

Capturing the Body

Ryūkōsai's Notes on "Realism" in
Representing Actors on Stage

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RYŪKŌSAI Jokei 流光齋如圭 is known as the late eighteenth-century Osaka artist who created "realistic" kabuki actor likenesses (*nigao* 似顔; *kaonise* 顔似せ) for the first time outside of Edo.¹ His dates are not known, but according to the dating of his works, he was active between 1776 and 1809. His excellent skills in creating actor portraits were famous among his contemporaries, and he was once described as "capturing their true essence" by one of the most enthusiastic Osaka kabuki fans and connoisseurs of the time.²

Japanese scholarship on Ryūkōsai began from the end of the 1920s with the work of Kuroda Genji 黒田源次 and Haruyama Takematsu 春山武松.³ After a brief burst of research and publication, however, there were decades of silence until the study of Ryūkōsai was taken up again in the late 1960s. Matsudaira Susumu 松平進 was the most prominent scholar in the field, and the leading scholars today include Roger Keyes and Kitagawa Hiroko 北川博子. The special exhibition at the British Museum in 2005, "Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage: 1780-1830," was a recent significant step forward for the study of Osaka kabuki theater and actor prints after the earlier exhibitions in Philadelphia in 1973 by Keyes and in Japan in 1975 by Matsudaira.⁴ *Ryūkōsai zuroku* 流光齋図録 (2009), co-authored and edited by Andrew Gerstle and myself, catalogues all possible Ryūkōsai prints and paintings known at the time of its publication.⁵

Ryūkōsai zuroku lists a total of 46 prints and 15 paintings located in Japan, Europe, and the United States.⁶ The subjects of Ryūkōsai's prints and paintings are mainly kabuki actors from Osaka. He depicts not only the big stars of the time but also relatively minor actors. This attitude

is even more pronounced in his actor picture books. Although he contributed illustrations for various themed books devoted to *kyōka* poetry, essays, comic or historical stories, and actor biographies, the books he both authored and illustrated are all related to the kabuki theater, including *Yakusha monoiwai* 旦生言語備 (1784), *Ehon niwatazumi* 画本行潦 (1790), *Ehon hana ayame* 絵本花菖蒲 (1794), *Yakusha hyakunin isshu yosooi kagami* 役者百人一衆化粧鏡 (1800), *Gekijō gashū* 劇場画史 (1803), *Yakusha yōbunshō jikishibako* 役者用文章直指箱 (1804), and *Kusa no tane* 草の種 (1804).⁷

Ryūkōsai seems to have started his career as an artist by contributing illustrations to books. His earliest known image is in *Kyōka narabi no oka* 狂歌ならびの岡, published in 1776. Although it is not clear when he started depicting actors, Ryūkōsai's fan paintings with actor likenesses were said to be popular around 1782-1783.⁸ He began publishing actor picture books and theater books from 1784, and also had commissions to paint actor likenesses from around the same time. His production of actor prints began in the eleventh month of 1791, according to the earliest extant example, and seems to have ended as early as about 1794. This is certainly too short for any artist who earned his living by making prints. Furthermore, after terminating actor print production, Ryūkōsai seems to have composed only a couple of paintings, four titles of theater/actor books, and several book illustrations. Therefore, we can conjecture that he was not so much a commercial artist as a skillful amateur artist who did not need to make a living from his art.

The question of whether or not Ryūkōsai was a professional artist is more important than it sounds, since Osaka kabuki culture, especially actor-print production in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, was significantly aided by amateur fans. This is in sharp contrast to the commercially systematized and sophisticated production of actor prints in Edo around the same period.⁹ Therefore, in this paper I would like to analyze 1) Ryūkōsai's attitudes toward actor-print production and his relationships with publishers, and 2) his position in the art world of his time.

RYŪKŌSAI'S ACTOR-PRINT PRODUCTION AND PUBLISHERS

The most prominent characteristic of Ryūkōsai's style is, to borrow the words of Matsudaira, that "it can be summarized as the spirit of realism

that refuses beautifying/beautification or idealization.”¹⁰

Actor likenesses in Osaka originated in the form of actor picture books formulated in response to their imported Edo equivalents. For example, the elaborate Edo actor portrait book *Ehon butai ōgi* 絵本舞台扇 (1770) by Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章 (1726-1792) and Ippitsusai Bunchō 一筆斎文調 (active: 1767-1801) was welcomed in the Kyoto/Osaka (Kamigata 上方) region. As a result, the Kyoto publisher Kikuya Yasubei 菊屋安兵衛 bought the woodblocks, and in 1778 published an abridged edition titled *Ehon zoku butai ōgi* 絵本続舞台扇, which altered some of the original actor’s crests and names into those of Osaka actors—in some cases without changing the face.

