

S U P P L E M E N T

T O

K U N I Y O S H I : T H E W A R R I O R P R I N T S

B . W . R O B I N S O N

M C M X C V I

## FOREWORD

Ever since I wandered into Richard Kruml's former street level gallery near Brown's Hotel in London approximately fifteen years ago, I have been an avid collector of the prints of Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Since I do not have any background in either Japanese culture or art and do not speak the language, I naturally studiously read B.W. Robinson's 1961 and 1982 books. Ever since, these two volumes have been extraordinarily invaluable to me in understanding what was being portrayed on the sheets that my eyes found so attractive and gaining some understanding of the culture that produced them.

Some years ago, I had the great fortune to be introduced to Mr. Robinson by another Londoner -- my good friend Israel Goldman -- and we have been "pen-pals" ever since. His mentoring has graciously and tolerantly been extended beyond his books to resolve many of the questions about items in my collection that my lack of knowledge had rendered mysterious to me. Thus, it seemed quite natural to suggest to Mr. Robinson that his book on Warrior Prints be supplemented, and after discussion he agreed to prepare the manuscript and I agreed to process it here and make it available at "cost" to anyone interested in this extraordinarily valuable updating document. Stephen Wagner of my office at the Harvard Law School deserves the credit for transforming the manuscript into final form.

Thus it is with love for the genius of Kuniyoshi and enormous gratitude to the modest, self-styled "collector/ex-museum man" who opened the door and has led me along the pathway for these many years that this Supplement is made available.

Cambridge, Massachusetts  
August 1996

Arthur R. Miller

## P R E F A C E

"I have little doubt that a number of readers will be able to add to the lists here given. If so, I should be grateful if they would let me know . . . so that, in the event of a second edition being called for, such additional information can be included". This appeal, which I incorporated in the Preface to the original volume (Phaidon, Oxford, 1982), has met with a gratifying response over the past fourteen years. Obliging correspondents from various quarters of the globe have provided me with unrecorded series, new triptychs, and numerous additions to the series already listed in the book, and these communications were often accompanied by photographs. For all of this I am deeply grateful.

After an interval of about ten years from the original publication I therefore approached the publishers, suggesting the possibility of a second, updated, edition; this proposal met with a polite but negative response, as did a subsequent suggestion of a small supplementary volume incorporating the new information. Not long after that, however, I received a generous offer from two Kuniyoshi enthusiasts, Professor Arthur R. Miller of the Harvard Law School and Mr Israel Goldman, to handle the mechanics of publication and distribution if I would supply the additional material. I am extremely grateful to them both for their interest and encouragement, and the present publication is the result. I hope it will appeal to owners of the original

volume and increase its usefulness, to which many of my correspondents have testified. No doubt further hitherto unrecorded material will come to light with the passage of time, but in view of advancing age I felt that it was advisable to wait no longer, but to publish the additional material so far available in the form of this modest Supplement.

Kuniyoshi: The Warrior Prints was kindly treated by reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic, one of them going so far as to say that it was "one of the most extraordinary books I have ever seen in my years of reviewing" (Essex Journal, USA), and another remarking on its "extraordinary felicity as well as impeccable scholarship" (Arts Review, London)! One American reviewer deplored the fact that I had occupied space with fanciful parallels to Kuniyoshi's subjects in Western history and ballad lore that (in her opinion) would have been more profitably filled by a socio-political background to mid-nineteenth century Yedo. But I am unrepentant: the social background of Ukiyoye has been frequently treated by writers better qualified than myself, and my aim in the book was to arouse interest and even to communicate enthusiasm for Kuniyoshi's heroic subjects and his masterly treatment of them. It was essentially a personal book which I wrote as I felt, and not on any "correct" art-historical principles. Of course it was a "slow mover", as the booksellers say, and it was a little disappointing that it was so soon remaindered, and is now

difficult to obtain. In 1983 it was awarded the Uchiyama Prize by the Japanese Ukiyoe Society, being their choice as the best book on a Ukiyoe subject by a non-Japanese author.

Meanwhile Kuniyoshi's reputation as a prolific, enthusiastic, and inspiring illustrator of his country's rich heritage of history, legend, and folk-lore seems to be still growing, both in the West and in Japan itself, the latter largely owing to the dedication and scholarship of my old friend and correspondent Mr Suzuki Jūzō. Of the newer publications here included in the addenda to the Bibliographical References, Mr Suzuki's masterly and majestic volume Kuniyoshi stands out from all the others, but an honourable mention must be accorded to the more modest, but most valuable Warrior-Prints of Utagawa Kuniyoshi in Czechoslovak Collections by Mme. Boháčková. We mourn her recent death, but may draw some consolation from the fact that she lived long enough to see her country liberated from the Communist yoke; her resulting happiness and relief were communicated to me in a touching letter.

In addition to the previously unrecorded prints and minor addenda, I have taken this opportunity to include a few features for which the publishers felt themselves unable to afford space in the original book. Such are the alphabetical indices of the Japanese titles of series and triptychs, and detailed lists of the characters portrayed in certain group triptychs, which I hope may prove useful and interesting.

In the interests of consistency with the original volume, as well as of personal preference, I have in this Supplement continued to use the "old" system in the transliteration of Japanese names (Kwannon, not Kannon, &c) -- the system used in the immortal Japanese Names of Koop and Inada, on which I cut my teeth some sixty years ago. One reviewer twitted me for this with a good-natured joke about "Robinson's Last Stand"; however, though I emphatically disclaim the implied affinity with the Kusunoki at Shijo-nawate and Yamamoto Kansuke at Kawanakajima, I remain, once again, unrepentant. I sometimes wonder where the new systems come from, and with what authority? It was, I am sorry to say, the Japanese Government in the 1930s that tried, unsuccessfully, to introduce a system that would have us degrade Fuji, the Peerless Mountain, into the ludicrous Huzi; and I suppose it was the Maoist Chinese Government (or was it an American university?) that thought up the preposterous "Ping-pong" spelling of Chinese with its unpronounceable combinations of Qs and Xs. Once somebody starts one of these innovations, it seems, in no time at all everybody is jumping through the hoop.\*

Finally, I should like to dedicate this Supplement to all those kind correspondents -- too numerous to enumerate

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\*Of course I write as a mere collector/ex-museum man, as opposed to an academic linguist or a purveyor of "modern colloquial" (on which, I understand, the new system was founded)!

individually -- whose ready and generous cooperation has provided its basic material.

August 1996

B. W. Robinson

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