

## Chapter 7

# Miscellaneous Prints

### 7.1 Miscellaneous Publishers of Tsuchiya Kōitsu Prints

Like most print artists Tsuchiya Kōitsu worked with various publishers over the course of his 50-year artisan career. While we’ve listed the major publishers of Kōitsu prints in separate chapters there were also a number of minor publishers for whom very little background information exists in the public domain. In the following chapter we will discuss each of these publishers and list the Kōitsu prints that were published by them. Kōitsu was also a keen ‘suisai-ga’ (watercolour) artist and several of his floral watercolours, thought to be original ‘shita-e’ for unpublished Doi woodblock prints, are also listed in this chapter.

#### 7.1.1 Kawaguchi (Kawaguchi Shōkai) by Kawaguchi Shōzō

Before we talk about the publisher Kawaguchi Shōkai we first need to talk about the publisher known as “Sakai-Kawaguchi” in the shin-hanga community. In the period 1929 to 1930, the Tokyo-based publishers Sakai and Kawaguchi worked jointly with the aim of publishing high quality prints for several shin-hanga artists including Torii Kotondo, Kawase Hasui, Ohara Hōson (Shōson), and Inuzuka Taisui. We are currently unsure why, but their relationship did not last very long – dissolving in 1931. Subsequently, a large stockpile of woodblocks and unsold prints were transferred to Kawaguchi Shōkai who continued the woodblock printing business.

As far as Tsuchiya Kōitsu’s prints are concerned, Kawaguchi published only three ōban-sized prints (TK-KG-1, 2, and 3) with no specific publication date. We roughly date these three prints to circa early 1930’s because we have been unable to find any documentation or other information on Kawaguchi’s publishing activities. Because it is sometimes possible to find the numbers ‘40’ on “Nikkō Five-Storey Pagoda”, ‘41’ on “Morigasaki Coast” and ‘42’ on “Nikkō Futarasan Shrine” on the verso of each print<sup>1</sup>, with similar numbering on the versos of prints by other Kawaguchi artists, we speculated that either Sakai-Kawaguchi or Kawaguchi Shōkai might have catalogued their published prints in numerical order. We hope to one day obtain such a catalogue or list prepared by either Sakai-Kawaguchi or Kawaguchi Shōkai and finally put to rest the question of publishing dates. However, our current belief is that the three Kōitsu scenes were most likely published as first editions by Kawaguchi Shōkai in the early 1930’s, not by Sakai-Kawaguchi. Our reasoning is as follows:

- We have never seen a Kōitsu print containing the familiar Sakai-Kawaguchi publisher seal nor a verso limited-edition seal;
- We have never seen the above-mentioned verso catalogue number on prints carrying the Sakai-Kawaguchi publisher and limited-edition seals. This suggests the catalogue numbering was initiated by Kawaguchi Shōkai, not by Sakai-Kawaguchi
- The earliest Kōitsu shin-hanga prints that we can verify are those by Watanabe which date to 1932. We feel that Kōitsu probably started his shin-hanga career around this time, and not back in 1929-1930 when Sakai-Kawaguchi was active; thus

<sup>1</sup>These are not limited-edition numbers.