II. New Year's and Christmas Card 'Japonaiserie'

A distinction will be made here between 'japonaiserie' and 'japonisme' (henceforth lowercase as in the original French) in Christmas card design, in the following sense: japonaiserie is the inclusion of identifiable Japanese elements such as kimonos, fans, and the like, to intentionally appear exotic, though sometimes only subtly. That is to say, japonaiserie design rides on the popularity of Japan and things Japanese; while japonisme, on the other hand, is the assimilation of Japanese artistic principles into the artistic process itself, oftentimes into an entirely Western setting with no obvious connection to either Japan or Japanese art;---but with caveat that the two not so uncommonly come together, one part salient and the other not so, as we shall see in the examples to follow.

Let us first look at the japonaiserie of Christmas cards. Arthur Blair, one of the foremost collectors of Christmas cards, who we shall return to later, wrote in his classic *Christmas Cards for the Collector* (1986:49): "Towards the end of the nineteenth century many middle-class women took up a new craze---all things Japanese, and card publishers welcomed the novelty." And to quote George Buday's *The History of the Christmas Card* (1954):

> **"Most, if not all, Christmas card publishers in the 1870's and 1880's produced at least one or two sets of cards with a Japanese setting or flavour amongst their novelties every year.** Some were indeed charming in their interpretation of Japanese art and style-as they appeared to Western eyes, imbued with Victorian vision. In the 1870's the Marcus Ward firm produced a clever imitation of a Japanese lacquer cabinet with folding doors, designed by T. W. Wilson; also 'natural flowers on cleverly treated diaper patterns in gold and silver' by P. Tarrant; and 'a similar set in blue and white'; or designs, 'though based on Japanese art', not transcriptions of genuine patterns, but **'exercises in the style of Japan'**."

「**1870 年代と 1880 年代のほとんどのクリスマスカード出版社は、少なくとも毎年、一つか二つの日本を背景としたりや日本的なフレーバーのある新商品を出していた。**中には、ピクトリア朝のビジョンが染み込んだ目に映る、彼らなりに、日本美術やスタイルを、実に魅力的に解釈した。1870 年代に、マーカス・ウォード社は、T・W・ウィルソンがデザインした折り畳み式の扉を備えた日本の漆器キャビネットを巧みに模倣しました。また、P.タラントによる「自然な花を金と銀の巧みに処理されたダイパーパターン」というのもあった。そして「青と白の同様のセット」。または、「日本の芸術に基づいているが」、本物のパターンの転写ではなく、「**日本のスタイルの試み**」であった。」

Buday juxtaposes a surimono (left) by Yashima Gakutei (八島岳亭 1786-1868), a leading surimono print maker, published in c.1827, with one of Rebecca Coleman (1840-1882)'s 'Japanese Belles' (right), produced by the De La Rue Company in 1880, one of the leading London Christmas card publishers of the late 1870s to the mid-1880s:

PLATE 15 The Japanese interpretation of a celebrated Japanese beauty. A *surimono* by Gakutei.

PLATE 16 A Victorian representation of Japanese beauty on a celebrated Christmas card by Rebecca Coleman, published in 1880.

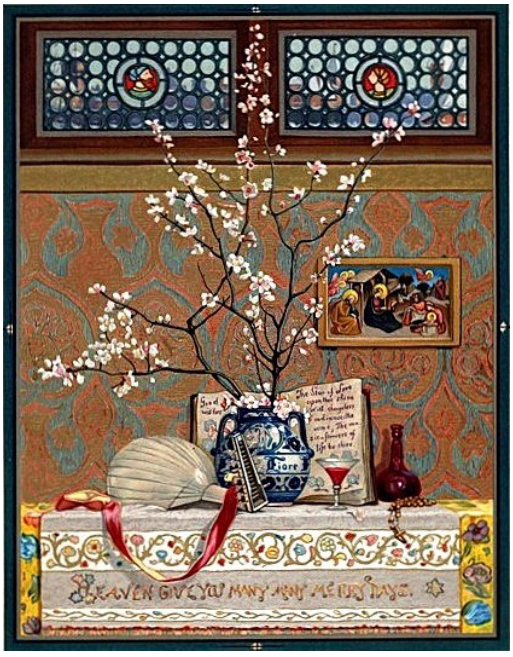
Regarding the Rebecca Coleman card Buday comments:

> "The De La Rue firm in the 1880's published an attractive series of **'Japanese Belles' by Rebecca Coleman**, a popular designer of the time. I reproduce one of these, as it can pleasantly be compared with and contrasted to the original Japanese conception of the same subject. My illustration (Plate 16) is taken from a print on fine silk depicting a Japanese girl with features somewhat Europeanised to appeal to the Western idea of exotic beauty.