Ehon mizu ya sora 絵本水や空 (1780) by Nichōsai 耳鳥齋¹¹ and *Sui-futei gigafu* 翠釜亭戯画譜 (1782) by Suifutei 翠釜亭, who is known only for this book, are the first original compilations of Osaka-actor portrait prints published in Osaka. The former depicts actors with economical brush strokes in a lovingly caricaturist and exaggerated manner. The latter has a brief criticism of both *Ehon butai ōgi* and *Ehon mizu ya sora* in its preface,¹² and represents actors with stiff postures whose faces are either not very expressive or depicted in a variation of muted caricature. Each actor’s upper body is set at a corner of the rectangular frame of the page, allowing ample space for representing the actor’s name in an elegant style resembling Chinese verse. These two titles were followed by Ryūkōsai’s *Yakusha monoiwai* of 1784, in which each actor is drawn in a relatively realistic manner, presenting a unique likeness with a distinctive facial expression. In addition, Ryūkōsai depicts his actors in a variety of poses so that their entire bodies appear lively. Ryūkōsai’s “spirit of realism” can thus already be observed in this, his first book.

Nonetheless, Ryūkōsai did also learn methods from the more stylized Edo actor prints. It is evident that he took models from Shunshō and Bunchō’s narrow-format (*hosoban* 細判) productions in terms of composition. In regard to likeness, he seems to have further pushed Shunshō’s likeness style, which clearly represented noticeable facial features within the framework of a well-crafted overall design. Ryūkōsai seems to have consistently tried to capture the almost tactile “real-ness” of the actors: facial wrinkles, bags under the eyes, bulging cheek bones, fleshy chins, and the weight of the body. He also chose to represent *onnagata* 女形 female-role specialists as male actors, unlike his Edo counterparts.¹³



Fig. 1. Ryūkōsai, “Yoshizawa Iroha I as Ariwara no Narihira,” twelfth month, 1791. The British Museum. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Although he was the most enthusiastic Kamigata actor-portrait artist of the period, Ryūkōsai’s production of actor prints did not last for very long. It started in 1791 and peaked in 1793. Even though there are works dated after 1794 that are attributed Ryūkōsai, it is most likely that many of them were drawn by the follower(s) of his style. Compared to Ryūkōsai’s best works, they fail to represent the grandeur of actors on stage.

Ryūkōsai’s first actor prints, issued by a publisher known only by the seal of “ki” 鬼, are dated from the eleventh month of 1791 to the fourth month of 1792 (Fig. 1). Matsudaira has suggested that the publisher might have been Sōshiya Kikichi 草紙屋鬼吉.¹⁴ The characteristics of Ryūkōsai’s prints during this period are 1) that their depictions of the face are not yet so stylized, and contain consecutive short lines to represent each actor’s fea-

tures; 2) that they are made in a time-consuming and costly way, using many color woodblocks and employing an elaborate printing technique such as *kara-zuri* 空摺 and a process of filling up the background with light grey color; and 3) that all are *hosoban* with only one exception in the *ōban* 大判 “large print” format. These characteristics not only demonstrate the early experimental stage of Ryūkōsai’s art in a new medium, but also show that the prints produced may have been meant to circulate in a small quantity among a limited number of people, who could have included Ryūkōsai’s patrons and the actors portrayed.

The next stage of Ryūkōsai’s career can be dated to around the ninth month of 1792 to the first half of 1793. Ryūkōsai’s main publishers in



Fig. 2. Ryūkōsai, “Yamashita Kinsaku II as Kohagi, the fortune-teller,” first month, 1793. The Art Institute of Chicago.



Fig. 3. Ryūkōsai, “Yamamura Giemon II as Sakae Hida no Kami,” first month, 1793. Chiba City Museum of Art.

this period were Ōsakaya Sashichi 大坂屋左七 (Fig. 2) and Shioya Rinbei 塩屋林兵衛 (Fig. 3), for whom Ryūkōsai is known to have produced five and seven designs, respectively. Also, Ryūkōsai created at least a couple of designs for Shioya Chōbei 塩屋長兵衛, who became the dominant figure in the Osaka actor-likeness industry from the latter half of 1793. This is the period when, apparently, Ryūkōsai was most committed to producing actor prints. In the first month of 1793, he created five designs from the play *Keisei yanagi sakura* けいせい楊柳桜, which was then being performed at the Naka Theater, and five designs from *Shōbukawa yakko dōjōji* 勝武革奴道成礎 at the Kado Theater. The production of these prints was shared by the three aforementioned publishers.



Fig. 4a. Ryūkōsai, “Izumikawa Tatezō as Fujiya Izaemon,” eleventh month, 1793. Private collection.



Fig. 4b. Ryūkōsai, “Izumikawa Tatezō as Fujiya Izaemon,” ca. 1793. Private collection.

