, and second, it speaks of a new age in Japanese
art whereby familiar images and their associated lore are
revitalized with modern artistic conventions. These
conventions are easy to identify when we compare
Yoshitoshi's interpretation of Shōki to one created by
Hokusai for his series of 1836, *Ehon sakigaki* (Fig. 52). It
is in their differences that we can distinguish the modern
elements of *Nihonga*-style art.

To begin with, Hokusai's composition is arranged on
just two planes, and even though his treatment of Shōki
suggests three-dimensionality through contour lines, the
lack of background detail diminishes the overall effect.
Yoshitoshi, on the other hand, used Western devices to
infuse his image with a sense of real presence. One of
these devices is his handling of spatial relationships. For
instance, Shôki commands the foreground space and is caught in suspended movement as he swings around to step closer to the edge of the picture plane. He is spotlighted as if on some carefully lit stage, the limits of which are defined by a subtle gradation of gray to pitch black tones. To further emphasize this stage-like effect, Yoshitoshi placed Shôki, the canopied bed, the candle stick, and the impish demon on separate planes, which conveys the illusion of depth.

Second, the effects of light and shadow, an element of Yoshitoshi's figure-on-stage approach, do not appear in Hokusai's design. The background was left plain, so color adds visual interest to the characters but does not provide emotional content or create a sense of atmosphere around his figures. In contrast, Yoshitoshi used subtle gradations of gray to obscure the background which enlivens the scene with a touch of dreamlike mystery so appropriate to the world of fantasy and nightmare—the world in which this story takes place. Yoshitoshi created a mood in his design that is expressed by the entire composition.

This brings us to the third difference—the function of line in each composition. Hokusai's outlines are, for the most part, even and wire-like and serve only to define the figures and areas of decorative detail; however, Yoshitoshi used a zigzagging, calligraphic line to represent the folds of Shôki's robe, which not only defines the form but conveys the idea of emotional agitation or inner conflict and
determination. The "flying drapery" convention animating the figure's hem, sleeves, and sash, and the use of dynamic calligraphic line to convey emotional qualities are age-old devices seen in twelfth and thirteenth-century narrative handscrolls such as Ban Dainagon ekotoba, Shigisan engi, and Chôju giga. Yoshitoshi adapted these same classical painting techniques to the woodblock print medium, and fused them with carefully selected Western devices. While both designs contain elements of humor, Yoshitoshi has allowed more of the story to unfold in the viewer's mind. In Hokusai's design, Shôki has already located and snagged his prey; it is just a matter of time before he swings his sword and beheads the hapless demon. Yoshitoshi portrayed him as if he had just stepped into the room, and although Shôki has not yet caught sight of the demon, he senses its presence. The result was a truly modern and unique interpretation of this old subject.

Yoshitoshi's interest in depicting this subject was all part of the revival of traditional art. He was not alone in trying to achieve this perfect union between Eastern and Western systems of representations, but he was one of the few to develop a truly masterful solution. Many of Yoshitoshi's contemporaries tried to achieve these results; while some artists sank to mediocrity, others were quite successful.\(^{52}\) A work that demonstrates another artist's interpretation of the Nihonga ideal and the impact of the
spirit of nationalism is the oil painting, *Kannon Riding on a Dragon* (fig. 53), by Harada Naisjirō (1863-1899). The painting was completed in 1889 and exhibited at the Third National Industrial Fair in 1890.53

Harada was primarily a Western-style oil painter, but his modern interpretation of this traditional religious subject resembles ideas found in Yoshitoshi's depiction of Shōki. First, in keeping with the renewed interest in Japan's national heritage, both artists chose to depict a familiar traditional subject. Second, they combine Eastern and Western ideas to create new images of these old subjects. Where Harada updated the image of Kannon by superimposing Western painterly techniques onto a standard image of the bodhisattva, Yoshitoshi modernized the image of Shōki by grounding the figure in three-dimensional space using the techniques of Western linear perspective.