The conventional kimono, sunshade and flowers complete the design of an attractive "Japanese Christmas card" made in England in 1882."

「1880 年代のデ・ラ・ルー社は、当時の**人気デザイナーであるレベッカ・コールマンによる魅力的な「ジャパニーズ・ベル」シリーズを出版した。**私は、同じ主題に対する日本人の本来の概念と心地よく比較し、対比することができるので、これらのうちの一つを再現します。私のイラスト(プレート 16)は、西洋のエキゾチックな美しさのアイデアにアピールするために、ややヨーロッパ風の特徴を持つ日本人の女の子を描いた上質なシルクのプリントから取られています。 従来の着物、日よけ、花がデザインを完成させ、1882 年にイギリスで作られた魅力的な「日本のクリスマスカード」であった。」

Difficult to appreciate in monochrome, the same Gakutei print is shown below in color; but this time next to a different Christmas card perhaps not as blatantly oriental, but expressing a kindred decorative sensibility---a prize-winning Charles Carly Coleman (1840-1928) card design of 1881:



Left: Yashima Gakutei (1786-1868), 'Benten' from the series Allusions to the Seven Lucky Gods (Mitate Shichifukujin), c. 1827-1828. Surimono with metallic pigments. 21 x 18.6 cm. Legion of Honor, San Francisco. **Right**: Charles C. Coleman, Christmas card still-life, with the message 'Heaven give you many many merry days' (third prize in Louis Prang contest), 1881, card size 26 × 21 cm. The original, framed design is at the National Museum of American History (Smithsonian), Washington, DC, from which the above image comes.

The mass-printed Coleman Christmas card was actually surrounded with a shaggy orangish silk fringe (as in the example at the Metropolitan Museum of Art), which gives it a less Japanesque feel, but otherwise, the use of embossed metal foil, the depiction of blossoms looking like 'sakura' cherry blossoms, arranged in an ikebana-like style with asymmetrically extending branches give it very much a surimono aspect. And while the feathered fan, blue and white porcelain, tablecloths, wallpaper, and window grille and the like are an exotic mélange of objects, in combination, they reflect the same rich mix of patterns and color variations, in foreground and background, and between objects, as found in the Gakutei surimono.

Indeed, should we ponder over the two images at length, we might discover some interesting compositional correspondences, which enhance that echoing effect. The central subjects in both pictures (the woman vs the flower arrangement) have behind them to the side an orthogonal frame on a boldly patterned backdrop, where the headdress of the woman in one, and the flower branches of the other, slightly intrude over the framed piece. The woman's biwa instrument points in the opposite direction almost touching the edge; so too does one of the cherry branches reach out to the opposing edge. There is a great concentration of objects and their varied patterns, clustered just below the center in both; in Gakutei the biwa, the handheld pick, the overlapping vestments and their ribbon-like strings; these correspond to Coleman's objects on the table and their contrasting patterns. More observations might be made; but what is important is not the parallels between these individual images, but rather the underlying similarity in the governing principles of their artistic/decorative approach---this is not mere 'japonaiserie'---we must call it *japonisme*.

Coleman's japonisme surfaces even more pronouncedly in his other works, such as 'Apple Tree' (1889), at the MET, which comments that, while once again combining various cultural motifs, is "a composition which suggests his

appreciation of Japanese paintings." ('Apple Blossoms' MET website metmuseums.org, visited 2024.12.20). In Coleman's works, the overall aesthetic is often Japanese, much in the way Japanese surimono often combined various 'karamono' (foreign objet d'art from China and other parts of Asia), to produce a distinctively 'Yamato', that is indigenous, in contrast to classical Chinese style of painting. And as the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History explains in an article, "The museum's Archives Center holds a proof book that shows the progressive printing of 19 colors for this card." (Wright, 2019)---this too, seems to echo the step-by-step printing process of Japanese woodblock prints.

