

Ukiyo-e, “Painting of Nori Making”, Made by KATSUKAWA SHUNSEN

—Pictures as Materials of Technology—

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Abstract “Painting of Nori making” made by Katsukawa Shunsen (around 1817) indicates actual state of initial Nori culture and making Hoshi-Nori in Bunka-Bunsei Period (1804–1830) in Edo Age (1603–1867). It shows the shape and arrangement of wooden Hibi (the support to which Nori adheres), the practice of picking Nori by hand, the cutting fresh Nori with two long swords as origin form of “Hikouki-bouchou” and more or less larger size of a Hoshi-Nori sheet in comparing with modern age. Ukiyo-e is valuable materials to study technology on regional domestic industry in the end of Edo Age. In addition the locality where he depicted “Painting of Nori making” became clear as Samezu beach (Shinagawa, Tokyo). “Nori eating culture” exists over a period of 1,000 years in Japan.

Key words: Ukiyo-e, Nori making, Nori eating culture, Katsukawa Shunsen, Bunka-Bunsei Period, Edo Age, Japan, materials of technology, *Porphyr*a, Tokyo Bay.

“Painting of Nori making” made by Katsukawa Shunsen (around 1817), which is used as a cover picture of this volume (*Natural History Research, Special Issue No. 3*), has many informations about technology of regional industry, Nori culture and Hoshi-Nori making, at the coast of Edo Bay (Tokyo Bay) in Edo Age (1603–1867) of Japan (Fig. 1). Generally speaking, pictures may projects state of public society depending on a time.

What is Ukiyo-e (浮世絵) ?

“Ukiyo-e” or “Ukiyo-e woodcut print” was a new term of art gradually being used during the Tenna Period (1681–1684), around the same time a new genre style of literature called “Ukiyo-zoshi” was established by Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693). What is the meaning of the word “Ukiyo” in these two new terms that started to develop at the same time? As often pointed out “Ukiyo” used to mean the harsh world. According to the pessimistic outlook on life during the Middle Age, people were to endure the temporary stay in this harsh world until they would die and

go to the Pure Land where they might enter Nirvana. But an optimistic approach to life eventually became dominant later on “because it is only short and temporary, why not take it easy and float through life”, and the Kanji for “Ukiyo” was changed to the one that literally meant “floating world”. Also they started to accept the customs and social conditions of their time as they were, and they used the word also as “up-to-date” and “contemporary”. It is obvious that the original style of Ukiyo-e should have been the ones depicting the contemporary customs of that time, rather than the ones that depict the idealistic another world in the past or future. Therefore, all the Ukiyo-e artists were aware of the up-to-date customs and topics, while they tried hard to get away from conservatism and mannerisms, searching for new ways and ethniques to express their art. Under these circumstances Ukiyo-e artists depicted beautiful ladies, scenic beauty of landscape, regional domestic industry with working men and women, and so on.

As a rule “Ukiyo-e” was the popular picture

one of the mass culture that flourished in the area of Edo Age, over a period of about 200 years to the early Meiji Age. The origin of the style is traditional "Yamato-e", the methods are mainly woodcut printing. The subjects are devoted to depicting the world of pleasure, and they attracted the masses of people.

There is an explanation described above about the origin, the development process and the historical back ground on appearance of Ukiyo-e (Tokyo National Museum, 1971; Yoshida, 1977; Yura, 1979.).

What is Nori and "Nori Eating Culture"?

Nori is thin delicate seaweed, laver. It is one of the most important edible seaweeds in Japan and taxonomically belong to *Porphyra* (Bangiaceae, Rhodophyta).

The exact date of the beginning of the Nori culture is not known, but the practice is quite old and probably began in *Porphyra* species grew naturally at the mouth of the River Sumidagawa during the Kyoho Period (1716–1736). In Edo Bay, where the principal culture grounds used to be at Omori and Shinagawa, the grounds are prepared in October to December by fixing bundles of bamboo or oak brushwood, known as "Hibi", into the mud in places where the water is 1-2 m deep. After gathering Nori by hands are washed in barels of fresh water in order to remove sand and mud. Then they are sorted and chopped up finely and spread out to dry on mats of fine bamboo splints. Drying used to be carried out in the open. In this way the seaweeds are made into thin sheets, a uniform size being obtained by means of a standard frame or mat. When they are dry the sheets are striped from the mats and pressed out flat. The sheets are thin and flexible and have a dark, mottled, brownish-purple colour and a glossy surface.

These course of Nori culture and Hoshi-Nori making was reviewed in Ukiyo-es (Figs. 1 and 2).

