

**On the History of the Japanese Book:
Two Illustrated Woodcut Editions of the *Seiashō*
(*Notes by a Frog From a Well*)
by Poet Tonna (1289–1372)**

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Abstract

Secular book printing began to spread in Japan since the beginning of the 17th century. From the middle of the 17th century, woodcut was completely dominant. The repertoire of publications was wide, including old texts written long before the Tokugawa period. Since commercial printing assumed that the book would be bought, only relevant old texts were published. The printed edition significantly expanded the circle of book readers. The *Seiashō* (*Notes by a Frog from a Well*) by Tonna (1289–1372) belongs to the *karon* genre (treatises on poetry) and is a guide for aspiring poets writing *waka* (Japanese songs). The text was published for the first time in 1648 and the first illustrated edition appeared in 1686, reprinted in 1709. The illustrator is believed to be Hishikawa Moronobu (1618–1694), although the book does not contain the artist's name. The second illustrated edition dates back to 1752. This edition uses illustrations by Tachibana Morikuni (1679–1748). In both editions, illustrations are made on separate sheets, occupying a whole page. The illustrations are monochrome and include a drawing (a landscape illustrating the text of the poem) and an inscription of the poem at the top. An analysis and comparison of these two editions makes it possible to see some trends related to both printing itself and a number of more general cultural issues. The understanding of authorship receives a “visible” embodiment: in the first edition, neither the author of the text, nor the artist are identified, while the colophon of the second edition contains the

names of both. During the time that has elapsed between the release of these two editions, the role of illustrations has grown significantly. The edition from the end of the 17th century contains 24 illustrations, and the book was made in such a way that it can exist in a version without illustrations; there, illustrations play a supporting role. The edition of the mid-18th century contains 80 illustrations, and they can be distributed in the text of the book or concentrated in one place, making this edition close to the *ehon* books.

Keywords: Japan, Tokugawa era, book printing, illustration, *waka*, *karon*, Tonna, *Seiashō*, Hisikawa Moronobu, Tachibana Morikuni.

The history of the Japanese secular woodblock book begins in the 17th century. In the first decades, most books were printed from movable type, but, by the middle of the century, printing had become almost entirely made with woodblocks. Among the reasons for the “victory” of woodblock printing were its cheapness, the ability to make additional printings over a very long period of time, and the ease of including illustrations in a book. The first published books were very similar to manuscripts, only with time there appeared special elements of printed books, not typical for manuscripts, such as the title page or the advertising appendix. Although the technology of woodblock printing did not change much during the Tokugawa period, the presence or absence of the name of the text’s author and artist, information on the title page and the colophon, and announcements of expected or already released books can often provide interesting historical information. Today, many Tokugawa period editions can be consulted on the Internet, which has greatly expanded the possibilities for research in book history.

The repertory of books published in the 17th and 18th centuries was very broad, including many old works that had existed in manuscripts until then. This publication analyzes and compares two illustrated editions of poet Tonna’s (1289–1372) *Seiashō* (*Records of a Frog from a Well*; the title can also be understood as *Notes of an Incompetent Man*).

The main aim of the publication is to consider the specific features of these editions in a broad cultural context, primarily in the context of the history of the Japanese book.

The poet Tonna and his work *Seiashō*

The text of *Seiashō* belongs to the genre of *karon* (歌論, “poetological treatises,” or *kagaku* 歌学, “study of poetry”). “Poetry” here means *waka* 和歌, “Japanese songs”. *Karon* texts do not have any single, definite structure; they may contain theoretical statements concerning the origins of poetry, give practical advice on composition, include numerous examples of poems, talk about poetic techniques, etc. There is a great variety of *kagaku* texts. Aristocrats, monks, samurai, almost every famous poet have texts related to *karon*. The *Nihon Kagaku Taikei* (*The Great Collection of Japanese Poetic Treatises*), edited by Sasaki Nobutsuna (1872–1963) and published between 1956 and 1963, consists of 10 full-length volumes. Scholars consider the key texts to be works by such *waka* poets as Ki no Tsurayuki (871?–946?); Mibu no Tadamine (life years unknown); Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041); Fujiwara no Toshiyori (1055–1129); three great representatives of the Mikohidari school of poetry: Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204), Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), Fujiwara no Tameie (1198–1275); Kamo no Chōmei (1154–1216), Abutsu-ni (1221? –1283), Shōtetsu (1381–1459). The name of Tonna also stands in this line. Tonna was an extremely influential figure in the poetic circles of his time. He was a disciple of Nijō Tameyo (1250–1338) and thus a representative of the Nijō school of poetry, the eldest branch of the three into which the Mikohidari school of poetry was divided. Tonna (born Nikaidō Sadamune), descended from a prominent samurai family, he became a monk while young, but never held a position in the Buddhist hierarchy. Tonna is the protagonist of a number of episodes in another work of the *karon* genre, *Shōtetsu Monogatari* (*Conversations with Shōtetsu*). Shōtetsu was a representative of a different school of poetry, so his judgment of Tonna is ambiguous, but his poetic talent is certainly recognized by Shōtetsu.