William Hosley writes in *The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America* (Hartford: Wadsworth Atheneum,1990:93), regarding Coleman's painting 'Night Owl', 1879, at the Zimmerli Art Museum of Rutgers University:

> "No American painter explored Japanese decorative effects with greater sensitivity and imagination than Charles Carly Coleman. Like his contemporary Elihu Vedder, Coleman maintained a studio in Rome where he joined a community of American expatriate painters, many of whom shared his interest in Greek, Roman, and Japanese art. This picture with its exaggerated vertical format owes much to the tradition of the Japanese woodblock print."

The "exaggerated vertical format" is that of a hashira-e (柱絵), or 'pillar picture', made to hang on a square cut wood pillar of the interior of a house. Even the frame of the picture is Japanesque, for in each corner is a circular design, highly reminiscent of the Tokugawa Shogun 'kamon', or family crest---the three leaf hollyhock (三つ葉葵 mitsuba-aoi). Buday notes that other lesser-known artists often produced Japanesque designs due to the popularity of such images:

> **"Ernest Griset,** a very clever and nowadays unjustly overlooked artist, **designed another successful set of 'Japanese drawings'**, which were published by the same firm in 1876. **Most other firms also produced 'Japanese sets' regularly. Sometimes, when the face of the Christmas card was in no way associated with Japan, the reverse might still have a decoration 'à la Japan'**, either in black and white or, other editions of the same card, printed in gold and silver. With the advent of the black-background cards, comic Japanese and Chinese subjects appeared on some American cards of this type, an idea almost entirely overlooked by the European publishers who catered for the fashionable 'Chinamaniacs'."

「アーネスト・グリーゼは、非常に賢く、今日では不当に見過ごされているアーティストであり、1876 年に同じ会社から出版された「日本の図面」の別の成功したセットをデザインしました。 **他のほとんどの会社も「日本セット」を定期的に生産していました。クリスマスカードの表紙が日本と全く関係ない場合でも、裏面には白黒の「à la Japan（日本流に）」の装飾が施されていて**、同じカードの他の版で金と銀で印刷されることもあった。黒バックグラウンドのカードの登場により、この種のアメリカのカードには、コミカルに描写された日本人や中国人が登場するようになったが、こうしたコミカル・風刺的な発想は、欧州におけるファッショナブルな「チャイナマニアックス［東洋通］」の要望に応じるヨーロッパの出版社では、ほぼ完全に見過ごされていた。」

An example of what Buday mentions above, where the face of the card (and here the interior as well), "in no way was associated with Japan", but "the reverse might still have a decoration à la Japan", is the following Christmas card by one of the most prolific producers of Victorian Christmas cards from the 1860s to the 1890s, Marcus Ward of London:

Marcus Ward and Co. of London, 'Folding card with lovers in medieval dress', ca. 1880's, Indiana University Library collection, Indiana University, Bloomington. "The decorative borders and relatively flat color of this card qualify it as architectural rather than pictorial. It's design, including the medieval and classical references, also mark it as representative of the aesthetic and arts and crafts movements." Front, closed: 'A Happy Christmas'. Inside: 'Will their dreams come true, I wonder? only this is sure to me, / That their love could not be truer than my friendship is to thee.'

Here we have a neoclassical/medieval revivalist picture on the inside, and a Japanese influenced vegetal design but

not obviously so, on the front cover, which folds open to reveal the triptych within. But the backside has a design which was clearly associated in the minds of the Victorian public as Japanese, a two tone in gold and brown, of a rising sun with straight radiating lines and flowers and branches in front, depicted 'à la Japan'. Some examples of the backside of cards from L. Prang & Co. of Boston are shown below. Note how Japanese 'monsho' or Japanese crests, frequently adopted at the time by English artists and architects as Edwin Godwin (1833-1886) and Thomas Jeckyll (1827-1881) into their designs, are added to the design of the Prang Christmas card to the left, specifically the 'maru-ni-mitsuboshi' (丸に三つ星, smaller, left), 'maru-ni-mitsuwachigai' (丸に三つ輪違い, larger, right); and how the imperial chrysanthemum crest to the right is displayed within a box all in a classic overlapping, asymmetric Japanese style.