Then only small quantities of the Nori are eaten whilst raw, because it is normally prepared in a standard way and sold in the markets as Hoshi-Nori. Hoshi-Nori as the final product is employed to savour soups or else is eaten as a vegetable. Hoshi-Nori is first

of all baked or toasted over a fire until the colour changes to green. It can be broken up and added to sauces and soups to which it imparts a flavour. Usually it is just soaked in soy sauces and eaten with rice, and is used as wrapping materials for rice ball, rolled sushi and hand-rolled sushi during the end of Edo Age to the present time. "Nori eating culture" exist over a period of 1,000 years in Japan.

Ukiyo-e as Materials of Technology

Ukiyo-e is a valuable materials as to know the initial Nori culture process of Hoshi-Nori making which was carried out in Edo Bay. It is just historiographical and research materials to study technology on regional domestic industry in the end of Edo Age.

Bunka-Bunsei Period (1804–1830) is the period of the eleventh Shogun Tokugawa Ienari (1773–1841), when commoner art was overripe, and many Ukiyo-e artists were active and depicted the scene of Nori making. As the typical woodcut print, there is "Painting of Nori making" (Fig. 1, Plate VII). In this Ukiyo-e we can see the scene of the Nori culture which had been carried out at the coast of Edo Bay, and we can find out characteristic of a working process, working environment, a variety of instrument and Hoshi-Nori products in comparing with those of modern age as follows; 1) the shape and arrangement of wooden Hibi (the support to which Nori adheres), 2) the practice of picking Nori by hand, 3) the cutting fresh Nori with two long swords, 4) the more or less larger size of a Hoshi-Nori sheet.

"Painting of Nori making" depicted the scene of Nori making in early morning, the composition is equally excellent in workmanship though different style with "Scene of picking Nori in Samezu" (Fig. 2, Plate VIII) which was depicted by the same artist in the same period, and it is considered that in "Painting of Nori making". The morning scene of Samezu beach in present Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo-to, was depicted. These two woodcut prints were published by the publisher, Wakasa-ya, in Edo in Bunka-Bunsei Period by their seals, and are the oldest pictures as those in which the scene of Nori making was expressed. In addition, as the Ukiyo-e by which the scene of Nori culture and Hoshi



Fig. 1 "Painting of Nori making" (海苔作りの図) made by Katsukawa Shunsen, Bunka-Bunsei Period (1804-1830). Right 37.2×25.1, middle 37.0×25, left 37.0×25.3 cm (Owned by Yamagataya Noriten Limited Company)



Fig. 2 "Scene of picking Nori in Samezu" (さめずのりとりどころ) made by Katsukawa Shunsen, Bunka-Bunsei Period (1804–1830). 21.5×35.5 cm (Owned by Matsuo Noriten Limited Company)

Nori making in Edo Age can be known (Folk Museum of Ota City, 1991). They are as follows; 1) "the 53 stages on Tokaido, Shinagawa, made by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), fourth year of Kyowa (1804)" (東海道五十三次品川: 葛飾北斎); 2) "Picture of picking noted product Nori in Post-town Shinagawa made by Utagawa Sadatora (around 1825) in Bunsei Period (around 1818)" (東海道品川宿 名物海苔取之図: 歌川貞虎); 3) "100 sceneries of the noted places in Edo. Minami-shinagawa Samezu Beach, made by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) (First generation), fourth year of Ansei (1857)" (名所江戸百景南品川鮫洲海岸: 歌川広重).

Ukiyo-e Artist, KATSUKAWA SHUNSEN (勝川春扇)

Commonly known as Seijiro, he lived in Koji-machi in Edo. During his early period he was known as Shurin, trained in illustrating picture for "haiku" (poem) under Tsutsumi Torin III, later changing it to Katsukawa Shunsen as he subsequently turned to Ukiyo-e and became a student of Katsukawa Shunei (1762-1819). And he also assumed the names Kashosai and Toryusai. His forte lay in "bijin-ga" (the portraiture of beautiful women). About the third year of Bunsei (1820), he succeeded to the name Shunko the second, and he also formulated an original style in "Fukeyi-ga" (landscapes). Besides, he was the fellow pupil of Katsushika Hokusai who was taught by Tsutsumi Torin III.