Tonna was not able to become a candidate to compile an imperial anthology due to his ancestry, but fate had it that Tonna was not the sole compiler, but the person who completed the anthology. This is the *Shinshūishū* (*New Selections*), the nineteenth imperial anthology, of which Nijō Tameakira (Tameaki, 1295–1364) was appointed compiler in 1363. Tameakira passed away without completing the compilation, and it was Tonna who completed the work. According to Konishi Jin'ichi, it was Tonna who was the main compiler: “Since he had a too low court rank, Tonna worked as an ‘assistant,’ but in fact he was the main compiler of the anthology” [Konishi 1986–1991, Vol. 3, p. 389]. The *Shōtetsu Monogatari* says the following about this: “As for Tonna, at that time, Tameakira was compiling *Shinshūishū*, but Tameakira died during the compilation without finishing the work, then, whether from the section “Miscellaneous” or “Love,” Tonna continued the compilation, so he must have records” [Besedy s Shotetsu 2015, p. 248].

Tonna enjoyed the patronage of the Ashikaga shoguns and the regent-*kampaku* Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–1388), a poetic authority of his time. In 1363, together with Nijō Yoshimoto, he wrote *Gumon Kenchū* (*Clever Answers to Stupid Questions*), a work on *waka* poetry. The essay is written in the *mondō* (question and answer) form, consisting of Yoshimoto's questions and Tonna's answers. Tonna was also interested in *renga* poetry and is among the authors of the *Tsukubashū* (*Tsukuba Mountain Collection*). Tonna is credited with two poetry collections, *Sōanshū* (*The Grass Hut Collection*) and its sequel, *Shokusōanshū*. Tonna is known in the history of poetry as one of the Four Heavenly Kings of Poetry of his time. A school of poetry tracing its lineage back to Tonna existed also during the Tokugawa period.

Seiashō, like many other texts in this genre, is a kind of textbook for people engaged in poetry, mainly, of course, for those just entering the field. Stephen Carter, in his preface to *Just Living: Poems and Prose of the Japanese Monk Tonna*, calls this text a “comprehensive pedagogical work” “in which he copied for his students important passages from earlier works by masters of the past on variety of topics, adding a few comments of his own and a section of chatty anecdotes,

bits of lore, and advice (*zōdan*) from his own experience over the years” [Carter 2002, p. 8].

Seiashō dates from about 1360–1364. The text consists of six parts (*maki*), in which Tonna cites early texts on poetry, gives a large number of example poems, and tells stories of the poetic milieu.

The first part is entitled *The Visage of Verse* (*fūtei-no koto*), it opens with a quote from Fujiwara-no Kintō’s *Shinsen Zuinō*: “A song’s soul (*kokoro*) should be profound, and its form (*sugata*) pure and clear”. This part cites the most important texts on poetry, including *Toshiyori Zuinō* (*Toshiyori’s Poetic Guide*), *Korai Fūteishō* (*On the Old and New Poetic Style*) by Fujiwara no Shunzei, a number of works by Fujiwara no Teika, *Yakumo Mishō* (*Secret Records of the Emperor*) by Juntoku-in (1197–1242, on the throne in 1210–1221). The second part deals with the technique of *honkadōri* (following the original song). The third part discusses poetic vocabulary. The fourth and fifth (the shortest part, the text of which has variant readings) parts are about famous places, *meisho*. The text of these parts is accompanied by a large amount of poetic material taken from anthologies and recordings of poetry tournaments. Of particular interest to modern researchers is the sixth part of the work, where the author has placed literary legends and anecdotes. This part is partially translated into English by Stephen Carter [Carter 2002, p. 181–222].

Compared to other *karon* texts, many of which were first published only at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries,¹ the *Seiashō* was published quite early – the first edition dates back to 1648. The book was published in Kyoto by Hayashi Jin’emon (林甚右衛門).² This edition was issued without illustrations. The first illustrated edition appeared 38 years later, in 1686.

¹ In 1708, a 10-volume edition entitled *Waka Kogo Shimpishō* (*Secret Old Language Records of Japanese Songs*) was published in Kyoto by the Izumoji Izuminojō publishing house.

² The edition is published on several sites on the Internet, for example: [Seiashō 1648]. https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko30/bunko30_d0123/index.html

Illustrated Edition of 1686 and the Reprint of 1709

Even before the age of printing, many genres of Japanese literature were represented by illustrated manuscripts: *emaki* scrolls, stitched illustrated books (for example, many works of the *otogi-zōshi* genre existed as *Nara-ehon* manuscript books). *Karon* texts were not accompanied by illustrations in manuscripts, so illustrations are rare in editions of these works as well. Illustrated editions of *Seiashō* are rather an exception to the general rule.

The colophon of the first illustrated edition gives the date of the book and the publisher, the Edo publisher Hon'ya Seibee (本屋清兵衛).³ The names of the author and the artist are not indicated either at the beginning of the book or in the colophon.

The book was republished in 1709, and the colophon lists two publishers, Masuya Kisuke (升屋喜助, Edo) and Murakami Seizaburō (村上清三郎, Osaka). The book is published in five volumes. The volumes of Japanese editions are traditionally not very large, due to the peculiarities of stitching. Each of the first four volumes contains one part (*maki*) of the work. The last volume contains two parts – the fifth and the sixth (Fig. 1). The books are bound using the *fukuro toji* (*sack*) method, i.e., each sheet is folded in half to form a book sheet *chō*, and the pagination in the book is counted on these “double pages” (Fig. 2).