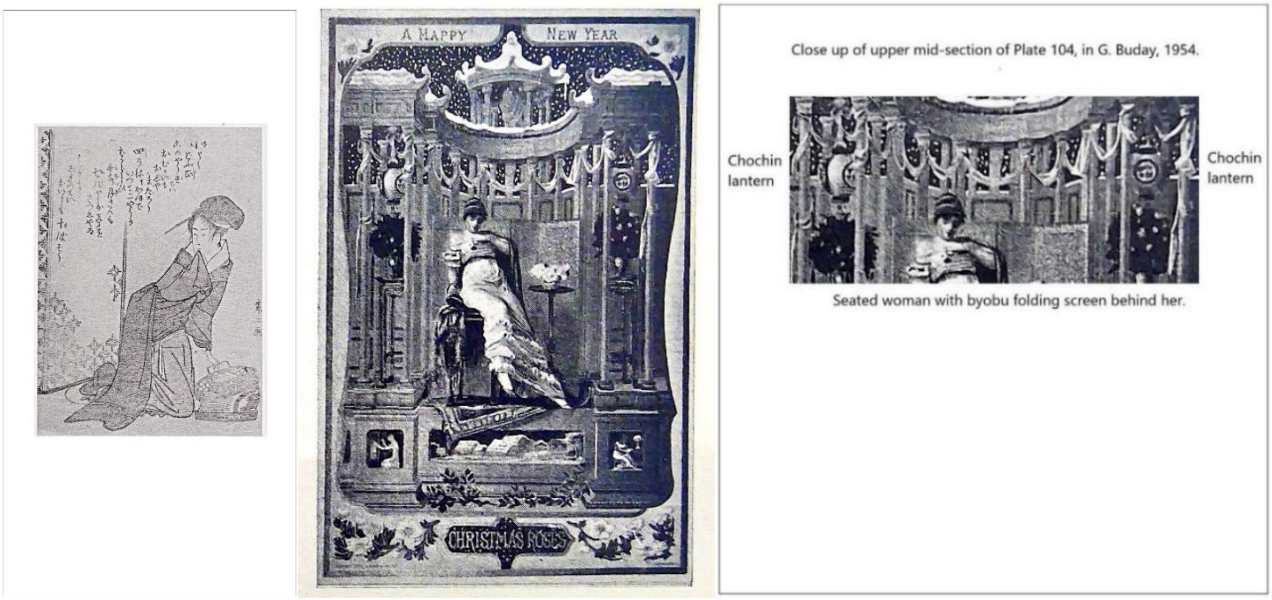
Examples of backside (verso) of greeting cards (chromolithographs) from pages of publisher's proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co. (Boston), Volume 7, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection (shelf locator: MEYK+), New York Public Library, New York. **Left:** Bridges, Fidelia (1834-1923 artist), Verso of one of 'Christmas cards depicting birds on tree branches', with the message 'A Happy Christmas', 1886 (Universal Unique Identifier: 2de87240-c5c5-012f-d9c3-58d385a7bc34). **Right:** Verso of one of 'Christmas, New Year, and Easter cards depicting leaves, moons, landscapes, flowers, and butterflies', 1886 (Universal Unique Identifier: 31f7bfc0-c5c5-012f-0c11-58d385a7bc34).

