

Selections from NDL collections

Comparing variations of a *chirimen* (crepe paper) book by Takejiro Hasegawa: "The Smiling Book" (1)

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The smiling book.

Editor: Takejiro Hasegawa; [NDL Call No. B-248]

Published in 1896; One volume 17×22 cm, 26 pages

*Available only on microfiche

In the [NDL Newsletter No. 198 \(February 2015\)](#), we presented an illustrated collection of poems in French by Emile Verhaeren entitled *Images Japonaises*. These same illustrations were also used in two English-language

anthologies with different titles and content: one is *The Smiling Book*, printed on *chirimen*, or Japanese crepe paper; the other is *Glimpses of Japan*, printed on ordinary paper.¹²³

¹ Oba Tsuneaki. "[Emile Verhaeren no Images Japonaises o megutte](#)" *Kanagawa Daigaku kokusai keiei ronshū* (16/17) 1999.3. [NDL Call No. Z4-1130] pp.85-106

² Muramatsu Sadafumi. [Tokyo Seitoku Daigaku kenkyu kiyo](#) (8) 2001.6. [NDL Call No. Z22-B69] pp.41-54 Includes all the pages of *Images Japonaises*

³ Sharf, Frederic A. Takejiro Hasegawa: Meiji Japan's preeminent publisher of wood-block-illustrated crepe-paper books. Peabody Essex Museum, 1994. [NDL Call No. UE17-E4]



Images Japonaises

Illustrator: Kwasson (Suzuki Kason); Text: Emile Verhaeren; Publisher: T. Hasegawa [NDL Call No. W193-B1] Published in May 1896; One volume 21 × 29 cm



Glimpses of Japan

Illustrator: Kwasson (Suzuki Kason); Publisher: T. Hasegawa; [NDL Call No. W166-B3] Published in May 1896; One volume 21 × 28 cm

The National Diet Library (NDL) owns copies of these three books, which were published by Hasegawa Takejiro, yet much about the relationship between them, how they came into being, and the order of their publication remains unknown.

After examining a draft copy of *The Smiling Book* that was owned by Nishimiya Yusaku, the grandson of Hasegawa, a number of new findings have come to light. Although *chirimen* books by Hasegawa had been examined

extensively, this was the first draft copy to be discovered. It also provided significant clues about the process of printing books with multi-colored woodblock illustrations during the Meiji period.

This is the first in a series of two articles, in which we would like to present the contents of *The Smiling Book* and discuss what comparison with the draft copy as well as with copies held by other institutions has revealed.



The title *The Smiling Book* appears on the front cover of the printed version. The draft copy, however, shows traces of corrections, which suggest that the working title was first *Japanese Smiling*, then *Japanese Smiles*, and

finally *The Smiling Book*. There are also instructions to the artist in the draft copy, specifying the color of the water as blue and that of trees as green.

Page 1 contains an illustration of wisteria and cherry blossoms. In the draft copy, however, the illustration included a white box with the words "In appreciation of the Beautiful Habit of Smiling this Volume is affectionably dedicated. By Lu Wheat Frank Hastings, Sole Agent, Yokohama, Japan." Page 2 contains an illustration of a Buddhist temple and a five-storied pagoda

next to a blank box. The copy held by the NDL has only the box on page 2, so the box on page 1 was probably deleted due to design considerations. Lu Wheat is the name of an American writer. We learned from the draft that the title *The Smiling Book* was a quote from Wheat, and that the book was originally intended to be sold by Frank Hastings, an agent in Yokohama.