The absence of the name of the author of a text (as well as the name of the artist) in early printed books is a common phenomenon. Printed books inherited the rules by which manuscripts were created, and manuscripts did not include the author's name; authors' names were obligatory only for poetic texts. At the same time, if an older text was printed from an existing manuscript, previous colophons were copied in it.⁴ The first book catalog, which, in a certain sense, breaks

³ See, for example, the book known as “Takatsukasa book,” preserved in the Imperial Library [*Seiashō* 1686]. <https://kotenseki.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/100245078/>

⁴ On the colophons in Japanese manuscripts, see [Goreglyad 1988, p. 260–262].



Fig. 1. *Seiashō*. 1709.
Private collection.



Fig. 2. *Seiashō*. 1709.
Fukuro toji brochure.

the tradition of the absence of authors' names of texts, is the book catalog of 1670.⁵

From the end of the 17th century, the names of the authors of texts begin to appear sporadically in books. This applies to both the names of literary authors and the names of artists. The first artist to be named in some of the books he illustrated was Hishikawa Moronobu (1618–1694), and it is to this artist that the illustrations in *Seiashō*⁶ are attributed.

The name of Hishikawa Moronobu invariably appears in works devoted to the Japanese book. Art historians focus primarily on the line in Moronobu's drawings. Edward Strange, author of *Japanese Illustration: A History of the Arts of Wood-cutting And Colour Printing in Japan*, published in 1897, wrote that "Moronobu's style is distinguished by its simplicity and caligraphic excellence of line." [Strange 1897, p. 7].

E. V. Zavadskaya in her book *Japanese Art of the Book (7th – 19th Centuries)* notes that a new stage in the history of the Japanese book is associated with the name of this artist. "The artistic merit of the book increasingly began to be determined by the skill of the artist-illustrator. This revolution in the history of the art of the book was connected above all with the activities of Hishikawa Moronobu. He transferred

⁵ On the names of authors in early publications, see [Kornicky 1998, p. 225–239; Moretti 2021, ebook].

⁶ See the data in *Nihon Kotenseki Sōgō Mokuroku Dētā Bēsu*, Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books. <https://base1.nijl.ac.jp/~tkoten/>

to woodblock prints the elegance and beauty of lines characteristic of classical Japanese painting. The artist illustrates many books, he is attracted by books about theater, theater programs. He creates a new type of book album (*gaфу*), in which illustrations are given almost without text and gallant scenes “read” as a story” [Zavetskaya 1986, p. 120].

Moronobu participated in the creation of many books (Kobayashi Tadashi names the number 150 [Kobayashi 1992, p. 70]), illustrated both the classics and works of contemporary literature.⁷

Moronobu is also known for his illustrations of poems. Joshua Mostow, author of several books and articles on illustrated books of the Tokugawa period, quotes Moronobu’s record that he transferred “the heart of the poems into pictures – *uta no kokoro wo we ni*” [Mostow 1992, p. 344; Mostow 1996, p. 10].

Poems are illustrated either with a portrait of the poet or with a drawing of the poetic text itself. The division is, of course, arbitrary, since an illustration may include both elements.

The tradition of poetic portraits originates from several 13th-century illustrated scrolls depicting poetic geniuses (*kasen* 歌仙), such as *Satake-bon Sanjū Rokkasen Emaki (An Illustrated Scroll of Thirty-Six Geniuses of Japanese Poetry – Book of Satake)*, *Narikane-bon Sanjūrokkasen (Thirty-six Geniuses – Book of Narikane)*, and *Agedatami Sanjūrokkasen (Thirty-six Geniuses of Japanese Poetry on Tatami)*. Later, a special role in the tradition of depicting poetic geniuses (the images were called *kasen’e* 歌仙絵) was played by the artist Kanō Tan’yū (1602–1674), who repeatedly turned to depicting various series of “poetic geniuses,” and it is the images of poets made by Kanō Tan’yū that are the model for artists of the following generations [Matsushima 2003].

⁷ Illustrations for *Soga Monogatari (The Tale of the Soga Brothers)* go under Moronobu name, they are reproduced in the translation of the work by V.A. Onishchenko, published in 2016 by the Hyperion publishing house [Povest’ o brat'yakh Soga 2016].

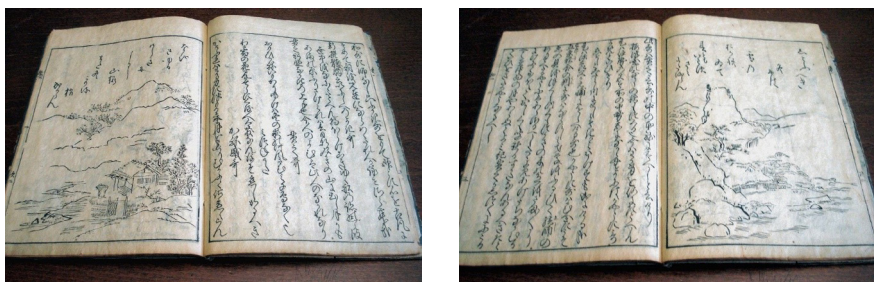


Fig. 3–4. *Seiashō*. 1709. Two first spreads with illustrations in the first volume of the edition.