Returning to our discussion of Marcus Ward of London, that company, under the artistic direction of Thomas Crane (brother of Walter Crane), strove for the development of cards with greater graphic awareness for the card as a decorative whole, rather than "those of other makers, whose chief effort is to imitate a little picture, without the slightest attempt to make the card itself a decorative and complete design" (White, 1895:17). Speaking of their innovations, which we may even include some cases where the motifs were medieval, Gleeson White noted that,

> "As in Japanese art the convention of a bold, arbitrary outline is accepted so also is the use of flat colour, and a purely decorative shading that does not for an instant seek to imitate nature." (1895:17)

Furthermore, the bold approach to bordering, and the way the "lettering was not left to chance, or reduced to the bare simplicity of a label in ordinary type, obviously an addition to the design, but was planned to accord with it." (White, 1895: 17)---these basic conceptions of card design, something that was not just the attempted reproduction of a realistic picture with a label, but a card that was meant to be seen as an integrated design package, not a 'scene'---that was the most important aspect of the Japanese influence, rather than simply specific motifs or patterns, though those too were abundantly utilized.

Often the recognizably Japanese element was placed inconspicuously, blended among other objects so as to add an almost subliminal exoticism. An example of this, but in a different way from the above medieval style, is the following card by Edward. J. Poynter (1836-1919), one time President of the Royal Academy of Britain. The Japanese elements, such as chochin lanterns (提灯) and the folding byobu screen (屏風) are shown in the expanded view to the right, of the upper mid-section of Poynter's card:



Left: Hishikawa Sori III (active 1797-1813), 'New Year's surimono of a woman with a folded lantern, 1798, small koban tate-e (13.0 x 9.4 cm), Frank Lloyd Wright Collection (FLLW FDN 3008.062). "A woman coyly glances around a screen while holding a collapsed paper lantern. In this e-goyomi, references to the numbers of the short months of the year appear in the inscription shō 1, 4, 7, 9, and 10-allowing the print to be dated to 1798." **Center**: E. J. Poynter, Season's greeting card, 'A Happy New Year' (top) and 'Christmas Roses' (bottom), c. 1880-1899 (author's estimate), Plate 104 in G. Buday, 1954. Buday refers to the lanterns as 'Chinese', as often is the case whether Chinese or Japanese. **Right**: A close up of the upper mid-section of Poynter's card, indicating the location of the chochin lanterns and byobu screen.

Interestingly, as often the case in early British season's greetings cards, the New Year's greeting is of equivalent or perhaps greater importance than the Christmas aspect, coming first or at the top, despite the new year occurring, of course, afterwards.

It might be said that even the pose of the woman---the accentuation of her body's angling, and how her dress forms a diagonal, sharp pointy shape---might be an oblique reference to female images in bijin-ga (ukiyo-e courtesan pictures) or shunga (erotic pictures), or otherwise 'kasen-e' (pictures of poets, often female), all which often depict an angling of body shape and kimono dress. To the left is an example of such a pose in an early 19th century surimono by Hishikawa Sori III.

Art historians of the period might be surprised to hear that someone like Poynter---the majority of whose works seem to be so mainstream neoclassical or medieval revivalist in style---might be included in this discussion, but his japonaiserie does come through occasionally, as in his very fine portrait of Louisa Baldwin (1868). Holding her delicate ogi fan, a small cabinet, reminiscent of a lacquered, yosegi-zaiku (Japanese woodwork) export piece, sits on a table behind her, against a rich textured, katagami-like patterned wallcovering---all with an aesthetic refinement that recalls both Bronzino and Utamaro.

Another painting of Poynter's, more explicitly Japanese, is the warm and luxuriant portrait of Mary Constance Wyndham, Lady Elcho, of 1886. Tomoko Sato and Toshio Watanabe write in their essay for the exhibition book, *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue 1850-1930* (London, 1991): "The Japanese fashion was long-lasting and far-reaching throughout the Victorian period and beyond. Even the characteristically conservative academicians were influenced by Japanese art. Edward John Poynter, the arch-academician, designed a Japonist fireplace in the 1860s (Victoria and Albert Museum) and painted Lady Elcho as an aesthete surrounded by Japanese art in 1885." (p. 24) Lady Elcho, wearing a pale-yellow dress, "is surrounded by fashionable objects including a Japanese screen, Oriental vases, Japanese woodcut books and a bowl of goldfish." (p. 112)