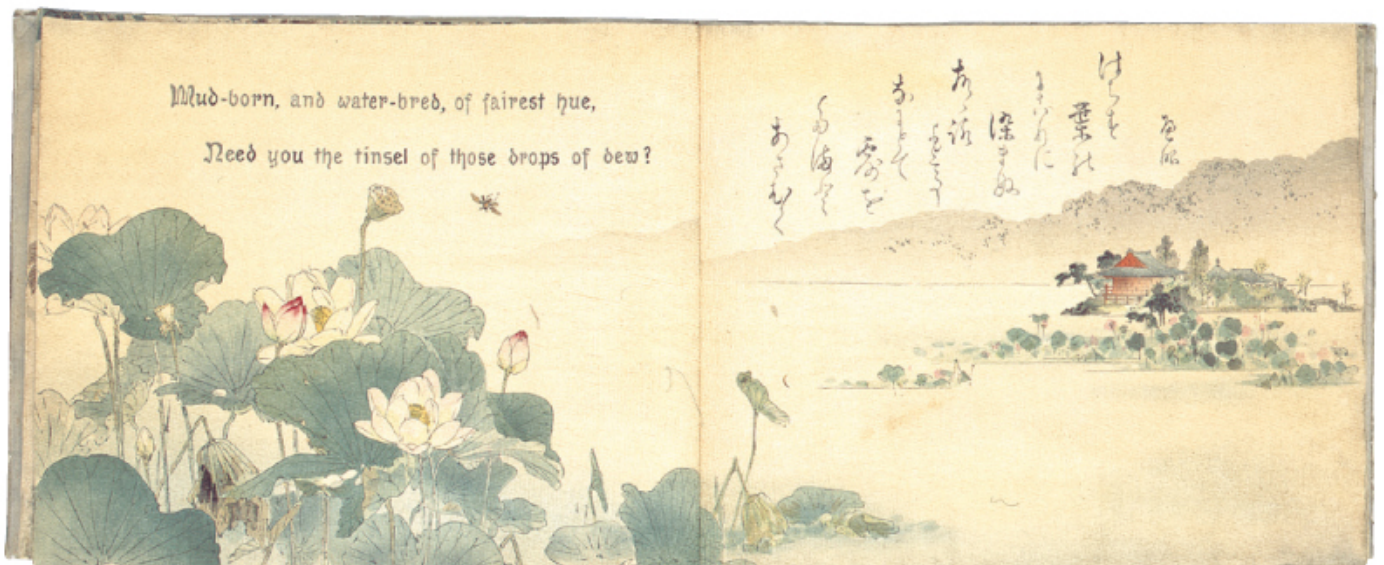
Pages 1-2 of *The Smiling Book*

On pages 3 and 4, a scene showing a temple on the far side of a lotus pond is accompanied by a *waka* (和歌) poem by Sojo Henjo from the *Kokin wakashu* (古今和歌集, a collection of *waka* poems edited by a Japanese emperor during the Heian period) and its English translation. The translation differs somewhat between the printed version owned by the NDL and the draft copy. The draft says:

Rooted on ~~shines~~lime and mud, yet all unsoiled

the Lotus rears its perfect head
and on its leaf the dew drop
shines like jewel Gems unspoiled.

Revision marks can be seen in the draft copy. The first half of the translation resembles one found in a *chirimen* book published in 1894 by AKIYAMA Aisaburo entitled *Rokkasen: the illustrated poems by the six poetical geniuses*.



Pages 3-4 of *The Smiling Book*

On page 5, a picture of birds swarming in the sky above a single worm is accompanied by a poem:

One little bug for twenty birds
But this was the hour of noon

An illustration on page 6 shows different insects. In the draft, it is accompanied by another poem:

When it was dark
There were plenty bugs
But the little birds had all gone

However, the poem does not appear in the printed version owned by the NDL. The sources of these poems are unknown.



Pages 5-6 of *The Smiling Book*

Pages 11 and 12 comprise a picture of a girl embracing a small boy at the edge of a pond. In the draft copy, ruled lines are drawn in the center for writing words, and a clipping from *The Peterson magazine* vol. 106 (1895) is attached, which says:

"CHERRY-BLOSSOM," lithe and little,
almond eyes and dusky hair,
In her garden waits and listens.
She's a musmée, sweet and fair!

Safe at anchor, in the harbor,
rides the ship from northern shores,
While the small-boat hastens gladly,
with a lover at the oars.

The content of the poem and the word musmée suggest a novel of the French writer Pierre Loti, but it is actually a quotation from Helen Leavenworth Herrick's "CHERRY-BLOSSOM."⁴ These words do not appear in the printed version owned by the NDL.



Pages 11-12 of *The Smiling Book*

⁴ The Peterson magazine. vol.106 (1895), p. 386 (<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.74716295;view=1up;seq=396>)

Page 23 is divided by a diagonal line, and the lower half of the page is illustrated with a spider, a snail, and a grasshopper. Written in white are the opening lines of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which are spoken by the first of

the three witches: "When shall we three meet again" "In thunder lightning or in rain." Page 24 contains a picture of jellyfish floating in the waves and birds flying in the sky above.



Pages 23-24 of *The Smiling Book*

Page 25 is divided by a strip of illustrated flowers which can be found in *chiyogami*, a kind of decorative paper used in arts and crafts. On the left half of the page is a line from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*: "All the World's a stage and all the men and women merely players." To the

right are a boy and a man smoking with a hoe on his shoulder. On page 26 are a priest, a samurai, a woman holding an umbrella accompanied by a maid, and a peddler carrying tubs of fish on a pole.



Pages 25-26 of *The Smiling Book*

A comparison of the draft copy with the printed version of *The Smiling Book* owned by the NDL showed that 12 of 14 illustrations were accompanied by poems in the draft, but there were only four poems in the NDL copy of the printed version. Also, the two illustrations without poems do have boxes and ruled lines for writing text. Not all of the poems are written by hand, and there are

sections where cut-outs from a book are clipped onto a page, or where another piece of paper is glued on. Thus, there actually might have been some kind of text on these pages, too.

The Smiling Book was originally regarded a collection of wood-block illustrations without much text, but it is

possible that the original intent was to accompany the illustrations with Japanese poems from the *Kokin wakashu*, Western poems, and lines from Shakespeare's plays. Since the draft copy has written notes on some pages with the names of artists other than Kason (Suzuki Munetaro), such as Goto and Yokota, there may have been several artists who were to be commissioned at first. The draft also implies that the book was originally scheduled to be published in November or December of 1895, by an agent living in Yokohama.

In the issue to be published in October 2016, we will continue to compare the NDL copy of the printed version of *The Smiling Book* with other copies and try to find out more about the process through which it was created.

Related articles on the National Diet Library Newsletter:

- [Japan's image transmitted abroad: Picture books by Hasegawa Takejiro](#) (No. 198, February 2015)