Japanese poetry was linked to the visual arts through the poetic genre of *byōbu-uta*, especially popular at the time of the first imperial anthology, the *Kokinshū* (*Collection of Old and New Japanese Songs*). Thus, Ki no Tsurayuki (as well as other poets of the time of *Kokinshū*) was especially celebrated for his *byōbu-uta* poems, i.e., poems that were written to be used together with an image (usually a landscape image) as interior decoration. Later, this connection between poetry and image experienced several bright pages (see [Watanabe 2011]).

Among Hishikawa Moronobu's illustrations of poems one can see different approaches to page design, to the use of text in the illustration, and to the interpretation of the poem itself.

The illustrated edition of *Seiashō* is organized as follows. There are a total of 24 illustrations in the edition, which occupy 12 double pages. The illustrations are distributed evenly throughout the first four parts, with 6 illustrations per part. The illustrations are on separate sheets, i.e., there are two spreads with illustrations in a row. First, we see an illustration on the left side of the spread and then on the right side of the next spread (Fig. 3–4).

Illustrations have separate pagination. The pagination of an illustration has three designations: at the top is the volume number, in the middle is the number of the illustrated sheet in the volume, and at the bottom is the place of the illustration in the volume. Sheets with illustrations are designated as “additional,” “following” the corresponding

sheet of the book. By volume they are labeled as follows: first volume 次; second 又, third 續, fourth 又. The adopted pagination (as well as the absence of the artist's name in the colophon) makes it possible to make the book both illustrated and to leave the text without illustrations (examples of such editions can be found on the Internet).

Each volume illustrates the poems quoted in the text; the illustrations, in all cases, are set off not far from the poem in the text.

The table below presents the poems illustrated in the book.

Illustration	Text of the poem in the illustration	Modern transcription of the text of the poem	Meaning of the poem	Author and the source of the poem
1-1-2-l	なをさゆる けしきにし るし 山桜 また冬こもる 梢なるらん	<i>nao sa yuru/ keshiki ni shirushi/ yamazakura/ mata fuyu komoru/ kozue naruran</i>	In nature – signs of the cold. The buds on the twigs of the mountain cherry tree are still shackled as in winter.	Fujiwara no Suetsune (1131–1221). <i>Roppyakuban Utaawase</i> , № 13.
1-1-2-r	しとふへき 冬には雪の おくれみて 春ともいはす さえわたる らん	<i>shitofubeki/ fuyu ni wa yuki no/ okureite/ haru to mo iwazu/ sae wataruran</i>	As if longing for winter the snow won't come down. You can't tell it's spring, it's cold all around.	Fujiwara no Iefusa (1167–1196). <i>Roppyakuban Utaawase</i> , № 14.
1-2-6-l	霜さゆる 庭の木の葉を ふみわけて 月は見るやと とふひとも かな	<i>shimo sayuru/ niwa no ko no ha o/ fumiwakete/ tsuki wa miru ya to/ tou hito mo kana</i>	If only someone would walk by on the fallen leaves of a garden glistening with hoarfrost, and ask: “Are you looking at the moon?”	Saigyō (1118–1190). <i>Mimosusogawa Utaawase</i> , № 43.

1-2-6-r	山川に 獨はなれて 住おしの 心しらるる なみのうへ かな	<i>yamakawa ni/ hitori hanarete/ sumu oshi no/ kokoro shiraruru/ nami no ue kana</i>	Only the waves know the sadness of a living by a mountain river, lonely, far away from everyone duck's heart.	Saigyō. <i>Mimosusogawa Utaawase</i> , № 44.
1-3-10-l	秋あさき 日かけに夏は のこれとも くるるまか きは 萩の上風	<i>aki asaki/ hikake ni natsu wa/ nokore tomo/ kururu magaki wa/ aki no uwakaze</i>	Though it is still summer but under the pale rays of the fall sun the wind is already bending the fall grass outside the fence in the evenings.	Nobusada (Jien, 1155–1225). <i>Ropyyakuban Utaawase</i> , № 312 (<i>Gyokuyō Wakashū</i> , № 455).
1-3-10-r	時雨には 色もかはらぬ 高砂の 尾上の松に 秋風そふく	<i>shigure ni wa/ iro mo kawaranu/ takasago no/ onoe no matsu ni/ akikaze zo fuku</i>	Under the drizzling rain the fall wind is blowing even in the crown of the evergreen pine tree Takasago Onoe.	Fujiwara no Ariie (1166–1216). <i>Sengohyakuban Utaawase</i> , № 1520.
2-1-2-l	おもふとち そこともい はす 行暮ぬ 花の宿かせ 野への鶯	<i>omoudochi/ soko to mo iwazu/ yukikurenu/ hana no yado kase/ nobe no uguisu</i>	The evening had descended while the friends were wandering, one cannot tell where. Give them the shelter among the flowers, oh, reed warbler of the field!	Fujiwara no Ietaka (1158–1237). <i>Shinkokinshū</i> , № 82.