Now returning to the features of the Poynter Christmas card, regarding the 'chochin' or Japanese style lanterns (though Buday calls them Chinese lanterns) on each side of the sitting woman. Chochin lanterns were often hung singularly (as above) or on a line high up (as below), across a room or during a garden party outdoors, as a popular decorative practice for celebrations in the late 19th and early 20th century on both sides of the Atlantic (for a more detailed example of a chochin

in a painting, John Haberle's 'A Japanese Corner', 1898 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA is included in the Appendix). The fashion for chochin lanterns even reached into the mountain woods of America. A photo by Edward Bierstadt (brother of the famous landscape painter Albert Bierstadt), of the interior of Camp Cedars, taken about 1885 (at the Adirondack Museum), shows a comfortable wood cabin room typical of the time, regarding which W. N. Hosley (1990: 113, Plate 93 caption) writes in his history of a Japan influenced Victorian age America:

> "The rustic and the Japanesque were compatible styles. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the furnishings of the great camps (summer homes) of the Adirondacks. A carefully placed fan, a table covered with Japanesque art needlework, or as shown here, a paper lantern chandelier; these were the decorative accents that gave camp life artistic flavor. During the Japan craze, more than one hundred camps were built on lakeshores, hillsides, and islands in the Adirondacks. Camp Cedars (1880) was one of the earliest and most famous."

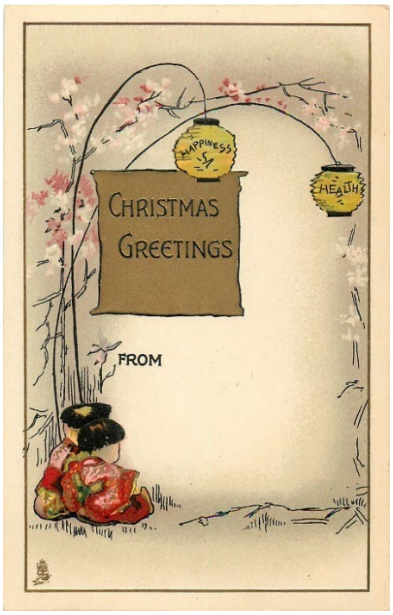
From the woods of the Adirondacks to the most fashionable quarters of Paris, the paper folding Japanese lanterns---chochin, whether round or cylindrical---were adored for their quaint charm, and often appeared in paintings and in season's greetings, across Western European and in North America. The following Christmas card (center), hand marked 1893, sent by Princess Mary of Cambridge, reflects this decorative practice in its heyday. Though, as the two rather surprising presidential election chochin lamps reveal, one as early as that for Ulysses Grant's election in 1868, Japanese paper folding lanterns were already a popular item by the late 1860s in the United States it seems, or at least in certain quarters (later the Grants became quite the Japanophiles, having visited Japan in 1879, and one of their sitting rooms was decorated in a Japanese style, filled with Japanese bronzes, fans, porcelains, swords, and other artwork).

Left: 'Grant "Union For Ever" Collapsible Paper Lantern', Republican Party, for the Ulysses S. Grant presidential election, made c. 1868 (27.9 x 17.8 cm), Collection of Political Americana, Cornell University Library Repository: Susan H. Douglas Political Americana Collection, #2214 Rare & Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library (image ID 4359375891), Cornell University, Ithaca. **Center:** Christmas card 'A Joyful Christmas' with a line of chochin lanterns, sent in 1893, from a 'Binder of greeting cards and momentos given to Queen Mary, stamped: 'The "Oriel" Binder / Rd. No. 93024 / Marcus Ward & Co. Ltd.' and inscribed: '1891-1910' (the dates extend more widely), at the British Museum © The Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). **Right:** 'Garfield-Arthur Collapsible Paper Portrait Lantern', Republican party, for the James A. Garfield presidential election, made c. 1880 (25.4 x 17.1 cm), Collection of Political Americana, Susan H. Douglas Political Americana Collection #2214, Rare & Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library (image ID 4360233800), Cornell University, Ithaca.