Except "Painting of Nori making" and "Scene of Nori picking in Samezu", his typical works in Bunka-Bunsei Period (1804-1830), which was deposited in Tokyo National Museum (1971), are as follows; 1) "Ichikawa of the Matsuba-ya: from Seiro Meikun Roku Tama-gawa" (青楼名君六玉川, 松葉屋市川), 2) "Beauty reading a letter" (美人心いき函含), 3) "Tsukioka of the Hyogo-ya: from Seiro Meikun Roku Tama-gawa" (青楼名君六玉川, 兵庫屋月岡), 4) "April" (卯月), 5) "Beauty amusing a child with a doll" (風流子供遊), 6) "Beauty" (主), 7) "Gay quarters at Yoshiwara: from Eight Sceneries in Edo (I)" (江戸八景之内吉原之図 (I)), 8) "Gay quarters at Yoshiwara: from Eight Sceneries in Edo (II)" (江戸八景之内吉原之図 (II)), 9) "Daughter of a draper" (呉服屋の娘), 10) "Beauties at

toilet: from Eight Aspects of Women at Toilet" (風流化粧八景), 11) "Jurojin (God of longevity) and courtesan" (寿老人に太夫), 12) "Scene from the drama KYO KANOKO MUSUME DOJOJI" (京鹿子娘道成寺), 13) "Pheasants" (山鳥), 14) "Children at play" (子供の遊), 15) "Soga Brothers' Revenge at the skirt of Mt. Fuji: one of a triptych (I)" (富士裾野敵討 (I)), 16) "Soga Brothers' Rvenge at the skirt of Mt. Fuji: one of a triptych (II)" (富士裾野敵討 (II)), 17) "Soga Brothers' Revenge at the skirt of Mt. Fuji: one of a triptych (III)" (富士裾野敵討 (III)), 18) "Women drawing brine" (汐汲), 19) "Firewood vender" (黒木売), 20) "Water vender" (水売), 21) "Firefly-catching" (螢狩), 22) "By the River Sumida" (大川端), 23) "Plum trees" (梅林), 24) "Shell-gathering" (汐干狩) 25) "Cooling off" (納涼), 26) "Boys raking pine needles" (松葉かき), 27) "Boy-sumo-wrestling" (子供の相撲), 28) "Landscape at Futamigaura" (二見浦), 29) "Women drawing brine (published by Sanoya)" (汐汲), 30) "Sunrise at Takanawa" (高輪日の出), 31) "Ama (fisherwomen)" (海女), 32) "Landscape at Enoshima" (江之島), 33) "Cranes and the rising sun" (日の出に鶴), 34) "Court lady viewing blossoms from her vehicle" (停車賞花), 35) "Landscape at Susaki" (州崎), 36) "Ohama Palace" (御浜御殿), 37) "Landscape at Shinagawa" (品川).

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勝川春扇作「海苔作りの図」

—技術史料としての浮世絵—

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絵師、勝川春扇（生没不明、1817 年頃に活躍）が描いた浮世絵版画「海苔作りの図」は、江戸時代（1603–1867）、文化文政期（1804–1830）におこなわれていた、初期の海苔養殖と乾海苔加工の過程を知ることの

できる貴重な技術史料である。近代の海苔の養殖加工技術と比較すると、木ヒビに着いた海苔をべか舟を使って手摘みで収穫し、飛行機包丁の原形と考えられるを長い一本刃の包丁を 2 本使って生海苔を刻み、それを笥の子にひろげて天日で乾燥することにより、やや大きめの黒紙状の乾海苔がつくられていたことがわかる。

また、これまで「海苔作りの図」に描かれた場所が不明であったが、同じ作者が描いた浮世絵版画「さめずのりとりるところ」と同工異曲ものであることから、隅田川の河口域に位置する江戸品川鮫洲海岸（東京都品川区鮫洲）の朝の情景として海苔つくりの様子を描いたことがわかった。

“海苔の食文化”は、1,000 年以上の黎明期を経た後、江戸時代後期に江戸湾（現在の東京湾）に開花したもので、そのきっかけは享保年間（1716–1736）に隅田川の河口域で始められた、木ヒビをつかった海苔養殖であった。

シンポジウム「海苔生物学の現状と課題」で論議されたことの原点を示す光景として「海苔作りの図」を *Natural History Research, Special Issue No. 3* の表紙とした。



Fig. 1. "Painting of Nori making" made by Katsukawa Shunsen at Bunka-Bunsei Period (1804–1830). Right 37.2×25.1, middle 37.0×25, left 37.0×25.3 cm. (Owned by Yamagataya Noriten Limited Company)



Fig. 2. "Scene of picking Nori in Samezu" made by Katsukawa Shunsen at Bunka-Bunsei Period (1804–1830). 21.5×35.5 cm. (Owned by Matsuo Noriten Limited Company)