2-1-2-r	たれをけふ まつとはな しに 山影や 花のしづくに 立そぬれたる	<i>dare o kefu / matsu to wa nashi ni/ yamakage ya/ hana no shitsuku ni/ tachi zo nuretaru</i>	Today I wasn't expecting anyone, just stood in the mountains and got drenched with dew of the flowers.	Fujiwara no Yoshitsune (1169–1206). <i>Sengohyakuban</i> <i>Utaawase</i> , № 333.
2-2-6-l	山風の 吹ぬるからに 音羽川 せきいれぬ 花も 瀧の白浪	<i>yamakaze no/ fukinuru kara ni/ otowakawa/ sekiirenu hana mo/ taki no shiranami</i>	As the wind blows, surmounting the dam, Otowa River, turns into flowers of white waterfall waves.	Fujiwara no Masatsune (1170–1221). <i>Sengohyakuban</i> <i>Utaawase</i> , № 334.
2-2-6-r	朝日かけ にほへる山の 桜花 つれなくき えぬ 雪かとそ見る	<i>asahikage/ nioeru yama no/ sakurahana/ tsurenaku kienu/ yuki ka to zo miru</i>	In the light of the morning sun, do the fragrant blossoms of the mountain sakura tree not seem like cold unmelted snow?	Fujiwara no Arrie. <i>Sengohyakuban</i> <i>Utaawase</i> , № 441, (<i>Shinkokinshū</i> , № 98).
2-3-11-l	かはれたた わかるる道の 野への露 あわれにむ かふ ものもおも わし	<i>kaware tada/ wakaruru michi no/ nobe no tsuyu/ aware ni mukau/ mono mo omowaji</i>	If one would change and on the way, parting, not think that the dew in the field is a sign of misfortune.	Fujiwara no Teika. <i>Roppyakuban</i> <i>Utaawase</i> , № 713.
2-3-11-r	岩くらの 小野の秋津に 立雲の はれすも鹿の 妻をこふらむ	<i>iwakura no/ ono no akitsu ni/ tachikumo no/ harezu mo shiki no/ tsuma o kouramu</i>	May the clouds that rose from Iwakura Ono to Akitsu not dissipate, still the deer seeks his wife.	Hamuro Mitsutoshi (1203–1276). <i>Kameyadono</i> <i>Goshu</i> <i>Utaawase</i> , № 22.

3-1-2-l	おもひ出は おなじなか めに かへるまで 心にのこる 春の明ほの	<i>omoide wa/ onaji nagame ni/ kaeru made/ kokoro ni nokoru/ haru-no akebono</i>	Until I return to see it again, in memories, stay in my heart, spring dawn.	Nobusada (Jien). <i>Roppyakuban</i> <i>Utaawase</i> , № 118.
3-1-2-r	帰る鴈 かすみのう ちに 聲はして ものうらめ しき 春のけしきや	<i>kaeru kari/ kasumi no uchi ni/ koe wa shite/ monourameshiki/ haru no keshiki ya</i>	Isn't it bitter? The spring landscape, when the geese cry out in the mist as they fly home.	Nyōbo 女房. <i>Sengohyakuban</i> <i>Utaawase</i> , № 361.
3-2-6-l	うちむれて すみれつむ まに とふひ野の 霞のうちに けふもくら しつ	<i>utimurete/ sumire tsumu ma ni/ tobuhino no/ kasumi no uchi ni/ kefu mo kurashitsu</i>	We gathered together and picked violets. Thus in the mist of the fields of Tobuhi we spent the day...	Fujiwara no Suetsune (1131–1221). <i>Roppyakuban</i> <i>Utaawase</i> , № 63.
3-2-6-r	雲のいる とお山鳥の おそ桜 心なくも のこる花かな	<i>kumo no iru/ too yamadori no/ osozakura/ kokoro nagaku mo/ nokoru hana kana</i>	In the distant cloudy mountains the long, like a pheasant's tail, late sakura blossoms will stay in your heart for a long time.	Munetaka Shinnō (1242–1274). <i>Shokukokin</i> <i>Wakashū</i> , № 185.
3-3-11-l	こきよせて とまとま りの 松風を しる人かほに いそくたくれ	<i>kogiyosete/ tomaru tomari no/ matsukaze o/ shiru hito kao ni/ isogu yufugure</i>	We ferry up. The evening hurries the wind in the harbor blowing the familiar faces of travelers.	Fujiwara no Teika. <i>Shuigūsō</i> , № 2081.