The latter half of 1793 appears to have been a turning point for Ryūkōsai’s production of actor prints, when he was affected by business concerns outside of his control. The publishing industry in Osaka was stirred up by Shioya Chōbei, who tried to monopolize the actor print genre. In the eighth month of 1793, Shioya Chōbei was granted by a judge (*gyōji* 行司) the exclusive right to publish actor likenesses in both printed book and single-sheet formats.¹⁵ According to Matsudaira’s and Kitagawa’s studies, in the eleventh month of that same year, Chōbei repelled the pleadings of Ōsakaya Sashichi and Shioya Rinbei, who had published several of Ryūkōsai’s prints, for their right to publish actor

prints. Moreover, in early 1794, Shioya Chōbei, shielding himself behind the earlier judgment in his favor, bought the woodblocks to Ryūkōsai's third actor picture book, *Ehon hana ayame*, which had been planned to be issued by a publisher outside of the publisher's guild (*hon'ya-nakama* 本屋仲間), but which Shioya Chōbei then published instead.¹⁶ This sequence of incidents tells us that the popularization and commercialization of Osaka actor prints directly involved Ryūkōsai's works. It is therefore natural to assume that the value of Ryūkōsai's name as an artist of actor likenesses should have increased at this time.

Ryūkōsai's reactions to the changes in the industry were different than we might expect. As far as I have seen, Ryūkōsai never put his signature on the prints that he published through Shioya Chōbei. His unsigned extant works include prints published by others as well, but he had previously placed his name on almost every print. The only exception among those produced by Shioya Chōbei is an image of Nakamura Noshio II 中村野塩 as Okinu おきぬ, dated to the second month of 1793.¹⁷ Two slightly different editions of the design exist: one published by Ōsakaya Sashichi, and the other by Shioya. The Ōsakaya edition must have been published first in co-ordination with the performances of the play. Later, Shioya must have bought the woodblocks, amended the publisher's seal, and added Noshio's penname. In the course of alteration, Ryūkōsai's signature was left untouched.

There is yet another example to suggest that woodblocks changed hands from Ōsakaya Sashichi to Shioya Chōbei: a set of prints of Izumikawa Tatezō 泉川楯蔵 as Fujiya Izaemon 藤屋伊左衛門, dated to the eleventh month of 1793 (Figs. 4a and 4b).¹⁸ The first edition of these images has a publisher's seal in the design of a plover and mountains, which resembles the seal of Ōsakaya found in earlier prints without a trade name. The lack of publisher and artist names may be interpreted as a cautionary measure on the part of the producers to avoid conflict with Shioya. But even without the signature, the images clearly show Ryūkōsai's characteristics in their composition, their complex background, their gentle and delicate color scheme, and their depictions of the actor's face, balanced body, and detailed *kimono*. Conversely, the later Shioya edition not only added the actor's name and penname but also changed the color composition to a stronger one, printing the sliding door (*shōji*) in deep green.



Fig. 5. Ryūkōsai, *Ryūkōsai ikō*, chō 1-a. Tojaku Bunko.



Fig. 6. Ryūkōsai, *Ryūkōsai ikō*, chō 2-b. Tojaku Bunko.



Fig. 7. Ryūkōsai, *Ryūkōsai ikō*, chō 4-a. Tojaku Bunko.



Fig. 8. Ryūkōsai, *Ryūkōsai ikō*, chō 5-a. Tojaku Bunko.

Ryūkōsai's zeal for actor prints seems to have faded after Shioya Chōbei established his monopoly. We can only speculate about the actual relationship between Ryūkōsai and Shioya, but the lack of a signature on Ryūkōsai's Shioya prints suggests his defiance toward Shioya's domination of the printing industry. By the ninth month of 1796, Shioya appointed Shōkōsai Hanbei 松好齋半兵衛 as the chief artist of actor prints for his firm.¹⁹ At first Shōkōsai faithfully followed Ryūkōsai's style, but later he developed his own new designs.

After withdrawing from actor-print production, Ryūkōsai continued creating theater-related books and a few paintings of actors, most likely for private commissions, as well as illustrations for a small number of books in various genres. If my hypothesis about Ryūkōsai's attempt to resist the dominance of Shioya Chōbei is correct, Ryūkōsai should be perceived as an independent-minded artist. At the very least, it is safe to conclude that Ryūkōsai did not need to exploit commercial opportunities to sell his prints. Like Nichōsai and Suifutei, the two other principal artists of Osaka actor likenesses during the early years of Osaka actor prints, he was a literati, culturally committed but not commercially driven.