Harada's energetic brushwork is especially notable for translucent wisps of cool, subdued colors similar to watercolor washes that create the effects of misty air and lightness. The background details are merely suggested yet the foreshortened body of the dragon and shading on the figures conveys the sense of three-dimensionality. What sets this work apart from Yoshitoshi's is Harada's traditional arrangement of the figure. Knowing what we do of Yoshitoshi's style of dramatic presentation, we could assume that if he were to depict Kannon, the dragon would be
shown coming directly toward the viewer. Yoshitoshi would be more inclined to impact the viewer immediately with the bodhisattva's presence. Creating the sense of personal contact with an image is the hallmark of Yoshitoshi's modern-traditional style; however, this sense of accessibility is not apparent in Harada's treatment of the image. Harada chose, instead, a traditional iconographic image, one of the thirty-three forms of Avalokitesvara the bodhisattva of compassion, to form his primary reference to traditional Japanese art and aesthetics. Both works are good examples of the flexibility and richness of the new Japanese art and exemplify the ideals of Nihonga as well as any works of this period.
CONCLUSION

In order to establish the relationship between Yoshitoshi's modern-traditional print style and the 1880s Nihonga Movement in Japanese art, we had to take several initial steps that examined the major developments seen in the works from his early and middle periods. This rather indirect approach was necessary since there is so little actual documented evidence of his involvement in the movement beyond his participation in the 1882 national exhibition in Tokyo. Apart from this event, the only other proof that we have of his continued involvement rests solely on the stylistic and thematic developments seen in his later works, which reflect specific trends in the print market and in public tastes and interests. Of all the factors considered, the artist-patron relationship is the most telling. There was never a time when Yoshitoshi could afford to overlook the demands of the market, and this dependent relationship was perhaps the only constant factor in his career, outside of the need for novelty and innovation.

To simplify matters, Yoshitoshi's style can be divided roughly into four major periods of development. The first period dates from approximately 1850 to 1872 and encompasses
his earliest works and works that show a marked similarity to his teacher's style and approach. During his early period, we noticed that he concentrated on violent themes, gory details, and traditional techniques, but did not use Western illusionistic devices. Toward the end of this period, Yoshitoshi suffered several devastating setbacks as a result of the new demands on artists brought to the fore by the imperial restoration. These problems provided us with important information regarding his absolute dependence on appealing to the tastes and interests of the print-buyers. Without a doubt, patronage was the single most important force behind the nature of Yoshitoshi's decisions to change his style and thematic approach, which leads us to the second period of his artistic development.

Spurred on by his failures of the late 1860s and early 1870s, the years between 1874 and 1877 turned out to be a remarkable period of change and success for Yoshitoshi. In his second stage of development, Yoshitoshi began his pioneering career in newspaper print illustration, and, in response to the public's avid interest in current events, he also introduced the new genre of historical prints, which made the previously unexplored subject of current events proper venue for an Ukiyo-e artist. The works from this period demonstrate a marked shift in his style and thematic approach, for unlike his works from the first period, these show his earliest exploration of Western illusionistic
techniques, such as linear perspective and shading, which makes his figures appear more realistic. The appearance of these devices in his works reflects the audience's growing fascination for Western art and culture, which peaked during the late 1870s. Evidence of these new tastes is found in the triptych *The Battle of Sannō Shrine* (1874) and his documentary spread on the Satsuma Rebellion (1877). Within these works we were able to identify the seeds of his later modern-traditional style prints.

The third period of his development, which dates from 1878 to 1892, corresponds with the rise of Japanese nationalism, the arrival of Ernest Fenollosa in Tokyo, and Fenollosa's subsequent involvement in the arts. While only one of Yoshitoshi's works from this period, *Fujiwara Yasumasa Playing the Flute by Moonlight* (1883), stands as evidence of his direct connection with the *Nihonga* Movement, we were able to identify the same elements of his style and thematic approach in two earlier works from 1878, *A Mirror of Famous Generals of Japan* and *A Collection of Desires.* These two works reflect his earliest attempt to fuse the aesthetic principles of *yūgen,* which forms the basis of all classical Japanese art, with carefully selected Western illusionistic devices. We found that this new approach responded to the public's growing distrust of "things Western" which was expressed by the rise of nationalism in the late 1870s and early 1880s and the revival and eventual
dominance of traditional art and aesthetics under the Nihonga Movement.