3-3-11-r	世をうしと おもひける にそ 成ぬへき 吉野のおくへ ふかく入なは	<i>yo o ushi to/ omoikeru ni zo/ narinubeki/ yoshino no oku e/ fukaku irinaba</i>	He must be soaked up by the sorrows of the world as he headed deep into the Yoshino Mountains.	Saigyō. <i>Mimosusogawa Utaawase</i> , № 43.
4-1-4-l	立わかれ いなはの山の 峰におふる 松としきは いまかへり こん	<i>tachiwakare/ inaba no yama no/ mine ni ofuru/ matsu to shi kikaba/ ima kaerikon</i>	Broke up. But if I hear from the pine trees born on the Inaba Mountains that they are waiting for me, I will return immediately.	Ariwara no Yukihiro (818–893). <i>Kokin Wakashū</i> , № 365 (<i>Hyakunin Isshu</i> , № 16).
4-1-4-r	音羽川 せき入て落す 瀧つせに 人の心の 見えもする哉	<i>otowakawa/ seki irete otosu/ takitsuse ni/ hito no kokoro no/ mie mo suru kana</i>	The Otowa River collides with an obstacle and collapses in a waterfall. This is also what the human heart looks like.	Ise (years of life unknown). <i>Shūiwakashū</i> , № 445.
4-2-12-l	ふしみ山 松かけよりも 見わたせは あくる田面に 秋風そふく	<i>fushimi yama/ matsukage yori mo/ miwataseba/ akuru tanomo ni/ akikaze zo fuku</i>	When look out from behind the pines of Mount Fushimi, the autumn wind blows there in the dawn field.	Fujiwara no Shunzei. <i>Shinkokin Wakashū</i> , № 291.
4-2-12-r	松かけの 入海かけて しらすけの みなとふき こす 秋の潮風	<i>matsukage no/ irumi kakete/ shirasuke no/ minato fukikosu/ aki no shiokaze</i>	An autumn sea wind walks over the waves of Shirasuke Harbor, where pine groves stretch into the bay.	Kujō Motoie (1203–1280). <i>Shokukokin Wakashū</i> , № 1564.

4-3-17-l	和歌の浦に 塩みちくれは かたをなみ あし辺をさ して 田鶴鳴わたる	<i>waka no ura ni/ shio michi kureba/ kata o nami/ ashibe o sashite/ tazu nakiwataru</i>	In Waka Bay, when the tide swallows up the shoal, the cranes head for the reeds with a cry.	Yamabe no Akahito (years of life unknown). <i>Man'yōshū</i> , № 919.
4-3-17-r	駒とめて なほ水かはん 山ふきの はなに露さふ 井出の玉川	<i>koma tomete/ nao mizu kawan/ yamabuki no/ hana ni tsuyusafu/ ide no tamagawa</i>	I will stop the horse and give it water mixed with the dew of yamabuki flowers from the Tamagawa River in Ide.	Fujiwara no Shunzei. <i>Shinkokin Wakashū</i> , № 159.

* The first digit means the volume number, the second digit means the illustration number, the third digit means the place of the illustration in the volume, 'l' means the left page of the spread, 'r' means the right page of the spread.

** The recording of the poem (hieroglyphics and kana signs) is given as it is given in the illustration in the book.

*** One of the possible sources for the poem is provided.

The illustrations are monochrome woodblock prints (*sumizuri-e*), consisting of a drawing (a landscape by genre) and a recording of a poem. The poem is inscribed at the top of the illustration and is not accompanied by any explanations. The drawing and the illustration are not separated by any special graphic elements, they are placed on the same plane.

The scenes depicted in the drawings follow the scenes described in the poems. The images show the whole “material” world that is present in the text; this is the most accurate translation into graphic language of the poem’s images.



Fig. 5. *Seiashō*. 1709. Illustration 1-2-6-r is a poem by Saigyō.



Fig. 6. *Seiashō*. 1709. Illustration 4-3-17-l is a poem by Yamabe no Akahito.

The people in the illustrations are depicted in Heian era clothing, making the images “historical.”

The method of recording poems is *chirashigaki* (scattered characters). Such a record goes back to *byōbu-uta*. However, the text of the *byōbu-uta* poem was not inscribed in the image but written on a separate sheet. *Sikishigata* 色紙形 (*sikishi* 色紙) sheets are square or close to square, vertically oriented. Writing on such a sheet could be a work of art itself and, despite the set format, was quite diverse. For the heyday of the *waka*, the principles of recording poems were an important issue. For example, advice on how to record poems is contained in what is considered the first work on calligraphy, *Yakakutei Kinshō* (*Records of the Instruction of the Night Crane*) by Fujiwara no Koreyuki (1139–1175). The text shows that the structure of the poem was important to the scribes, and that one should record the poem in accordance with this internal structure. Koreyuki writes:



Fig. 7. *Seiashō*. 1709. Illustration 2-3-11-1 is a poem by Fujiwara no Teika.



Fig. 8. *Seiashō*. 1709. Illustration 3-2-6-1 is a poem by Fujiwara no Suezune.

“The way songs are written. If two lines, one line 5-7-5, another line 7-7. If three lines, one line 5-7, second line 5-7, third line 7” [Jubokudō Sanbushū 1989, p. 7].⁸

However, the recording of a poem, in which the internal structure of the poem is easily grasped, was not compulsory. In the heyday of *waka* poetry, the recording of poems, practiced by participants in poetry tournaments and gatherings, could reflect, for example, membership in a particular school of poetry. There was a practice of recording a poem in four lines, with three signs in the fourth line, which did not reflect the internal structure of the poem [Toropygina 2020, pp. 226–235].

All the poems illustrated in *Seiashō* are recorded using the rhythm of the poem. The recording often emphasizes the division of the poem into two parts (it was the presence of such two parts in Japanese song that

⁸ For the English translation of Koreyuki’s text, see [De Coker & Kerr 1994].

gave rise to new poetic genres: the linked lines of the *renga*, the tercets of *haiku*). The recording does not mix the lines of the poems; each makes up its own calligraphic block. The recording of the poems uses mostly kana characters, but there are no entries without Chinese characters (see Table). Accordingly, the poems are easy to read.