RYŪKŌSAI IKŌ AND CONTEMPORANEOUS THEORIES ON DRAWING HUMAN FIGURES

Ryūkōsai ikō

Ryūkōsai ikō 流光齋遺稿 (Posthumous Manuscript by Ryūkōsai) is a work that demonstrates Ryūkōsai's professionalism in the art of drawing actor portraits.²⁰ It was first introduced in Haruyama Takematsu's 1931 article on Okada Isajirō's 岡田伊三次郎 collection of books and prints.²¹ The whereabouts of *Ryūkōsai ikō* were unknown during the post-war era, even after the dispersal and sale of the Okada collection in the last decade, and it was not until 2010 that it reappeared. The book is currently in the Tojaku Bunko 杜若文庫 collection in Japan, the owner of which kindly contacted Andrew Gerstle and myself after learning of our work on *Ryūkōsai's* oeuvre. We were delighted by the rediscovery of this long-lost treatise, which we had almost given up on finding, and we were happy that our study of Osaka prints had contributed to its resurrection. I would like to express our gratitude to the current owner for generously sharing it with us.

Ryūkōsai ikō consists of 19 *chō* 丁 (folded double-pages) of cut-and-pasted hand-drawn pictures in ink. We cannot tell who assembled the drawings, some of which are very small, but it could have been Ryūkōsai himself. The book was of course given its title after Ryūkōsai's death; it appears to have been prepared as a draft for a future publication that never materialized.

Ryūkōsai ikō shows how to draw human figures, especially actors on stage. It begins with faces seen from different angles, body proportions based on head size, the contours of various actors' faces, and eyes and eyebrows (Fig. 5). The actors include Ichikawa Danzō IV 市川団藏, Asao Tamejūrō I 浅尾為十郎, Yoshizawa Iroha I 芳沢いろは, Sawamura Kunitarō I 沢村国太郎, etc., who were Ryūkōsai's favorites and the regular cast of his works.

The book is unique in its emphasis on the importance of the basic draft in depicting actor likenesses, and on the necessity of drawing human figures from the naked body. The text pasted underneath the actors' physical contours reads:

On the process of drafting a likeness:

In the case of composing a likeness, it is important to take great care with your draft. The draft directly embodies what you want to draw, allowing your intention to come through in the final work. The shapes of eyebrows are similar in general, but try to shape them according to the role. Faces also should be drawn based on the play/character.²²

The pages from *chō* 2-b to 4-b include rough impressions of actors in particular roles and various scenes (Fig. 6). The group of figures does an excellent job of capturing movement and mutual engagement, and is an eloquent testimony to Ryūkōsai's outstanding artistic skills (Fig. 7).

Chō 5-a has a nude figure in front of a bathtub (Fig. 8). Haruyama considered it to be a sketch of a female nude and commented that this picture looked so modern that he was convinced at first sight that it had been inserted by somebody in a later period.²³ In my opinion, the muscular legs suggest that this is a male nude, probably an *onnagata* female-role actor.²⁴ The inscription above the figure reads:

To represent a figure, first draw the naked body of your subject in order to establish its corporeal continuity. Then clothe the figure according to the subject's dressing/character. In the case of actor likenesses in particular,

special attention needs to be paid to the subject's appearance. I will therefore show [an example] here.²⁵

On the next page, Ryūkōsai shows examples of this idea (Fig. 9). The upper picture on the page is a scene from *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑, in which Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (on the far left) is about to leave his family as he is forced into exile in western Japan. His aunt, his daughter, and a sympathetic official are all shown seeing him off, expressing their feelings of sorrow and desperation. However, what is unusual is that they are all drawn as naked men, wearing only a loincloth. Even the two female-role actors are clearly depicted as male. The disparity between the sorrow of the scene and the way in which the actors appear might induce laughter, but Ryūkōsai's notes, inserted between the figures, sound serious:

First of all, when you want to represent Sugawara [no Michizane], draw him like this and put clothes on him afterwards. He [Michizane] turns around, knowing that this will be his final farewell in this life.²⁶

The following pages present examples of various facial expressions and body language from everyday life, and are probably not drawn specifically from performance. Eight two-page spreads from *chō* 10-b to 18-a represent scenes from plays that have yet to be identified (Fig. 10). The composition of the two-page spread with actors depicted against a detailed background setting shows a striking similarity to some of the pictures included in one of Ryūkōsai's theater books, *Gekijō gashi* (1803).

So when was *Ryūkōsai ikō* composed? When were these manuscripts and sketches written, drawn, and assembled? Haruyama did not present any opinions on the matter. And the date cannot be determined by relying on the dates of actors depicted in the book, since Ryūkōsai sometimes portrayed deceased actors if they were among his favorites. In this sense, then, Ryūkōsai's actor prints and paintings might be better considered representations of his enthusiasm for the Osaka actors of his time, rather than timely documentation of what was happening on kabuki stages. Considering the instructions in *Ryūkōsai ikō* on drawing actor likenesses and bodies, perhaps the work could be dated to a period between the decline of Ryūkōsai's actor print production, when he became aware of the ever increasing popularity of his art, and his publication of *Gekijō gashi*—in other words, the decade from 1793 to 1803.