The last part of our discussion focused on his fully mature works, which date from 1885 to 1892. While the development of his mature modern-traditional style and his connection to the ideals associated with Nihonga-style art were discussed in the previous period, the nature of his later works demonstrate the strongest support for his continued relationship with the ideals of the Movement. Through these prints, we examined Yoshitoshi's extensive range of techniques for dramatic illustration and found that he used two modes of presentation that were dependent on the subject depicted. For subjects that required intense dramatics and energetic movement within the composition, he used an equal share of Eastern and Western pictorial devices so that his images would appear traditional yet modern and believable. For examples of this, we looked at the two triptychs Two Valiant in Combat atop the Hōryūkaku Pavilion (1885) and The Hag of Adachigahara (1885), as well as the print, "Shōki Capturing a Demon in a Dream" (1890) from New Forms for Thirty-six Ghosts. When we compared the last print to Harada Naojirō's oil painting Kannon Riding a Dragon, dated to 1889, it clearly revealed the all-pervasive influence of the Nihonga ideal in Western-style oil painting during the late nineteenth century.
We also looked at works that demonstrated Yoshitoshi's other mode of presentation. For themes drawn from classical literature and traditional genre, Yoshitoshi dropped the overt references to Western illusionism and capitalized on traditional Japanese pictorial techniques and aesthetic concerns. This approach is quite apparent in his designs for the series One Hundred Aspects of the Moon (begun in 1885) and Thirty-two Aspects of Women (completed in 1888), and is just as visible in his treatment of "The Spirit of the Komachi Cherry Tree" (1889) and "The Ghost of Okiku at Sarayashiki" (1890) from New Forms for Thirty-six Ghosts. Although these last two works depict supernatural subjects, his treatment of the beautiful ghosts is strongly reminiscent of traditional bijinga prints. Of these later works, the one that best demonstrates Yoshitoshi's application of classical Japanese aesthetics is his depiction of Ariwara Narihira (1890) from New Forms for Thirty-six Ghosts. Of all of Yoshitoshi's works, this last series truly stands as the culmination of his masterful style and techniques in dramatic illustration.

While this present study offers another approach to understanding the true nature of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's mature works, much more work needs to be done in the way of documenting this artist's invaluable contributions to
Ukiyo-e and Japanese art in general. It may be possible to use this approach for studies of other successful print artists of the Meiji period, many of whom were trained by Yoshitoshi. Very little effort has been made to document the works of his numerous students and followers, even though we know many of their names. While Yoshitoshi's historical battle prints comprise one of his greatest contributions to Japanese art, so far, we have not given them any serious attention. The same can be said for his pioneering efforts as a newspaper print illustrator; his works may be mentioned in general, but this important aspect of his career receives very little attention.

From what we now know of his career and accomplishments, there can be no doubt that Yoshitoshi's works do not deserve to be placed under a general discussion of the decline or demise of Ukiyo-e, as Richard Lane suggests in Images From the Floating World (1978). It is a fact that Yoshitoshi's works breathed new life and integrity into the world of Ukiyo-e and assured its survival into the twentieth century. Nor is it sufficient to discuss his works under the general heading of Meiji period prints, as Hugo Munsterberg does in The Japanese Print: A Historical Guide (1988). Although his statements regarding Yoshitoshi's works are accurate, he never once uses the word modern to describe the artist's later works. This is a troublesome oversight, since it tells us very little about
the true nature of his mature style and thematic approach. In fact, most of Yoshitoshi's works do not fit neatly into any of our present categories of Ukiyo-e art. It is my contention that the discussion of his later works should be placed in a new category that expands the parameters of late-nineteenth century Ukiyo-e to include modern-traditional style prints. In so doing, we would no longer accept the popular notion that true Ukiyo-e art died out in 1858 with the death of Hiroshige, as many scholars would have us believe; quite the contrary, we would be compelled to look further for Ukiyo-e's survival into the twentieth century through the works of print artists such as Kobayashi Kiyochika (1847-1915), Hashiguchi Goyo (1880-1921), Kawase Hasui (1883-1957), and Itô Shinsui (1898-1972), whose prints from the 1920s and 1930s exhibit many features found earlier in Yoshitoshi's prints from the late 1870s to 1892.
Notes to the Introduction


4. Yoshitoshi's style lived on in the works of his pupils, such as: Toshihide (1863-1925), Toshikata (1866-1908), and Toshitsune (fl. 1888-1907). See Lane, "Illustrated Dictionary of Ukiyo-e," *Images from the Floating World*, for further information on these and other artists influenced by Yoshitoshi.