Already at this time, illustrated books can be divided into two main types. The first one can be called “books with illustrations” (*e-iribon*), these are books in which a relatively small number of illustrations accompany the text, playing a subordinate role to the text. Another type is *ehon* books, in which the illustrative material is the main element, and the text accompanies the pictorial series [Kobayashi 1992, p. 70]. The first illustrated edition of *Seiashō* is certainly a “book with illustrations,” where the illustrations help the perception of the text. The book appears to be meticulously designed and masterfully executed.

Illustrated edition of 1752

A little more than half a century passed between the appearance of the first and the second illustrated editions of the monument. However, the new illustrated edition differs significantly from the previous one. The first page shows an important difference: the title of the work and the author’s name – Tonna – appear before the text (Fig. 10).

The colophon of the new edition includes, in addition to the publisher’s name, the names of the text’s author, Tonna Hōshi (designated 撰師⁹), the artist Tachibana Morikuni (畫圖), and the engraver Fujimura Zen’emon (彫工). The latter’s name appears in many books, including a number of books where the artist is Tachibana Morikuni.

⁹ Peter Kornicki in *The Book in Japan. A Cultural History From the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* explains that the character 撰 is the most frequent among the characters denoting the author of a text. Kornicki explains this by a tradition taken from Chinese texts [Kornicki 1998, p. 227].



Fig. 9. *Seiashō*. 1709.
The first page of the edition.



Fig. 10. *Seiashō*. 1752.
Kobe University Library K911-104-T.¹⁰
First page of the edition.

The date “1752” is put in several editions published by different publishers. Iseya Shōsuke 伊勢屋庄助 (Kyoto, in this edition, *Kōto* 皇都), Izumiya Kitarō 泉屋喜太郎 (Osaka, in this edition, *Naniwa* 浪華). There is also a reprint dated the same year (from the Iseya Shōsuke edition). This is the only edition that has a title page 扉 with the title *Kaihō Shimpan / Seiashō* 懷寶新版/井蛙抄 (*Treasure Collection – New Edition / Seiashō*).¹¹

Already at the time of the first illustrated edition, illustrations were an important element of many books; by the time of the second edition, their importance had increased considerably.

¹⁰ An Internet edition with the CC BY license: <https://kotenseki.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/100306373/viewer/>

¹¹ An Internet publication: *Seiashō (Kaihō Shimpan / Seiashō)*. 1752. <https://kotenseki.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/100210941/>

The artist of this edition was Tachibana Morikuni (1679–1748). Morikuni was an artist of the Kanō school, but he is particularly well known in art history as a book illustrator. Morikuni became famous for a number of books that served as guides for amateurs who wished to learn to draw and for young artists.

E.S. Steiner writes about the drawing manuals published by Morikuni as the predecessor books of the famous *Hokusai Manga* (*Hokusai Drawings*) by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) [Steiner 2014, p. 74].

E.V. Zavadskaya notes that it was Morikuni who actively created *ehon* books, in which the text plays a role subordinate to the visual series [Zavadskaya 1986, pp. 148–149].

Researchers agree that Morikuni had a great influence on both his contemporaries and the artists of subsequent generations. Books with illustrations based on Tachibana Morikuni's originals were published after his death. *Seiashō* belongs to such books published after the artist's death, so it is likely that Morikuni did not determine its overall design.

In its structure the new illustrated edition is similar to the first one: the illustrations are made on separate sheets, they are monochrome reproduced woodcuts, but in the new edition the text-illustration ratio is quite different than in the first one. The number of illustrations in this edition is 80 (the first edition had 24). The pagination of text and illustrations is separate, and the binding of an illustration to a particular place in the text is not indicated in the pagination. As the colophon gives the name of the artist, it is not possible to publish the book without illustrations, but they could be concentrated in one place, thus creating a “book of illustrations” within the edition.¹²

The 18 poems illustrated by Moronobu and Morikuni are the same. It was common for illustrations of this time to follow well-known models. Artists used the ideas of their predecessors, however not mechanically, but on the basis of their own objectives. A “classic”

¹² See *Seiashō*, 1752. <https://kotenseki.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/100258736/>



Fig. 11. *Seiashō*. 1709. Artist Hishikawa Moronobu.



Fig. 12. *Seiashō*. 1752. Artist Tachibana Morikuni.

example of such creative borrowing is Hishikawa Moronobu's illustrations for Ihara Saikaku's (1642–1693) book *Kōshoku Ichidai Otoko* (*The Love Affairs of a Single Man*), which were based on Ihara Saikaku's own drawings.¹³ In some cases, Morikuni does follow Moronobu in the composition of his illustrations, but his drawings always differ significantly from those of Moronobu.

Fig. 11-12 are illustrations of a poem by Fujiwara no Masatsuge (Tabl. 2-2-6-l).

The recording of poems in the illustrations in the new edition does not always follow the usual principles of *chirashigaki* recording, which

¹³ Russian translation by I.V. Melnikova, published by Hyperion Publishing House, is illustrated with drawings by Ihara Saikaku [Ihara Saikaku 2020]. For a comparative analysis of drawings by Ihara Saikaku and Hishikawa Moronobu, see, for example, [Mostow 1996, p. 101–103].