Fig. 11. Maruyama Ōkyo, “Sketches from Life: Lake Biwa and the Uji River,” detail, 1770. Kyoto National Museum.

Pictorial theories of Ryūkōsai’s times

It is most intriguing how Ryūkōsai came to the idea of creating a manual for drawing actors from naked figures. Haruyama argued that Ryūkōsai was certainly influenced by “Western realism” (*seiyō no shajitsu shugi* 西洋の写実主義), and that among others such as Shiba Kōkan 司馬江漢 (1748-1819) and Maruyama Ōkyo 円山応挙 (1733-1795), he was a “pioneer” (*sentanjin* 尖端人) of that imported style.²⁷ Timothy Clark has argued that Ryūkōsai inherited the attitude of “sketching from life” (*shasei* 写生) based on the ideas of Ōkyo in late eighteenth-century Kyoto.²⁸

Ōkyo drew numerous sketches from life and was keenly interested in books on Western anatomy.²⁹ According to an entry for the year 1768 in *Banshi* 萬誌, a record of events written by the Enman’in 円満院 abbot Yūjō 祐常 (1723-73) and containing accounts of the things that Yūjō heard from Ōkyo, Ōkyo once made a statement similar to Ryūkōsai’s own later instruction:

When drawing a figure, first fix the structure of the body and then put the clothes on it. Once you have become skilled at representing body struc-



Fig. 12. Morishima Chūryō, *Kōmō zatsuwa*, vol. 4, 1787. The British Museum. © Trustees of the British Museum.

tures, you may not need to follow this process. If you are a beginner, first draw a naked body, either male or female, young or old. Then clothe the body. By following this process, you can make whatever figure you would like.³⁰

Ōkyo seems to have put this process for drawing figures into practice, as we can see in his “Sketches from Life: Lake Biwa and the Uji River” (*Biwako Ujigawa shasei zu* 琵琶湖宇治川写生図, 1770) (Fig. 11). The lines depicting the bodies are clearly observable beneath the clothes, the outlines of which are in red ink.

Does this idea of drawing a human figure from a naked body have its origin in a Western pictorial method? In the fourth volume of *Kōmō zatsuwa* 紅毛雜話 (1787)—a collection of writings on various topics in Dutch studies (*rangaku* 蘭学) compiled by Morishima Chūryō 森島中良—a similar instruction is introduced as the “pictorial method of the Dutch” (*kōmō no gahō* 紅毛の画法):

Dutch painting is extremely thorough. Those learning the way of Dutch painting should first master in detail the bodily structures of men and women. After that, they should practise drawing naked bodies, which they can then complete by adding clothes.³¹

It may be worth noting that the *Ryūkōsai ikō* passage shows certain conceptual similarities to that of *Kōmō zatsuwa*. The two explanations are alike not only in terms of the process of drawing a figure, but also in their seemingly scientific methods of both providing examples of faces from different angles and demonstrating body proportions using geometric lines (see Fig. 5). **Although Ryūkōsai's diagrams are far simpler and two-dimensional, he seems to have been influenced in some manner by Western pictorial theories (Fig. 12).** His actual source may not have been *Kōmō zatsuwa*, but it does not really matter. Reliant as it is on models and classifications, the structure of *Ryūkōsai ikō* resembles that of *Kōmō zatsuwa*.

Nevertheless, the method of first drawing a naked body and then clothing it is not exclusive to **Western compositional methods.** Awareness of the body under the clothes in figure paintings is seen in artists of a more traditional Japanese style, such as Nishikawa Sukenobu 西川祐信 (1671-1750) from Kyoto, and Tsukioka Settei 月岡雪鼎 (1726-1786) from Osaka. In his picture book *Ehon tokiwagusa* 絵本常盤草 (1730), **Sukenobu** writes that one should take particular care in depicting human figures:

Even when the drawn/painted figure looks well-proportioned and dressed accordingly, if you are trying primarily to represent the surface of the figure, you tend to lose the structure of the flesh and bones of the body. Keep this in mind. First try to capture the structure of the body so that you do not lose the flesh and bones. Next, draw to add the character and clothes.³²

Moreover, in volume six of his pictorial manual *Kingyoku gafu* 金玉画府 (1771), Tsukioka Settei, who was a successor of Sukenobu and who is claimed to be a mentor of Ryūkōsai,³³ also states the importance of paying attention to the body beneath the clothes:

When you start drawing, be sure to take into account the person's character and profession. It is vital to consider the continuity of body structure from the head to the arms and legs. Employing faint ink, first carefully draw a naked body, and then clothe the body. If you do not follow this process, the continuity and movement of the body will not be conveyed. When the continuity and movement of the body fail to appear, it is difficult to dress it properly. When both the body and the clothing are not properly represented, the image will be naturally deficient, lacking the



Fig. 13. Utagawa Toyokuni, *Yakusha nigao-e hayageiko*, 1817. The British Museum. © Trustees of the British Museum.