Notes to Part One: The Wellspring of Artistry, 1850-1877


2. Yoshitoshi's skill in color harmony is demonstrated in his paintings, but where his prints are concerned, it is likely that he specified, only in general terms, which colors he wanted to be used and in which areas. The colorist probably was responsible for choosing the exact shades and submitted the print for Yoshitoshi's approval. This information is based on a discussion with John C. Huntington, Professor of Asian Studies, the
Department of History of Art, The Ohio State University.


4. The series *Rimei nijūhasshuku* (Twenty-eight Infamous Murders with Accompanying Verses) was produced in collaboration with Yoshiiku (1833-1904) from 1866-67; each artist contributed fourteen prints. Segi, p. 35.

5. In *Images from the Floating World*, Richard Lane provides a concise look at Hokusai's career and a list of his major works; while Matthi Forrer's *Hokusai* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1988), offers an excellent study of the artist's life and career and the impact his style had on the Ukiyo-e tradition of the nineteenth century.

6. The title of Yoshitoshi's print in fig. 13 is "Inuzuka Shino and Inukai Gempachi in Battle," *Ikkai zuihitsu* (A Yoshitoshi Miscellany of Figures from Literature), published 1873.

7. Hokusai designed this print for his series *Hyaku monogatari* (One Hundred Supernatural Tales), published in 1830.


9. Space will not allow a concise discussion of all of these relationships, but he also studied with the well-known painter Kikuchi Yōsai for a time after his studies with Kuniyoshi were completed. Yōsai worked in an eclectic style, much as Kuniyoshi did, but derived many ideas from *yamato-e*. Yoshitoshi also studied with various artists of the Kano and Maruyama Okyo Schools. For more information on these artistic influences see Hugo Munsterberg, *The Japanese Print, An Historical Guide* (New York: Weatherhill, 3rd ed., 1988), p. 139.

11. Segi, p. 28.

12. Yoshiiku was a pupil of Kuniyoshi and Yoshitoshi's staunch competitor in the field of newspaper illustration. He was hired by the *Tokyo mainichi shinbun* (Tokyo Daily News) just before Yoshitoshi went to work for the *Meiri Shindan*. For a discussion of the rivalry between the two artists, refer to indexed entries in Segi, *Yoshitoshi, the Splendid Decadent*. Yoshiiku also is mentioned in Lane's *"Illustrated Dictionary of Ukiyo-e," Images from the Floating World*, p. 348.


22. Segi, pp. 35, 43.


27. Segi, p. 42.


32. Segi, p. 43.


35. Kuwayama, "Yoshitoshi and His Art," p. 11. Kuwayama's translation of the title, Meiyo Shindan reads "Illustricus Newspaper" or Meiyo Shimbun which is an incorrect reading of the Japanese title. There is some discrepancy between the actual date he started working for the newspaper; Kuwayama states he was retained in 1874, while Segi dates this print to 1873. All this indicates is that the print was probably completed, signed, and dated before it was released for publication in 1874.

36. Harada Minoru's book, Meiji Western Painting, presents an excellent introduction on the impact of Western art and culture on Japanese painting and the arts during the 1860s and 1870s.

37. The name of the newspaper that commissioned this series was not identified by my sources, but it is recorded that he was working for the Meiyo Shindan (New Tales of Honor) in 1874; Kuwayama, "Yoshitoshi and His Art," p. 11.


43. For an example of this position see Thomas C. Smith, Native Sources of Japanese Industrialization, 1750-1920 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), especially Chapter 5, pp. 133-147.


48. For example, he worked for the *E-iri Jiyū Shimbun* (Illustrated Liberal Newspaper) in 1882, the *Lamp of Liberty* in 1884, and the last commissions he accepted were between 1886 and 1888 for the *Yamato Shimbun*, which, along with the *Yūbin hōchi* and *Tōkyō asahi* was one of the three leading newspapers in Tokyo, according to Carol Gluck in *Japan's Modern Myths*, p. 68. For the *Yamato Shimbun*, he supplied the illustrations to humorous tales told by the comic *rakugo* performer, Sanyūtei Enchō (1839-1900), see fig 36 for an example, and Segi, pp. 42, 52.