Fig. 13. *Seiashō*. 1709. Artist Hishikawa Moronobu.



Fig. 14. *Seiashō*. 1752. Artist Tachibana Morikuni.

presuppose a different indentation of graphic lines from the upper margin of the sheet. The composition of the illustration with the poem by Fujiwara no Yukihiro (Tabl. 4-1-4-1, Figs. 13-14) is taken by Morikuni from Moronobu's illustrations, but the recording of the poem differs considerably: almost all lines of the poem are placed at the same distance from the upper margin of the sheet.

In most of Morikuni's illustrations (as in Moronobu's illustrations), the poem is placed on the same plane as the figure, but, in a number of illustrations, the plane of "clouds" is used to record the poem (Morikuni often uses this element at the bottom of the figure as well).

Fujiwara no Ietaka's poem (Tabl. 2-1-2-1, Fig. 15-16) is illustrated in both books. In the 1752 edition, it is the only poem recorded in *man'yōgana* (characters used as phonetics).

It is rare for a poem to be recorded in five lines (the recording corresponds exactly to the internal structure of the poem). The poem



Fig. 15. *Seiashō*. 1709. Artist Hishikawa Moronobu.



Fig. 16. *Seiashō*. 1752. Artist Tachibana Morikuni.

by Taira no Kanemori (?–991), which was included in the imperial anthology *Shūishū*, is recorded in this way in the illustration (Fig. 17).

かそふれは我身につもるとし月を送りむかふと何いそくらん
kazofureba / waga mi ni tsumoru / toshi tsuki o / okuri mukau to /
nani isoguran

As I count the years and months that pile up on me... What's the hurry to see them off and meet them?

An unusual one, from left to right, is the inscribing of a poem by Fujiwara no Teika (Fig. 18). This poem was placed in the imperial anthology *Shintokusenshū* (*New Imperial Anthology*), and it is the poem that the author placed in his famous anthology *Hyakunin Isshu*, *One Hundred Poems of One Hundred Poets*.



Fig. 17. *Seishō*. 1752. Artist Tachibana Morikuni.

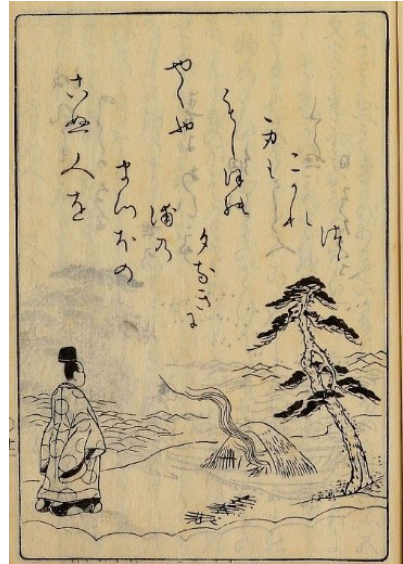


Fig. 18. *Seishō*. 1752. Artist Tachibana Morikuni.

こぬ人をまつほの浦の夕なきにやくやもしほの身もこがれつつ
 konu hito wo / matsuho no ura no / yūnagi ni / yaku ya moshio no /
 mi mo kogaretsutsu

Waiting for the unarrived beloved in the evening silence of Matsuho no ura bay, burning as if salt were being evaporated from seaweed.

In general, the illustrative material of the 1752 edition lacks the unity that is characteristic of the illustrations of the first illustrated edition of *Seishō*. It is difficult to say whether this is due to the use of available material (let me remind that the book was published after the artist's death) or whether it was in accordance with the plan of the creators. Perhaps the noted instances of unusual recording of poems were meant to attract the reader's attention.

Conclusion

A comparison of the two illustrated editions of *Seiashō* shows the direction in which Japanese printing was moving in the late 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries, namely, the increased value of illustrative material. In both editions, the same principle of construction is applied: the illustrations to the poems are made on separate sheets and have separate pagination. However, in the first case, the pagination of illustrations indicates that they can be excluded, the book can be published without illustrations, and the illustrations are subordinate to the text. In the second case, an edition without illustrations cannot exist (the artist's name is indicated in the colophon), and the separate pagination of illustrations makes it possible to concentrate them in one place, turning a book with illustrations into an edition consisting of two elements: a book of illustrations and – separately – the text. The book illustrated by Morikuni does not have the usual *ehon* title element of the time, but it is close to the *ehon* books.

In the time between the publication of the two illustrated editions of *Seiashō*, there was a significant change in the understanding of “authorship,” a certain reassessment of the contribution to the book of the people who create it. This is related, of course, to the broader cultural context; printing is only one area in which the change in attitudes towards the author is noticeable, but it is in the book that these attitudes become “visible.” The late 17th century edition lacks the names of author and artist, and the colophon notes only the publisher (in both the edition and the reprint). The 1752 book places, besides the name of the publisher, the names of the authors of the text and illustrations, as well as the name of the engraver. In addition, the author's name appears before the text.

The *waka* poetry to which the *Seiashō* text is dedicated was a phenomenon of the distant past for readers of the Tokugawa era, but editions and reprints of the *Seiashō* text attest to its relevance and popularity during this period.

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