spirit of its subject. Each person's body structure should be considered accordingly.³⁴

Thus, this drawing process is not exclusive to Western pictorial theory, and for that reason Ōkyo's statement may not necessarily be influenced by Western ideas. Nevertheless, there is one possible distinction between the two: while the interest of Ōkyo's works and *Kōmō zatsuwa* seems to lie more in the precise visual representation of objects, in the case of Sukenobu and Settei, the process was rather a way of representing the essence of a person. The distinction is not clear-cut, however, as seen by the fact that Ōkyo eagerly studied Chinese physiognomy in order to represent typical characteristics of people of a certain social status.³⁵

Lastly, in relation to the instructions on actor likenesses, I must mention *Yakusha nigao-e hayageiko* 役者似顔画早稽古 (1817) by Utagawa Toyokuni I 歌川豊国, since in its section titled "the method for drawing the body and clothes of a human figure" (*Jinbutsu shitai emon no gahō* 人物支体衣紋之画法) it also contains two model drawings showing the black outlines of an actor's body underneath costumes outlined in red (Fig. 13).³⁶ The instructions on the page sound familiar:

In general, those who are new to drawing human figures should make a draft of a naked body and try to clothe it as shown here.³⁷

One of the purposes of Toyokuni's publication was to show popular audiences his awareness of artistic trends in the Kyoto/Osaka region.³⁸ However, Toyokuni does not mention either the continuity of the body or the representation of the character. His method was simply a mock-professional procedure for depicting actors. His two example figures lack facial features and, probably importantly in comparison to Ryūkōsai, loincloths. The loincloths in Ryūkōsai's actor figures, especially in female-role actors, functioned as symbols of the indisputable reality that they are male. The blank face is replaceable with anybody's face, and the face and body therefore lose their mutual connection. The pictorial theory persistently cultivated by artists in the Kamigata area in the eighteenth century was thus presented by Toyokuni for popular commercial consumption.

CONCLUSION

Ryūkōsai was apparently an independent, non-commercial artist who owned some kind of alternate business. This sort of "amateur," non-commercial artistic activity was fairly common among those who supported Osaka kabuki culture, in particular at the dawn of the actor-likeness movement in the late eighteenth century. Ryūkōsai appears to have escaped the constant and immediate demands from publishers to produce actor prints for every important performance. He could even quit if he wished.

Ryūkōsai's autonomy must have allowed him to search widely among various sources to develop his art. Also, it is most probable that Ryūkōsai was taught directly by professional artists such as Settei and Shitomi Kangetsu 蔀関月 (1747-1797). However, the view that Ryūkōsai was one of the core members of the artistic school formulated around Settei, which the 1854 *surimono Gabō keifu* suggests, cannot be understood to represent Ryūkōsai's own sense of identity during his lifetime. The change in the general perception of Ryūkōsai as an independent artist of kabuki actors (along with Nichōsai) to one of the key figures in the Osaka genre-painting school must have coincided with the rise in his popularity and reputation.³⁹ Also, the notion of "artistic schools" must have made more sense in Osaka at the end of the Edo period. Takeda Tsu-

neo has observed that artists in early modern Osaka “had a tendency to operate relatively independently, following an individual artist’s own proclivities, rather than working within the strictures of a particular style or in presenting themselves as being within a particular school.”⁴⁰ The cultural atmosphere in the Osaka of Ryūkōsai’s time seems to have corresponded exactly to this remark. Passion for Osaka kabuki was the principal catalyst for Ryūkōsai to create, in a style distinct from artists in Edo, realistic portraits of actors through which he aimed to capture their “true essences.”

NOTES

* I would like to express my gratitude to the owner of the Tojaku Bunko collection for permission to reproduce the images from *Ryūkōsai ikō*. I would also like to thank Matsuba Ryōko for helping me to obtain some of the images reproduced here.

1. Actor prints existed in Osaka before Ryūkōsai. Artists’ names, such as Baisetsudō 梅雪堂 in the 1740s and Sekkeisai 雪圭齋 (Okamoto Masafusa 岡本昌房) in the 1770s, and their works, are known. Actors’ faces in these artists’ works retain some distinctiveness but may also be seen as generic. The printing methods employed are ink print with hand coloring (Baisetsudō) and stencil print (*kappazuri* 合羽摺) (Sekkeisai). See Matsudaira Susumu, “Fūzokuga,” in *Kinsei Osaka gadan*, ed. Osaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan (Kyoto: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1983), pp. 214-15, and Matsudaira Susumu, *Zenki Kamigata-e*, vols. 1 and 2 (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan, 1995), p. 10 (vol. 1) and p. 55 (vol. 2).