52. Hokusai was one such artist, who is considered to be one of the greatest Ukiyo-e masters, was so overworked in his mature period that he often used stock figures and similar compositional arrangements in his designs.

53. It was common practice for a publisher to hire artists under contract, and after determining what the market called for, he commissioned his sponsored atelier or contracted independent artists to design the kinds of
works he felt would attract the attention of the print-buyers. They would not take on an artist's work unless they were fairly certain it would sell. Lubor Hájek, Japanese Graphic Art (Leicester, 1989), pp. 30-31.

54. The publishing industry grew at an extraordinary rate during the Meiji period to keep pace with the rapid rise in literacy among the Japanese. A major reason for the increase was the establishment of a national system of mandatory elementary education. This facilitated a new demand for illustrated materials such as technical manuals, scientific journals, magazines, textbooks, and government propaganda. Since woodblock prints were relatively cheap to produce, and the distribution network was already in place, it was simple for the government to exploit the media for its purposes. The establishment of a by-product of the Japanese publishing industry, the daily newspaper, is a prime example. They began to appear in the early 1870s when the government used them to bolster support for the imperial restoration. It is important to stress the fact that Yoshitoshi worked for one of the three largest newspapers in Tokyo, the Yamato Shim bun, so he was working under the watchful eye of his editor and the censorship committee, and managed to command a captive audience.

Notes to Part Two

1. For lack of a better word, earlier scholars used the term "feudalistic" to describe the socio-political and economic systems of Japan prior to the imperial restoration. Recently, we have discovered the inadequacy of the term as it misguides our understanding of Japanese society. We have yet to find a more definitive term, so I have chosen to follow M.E. Berry's description of Japanese feudalism in Hideyoshi (Cambridge, MA and London, 1989), p. 147.

2. Kenneth Pyle's The New Generation in Meiji Japan is an in depth study of the problems facing the Japanese in modernizing their institutions and attitudes and the impact these programs had on the attitudes and public spirit of the 1880s' generation.

3. Kōda Rohan (1867-1947) was a novelist, essayist, and


5. Harada, p. 36.

6. For a concise study on the rise of nationalism in Japan and related topics, see Carol Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), especially Chapters I-V.

7. Sullivan, The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art, p. 121.

8. Irokawa Daikichi, "The Impact of Western Culture," The Culture of the Meiji Period (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 16-17. This phenomenon is a continuation of Tokugawa period practices on the popular level.

9. Harada, p. 36.


15. *Nanga*, also called *Bunjinga*, is a style influenced by seventeenth and eighteenth century Chinese literati artists commonly referred to in Japan as the 'Southern School.'


18. These are portraits in the Japanese context, where idealization rather than true likeness is the major concern of the artist. Segi, p. 88.


27. Sullivan, p. 121.


32. For a complete discussion of Yoshitoshi's involvement in the Nō theater, see Segi, pp. 112-113.

33. This was a popular story adapted for the Nō stage in 1822 and was revived in 1862. Kuniyoshi depicted it on a number of occasions, and Yoshitoshi seems to have been fond of this story since he treated the subject before and after 1883. Segi, p. 127.

34. Segi, pp. 127-128.


38. Sullivan, p. 119.


40. Sullivan, p. 120; and Takashina, p. 25.

III. Yoshitoshi's Range of Techniques in Dramatic Illustration, 1885-1892

41. The "new generation" refers to those born shortly before or during the Meiji restoration. The phrase was taken from the title of Kenneth Pyle's book *The New Generation in Meiji Japan*.

42. Kuniyoshi's diptych, published in 1858, is an episode out of the novel *Satomi hakkenden*, by Kyokutei Bakin.


44. Segi, p. 144.

45. Segi, p. 144.


47. For details on each print in this series and a brief discussion of the artist's life and work, see, John Stevenson, *Yoshitoshi's Women* (Boulder: Avery Press, 1986).

48. For a brief summary of the story depicted in this print, see Stevenson, *Yoshitoshi's Thirty-six Ghosts*, pl. VIII.


54. The identification of this icon is based on a discussion with Professor John C. Huntington, Asian Studies, the Department of History of Art, The Ohio State University.

54. Munsterberg, p. 141 (fig. 65), p. 154 (fig. 70), p. 156 (fig. 72), and p. 155 (fig. 71).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Yoshitoshi's Women, the Woodblock Print Series


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