2. 「其の真に似たり」 (Translation by the author. Translations from Japanese in this article are all by the author except when otherwise indicated.) This phrase appears in Ro’oku’s ろおく postscript to the painted albums of actor portraits entitled *Rien shoga* 梨園書画 (Osaka Museum of History 大阪歴史博物館), commissioned to Ryūkōsai and Nichōsai 耳鳥齋 by Matsumoto Hōji 松本奉時 in 1787-1788.

3. Kuroda Genji, *Kamigata-e ichiran* (Kyoto: Satō Shōtarō Shōten, 1929); Haruyama Takematsu, “Ryūkōsai to Shōkōsai: Naniwa nishiki-e no kenkyū,” *Tōyō bijutsu* 12 (1931): 1-42; and Haruyama Takematsu, “Osaka no Ryūkōsai ni suite,” *Ukiyo-e geijutsu* 1, no. 8 (1932): 56-60.

4. Roger S. Keyes and Keiko Mizushima, *The Theatrical World of Osaka Prints: A Collection of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Japanese Woodblock Prints in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Boston: David R. Godine in association with the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973). Nihon Keizai Shinbun Osaka Honsha Jigyōbu, ed., *Kamigata ukiyo-e nihyaku-nen ten* (Osaka: Nihon Keizai Shinbun Osaka Honsha Jigyōbu, 1975). C. Andrew Gerstle with Timothy Clark and Akiko Yano, *Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage: 1780-1820* (London: The British Museum Press, 2005).

5. Andrew Gerstle and Yano Akiko, eds., *Ryūkōsai zuroku: Kamigata yakusha nigao-e no reime* (Nishinomiya: Mukogawa Joshi Daigaku Kansai Bunka Kenkyū Sentā, 2009).

6. Two more works by Ryūkōsai have since been reported to the authors. I would like to express my gratitude to Asano Shūgō and Kitagawa Hiroko for these discoveries.

7. For the list of Ryūkōsai's works in printed book format, see Yano Akiko, "Ryūkōsai kenkyū no genzai," in *Ryūkōsai zuroku*, pp. 3-23. Two more books to which Ryūkōsai contributed illustrations were recently reported in an oral presentation delivered by Kitagawa Hiroko in December 2010.

8. See *Ōsaka dachin uma* 大坂駄珍馬 (no date), manuscript preserved in the National Diet Library, Tokyo. Accession number 211-225 (和古書).

9. C. Andrew Gerstle, "Kabuki Culture and Collective Creativity," in *Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage*, pp. 10-29.

10. 「一言で要約すれば美化や理想化を拒否した写真精神ということであろう。」 Matsudaira, "Fūzokuga," p. 216.

11. Nichōsai is a penname of Matsuya Heizaburō 松屋平三郎. His main businesses were a sake brewery and an antique dealership. He was said to chant *jōruri* as a hobby and excelled to the level of professionals. See Nakatani Nobuo and Itami Shiritsu Bijutsukan, eds., *Warai no kisai Nichōsai: kinsei Ōsaka no giga* (Itami: Itami Shiritsu Bijutsukan, 2005).

12. "I have often regretted that while [*Ebon*] *Butai ōgi* is sensually beautiful, it does not have enough pure resonance. As for [*Ebon*] *Mizu ya sora*, although it is fine – plain and aloof – it is also too light and frivolous." 「常恨舞台扇者穢豔有余清韻不足水也空者冷然雖善輕薄」 Translation by Andrew Gerstle, in *Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage*, p. 71.

13. For the argument about Ryūkōsai's representations of *onnagata*, see Andrew Gerstle, "Onnagata noshintai wo egaku: nikutai hyōgen to Ryūkōsai," *Ukiyo-e geijutsu* 152 (2006): 80-87.

14. Matsudaira Susumu, *Kamigata ukiyo-e no saihakken* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1999), p. 113.

15. Matsudaira Susumu, "Kamigata yakusha-e no shoki," *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 68, no. 6 (1991): 1-14; Kitagawa Hiroko, "Osaka no yakusha-e hankō to Shioya Chōbei no dōkō," *Toshi bungei no tōzai hikaku: toshi mondai kenkyū; Ōsaka-shi to Hanburukushi wo meguru toshi, shimin, bunka, daigaku hōkokusho* 3 (2005): 37-45.

16. Shioya Chōbei's dominance of the Osaka actor-likeness industry continued until the late 1810s. Matsudaira, "Kamigata yakusha-e no shoki"; Kitagawa, "Osaka no yakusha-e hankō to Shioya Chōbei no dōkō."

17. Neither the role nor the play were previously known, but I have been able to identify them as Okinu in *Keisei mutsu no Tamagawa* けいせい睦玉川 (performed at the Kado Theater) by referring to the *ezukushi* 絵尽 of the play. See Yano Akiko, "Zuhan kaisetsu: zu 20ab," in *Ryūkōsai zuroku*, p. 136.

18. The play is *Keisei Awa no naruto* 「けいせい阿波鳴戸」, performed at the Kado Theater. See Yano, "Zuhan kaisetsu: zu 27ab," in *Ryūkōsai zuroku*, pp. 140-41.

19. Shōkōsai's biography is unclear. He was active as an artist of actor prints and books from around mid-1795 to 1809. See Keyes and Mizushima, *The Theatrical World of Osaka Prints*, pp. 48-53.

20. Timothy Clark translates the title as "Testament Manuscript by Ryūkōsai." See Timothy Clark, "Ready for a Close-up: Actor 'Likenesses' in Edo and Osaka," in *Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage*, p. 47.

21. See footnote 3 above.

22. 「似面下画之事 かほにせは草稿に心を用ゆべし。草案に其心預る事第一なれば、是によりて本写之時其面貌をあらわすなり。都而眉はよく似るものなれども、銘々其役に応じて色々是を作るなり。似面も其ごとく芸によつて引べし。」 The original texts quoted in this paper are transcribed by the author. I have added punctuation and sonant marks, except when references for the transcribed quotations are noted.

23. Haruyama, “Ryūkōsai to Shōkōsai,” p. 18.

24. Although the figure is not shown wearing a purple forehead cover (*murasaki bōshi* 紫帽子) typical of female-role specialists, an offstage *onnagata* actor may be seen sporting a similar hairstyle in *Yakusha natsu no Fuji* 役者夏の富士 (1780), by Katsukawa Shunshō.

25. 「凡人物を画せんとせば、先其ころざす所の人形を裸にしてよく五体のれんぞくを作り、其風俗によつて、よろづのいしやう着べし。別て俳優のかほにせは其容が第一なれば爰にあらはす。」 I would like to thank Ishigami Aki for helping me to transcribe this text.

26. 「先菅原を画かん思は、如斯図して、跡よりいしやう着すべし。見返り給ふ御かほばせ、是ぞ此世の名ごりなアリと云ふ所。」

27. Haruyama, “Ryūkōsai to Shōkōsai,” p. 19.

28. Clark, “Ready for a Close-up,” p. 47.

29. Sasaki Jōhei and Sasaki Masako, *Maruyama Ōkyo kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1996).

30. 「人物ヲ画ニ、先骨法ヲ定、次ニ衣装ヲ付ヘシ。其骨法ヲ得タル時ハ、左ナクテモ良。初心ニハ先裸体ニ老幼男女画之、是ニ衣装ヲ付ヘシ。図給出来ハ、如此スレハ如何様ニモ図出来[る]云々。」 Sasaki Jōhei, “Ōkyo kankei shiryō ‘banshi’ bassui,” *Bijutsushi* III (1981), p. 49.

31. 「紅毛の画たるや至れり盡せり。凡此道を学ぶ者。初に男女の骨節を精うし。夫より赤裸の人物を書き習ひ、其上にて衣服を穿たる所を画くにいたる。」

32. 「衣裳の上より能物体の肉おきをあらはし、品かたちをなすといへども、品形のミ第一にかんとて、かならず骨肉の刻をうしなふ事多し。これに心をつけて、骨肉をそこなはざるやうにまづ其姿の骨を究め、次に其品を付、風流を書べき事。」

33. According to a *surimono* entitled *Gahō keifu* 画法系譜, dated 1854. See Haruyama, “Ryūkōsai to Shōkōsai,” pp. 3-4; Gerstle, “Kabuki Culture and Collective Creativity,” p. 26; and Yano, “Ryūkōsai kenkyū no genzai,” p. 17.

34. 「さて画くに至つては、其人其業のなせる事を熟思し、面部より手足まで骨度の考肝要なり。灰筆を用ひて先裸形をとくと画て、さて衣服を付べし。さなき時は、面貌手足支株、屈伸等傳はらず。屈伸傳はらざれば、衣服の衣紋齋ひがたし。株傳はらず、衣紋乱る時は、自ら全體不具にして、精神そなはる事なし。骨度は銘々身體を備ふれば、考知るべし。」

35. Sasaki and Sasaki, *Maruyama Ōkyo kenkyū*, pp. 105-108.

36. Translation of the section title by Timothy Clark. See Clark, “Ready for a Close-up,” p. 47.

37. 「凡て人物を画くに初心の人は、かくの如く、下画には全身裸の容体を画きたる上に衣服をきせて見るべきなり。」

38. Clark, “Ready for a Close-up,” p. 47.

39. See Yano, “Ryūkōsai kenkyū no genzai,” pp. 21-22.

40. 「大坂においては、(中略) 顕著な流派様式を標榜し、集団活動による規制、つまり流派を前提とするよりは、個々の画人活動にゆだねられる傾向が強かったのである。」 Takeda Tsuneo, “Kinsei Osaka gadan to sono jidai kubun,” in *Kinsei Osaka gadan*, p. 182.