Japanese chochin (folding paper lanterns) came in a variety of shapes and designs, but the two most common and popular were the round (or slightly oval) and cylinder type, as shown above, and below in the photograph taken by a Western photographer most likely and made into a postcard around 1910, or a few years earlier or later. As can be seen in the photo they came in a variety of shapes and sizes, and in an endless variety od designs. They are rarely decorated with gold trim as Chinese lanterns, but rather black lacquered at the top and bottom and handles. Also, while they have cloth or paper elements which hang from them at times, they are never the kind of tassels found on Chinese lanterns. Furthermore, while there are round lanterns, the squat, wider than taller lanterns common in China. Most importantly, Japanese lanterns are naturally ribbed horizontally, for folding, with many dozens of ribs; while traditional Chinese lanterns are structured with the ribs vertically oriented, much fewer in number and are not folding.

Postcard of 'Lantern makers, Japan', verso imprinted 'Th. E. L. Theochrom Serie 1007', Theodor Eismann publisher, halftone photomechanical print (black halftone key printed over three-color lithography with hand-colored highlights), 1907-1918 (9 x 14 cm), The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection (shelf locator: PC POC JAP – Lif), New York Public Library (NYPL Hades-2360200-4043999), New York. According to the NYPL, Theodor Eismann was a Pre-WW1 German postcard publishing and printing company (website: The Postcard Project "Theodor Eismann"), the print was likely made between the years 1907-1914, and more likely in the earlier half of that time period, and highly unlikely to have been produced in the years 1914-1918, when Germany was at war with Japan, especially in the latter years of the war.

Their popularity in Europe is attested to by the George Auriol designed cover, shown below, for *La Lanterne Japonaise* (1888), the weekly announcement (with also poetry selections) of events at the Divan Japonaise cabaret, an establishment whose interior was decorated with Japanese lanterns, an establishment which the painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec made famous with his poster of the same name. The two Christmas cards were published in 1911, an indication that japonisme was still going very strong in the early 20th century, and which we will see continued with great if not greater force throughout the 1910s and 20s.



Left and right: Two Raphael Tuck and Sons Christmas postcards. 'CHRISTMAS GREETINGS, two seated Japanese children, lanterns', and 'A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU, three Japanese children climb ladder, lanterns', gilt or silver embossed, chromographed in Bavaria, Germany, listed in 1911/1912 Postcard Catalogue and Christmas Greetings, both first use in 1911, sold in America. Courtesy of Tuck DB Postcards, online website. **Center:** George Auriol designed cover for 'La Lanterne Japonaise' (The Japanese Lantern), Saturday 27 October 1888, Paris, issue of the weekly announcement for the 'Divan Japonais' in Paris, directed by the poet Jehan Sarrazin, featuring cabaret shows and concerts. The cover depicts a triumphant Sarrazin entering Montmartre dressed as a Japanese samurai.

At times these lanterns in library records or vendors are simply called lanterns as if they might be European in origin or otherwise Chinese lanterns, but they are clearly Japanese chochin lanterns. That were considered so, and strongly associated with Japan, can be seen in F. Schuyler Mathews (1854-1938)'s designs for 'The Golden Flower' series (1890) of which the L. Prang & Co. publisher proofs (Volume 13, at the New York Public Library) reveal; for not only are the lanterns themselves drawn in accurately in great detail (center), but the designs for the other card illustrations make it amply clear that the imagery was intended to evoke Japan. To the left is a scene Mount Fuji with a river drawn in the Japanese manner

with chrysanthemums floating down it, and to the right a poem 'Kioto' with chrysanthemums clustered around it.

Ferdinand Schuyler Mathews, (1854-1938) designs for 'The Golden Flower' series, 1890 (see book version *The Golden Flower: Chrysanthemum* cover proof), publisher's proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co., Boston, Volume 13, the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection (shelf locator: MEYK+), New York Public Library. **Left:** 'To The John Thorpe' from 'The Golden Flower: cards titled 'Peter the Great' and 'To The John Thorpe' with text by Edith M. Thomas and Kate Upson Clark; depicting a vase, flowers, a volcano, lava, planets, stars, the sun and decorative design.' **Center:** 'Moonlight' from 'The Golden Flower: cards titled 'Moonlight' and 'October beauty' with text by Richard Henry Stoddard and Robert Browning; depicting flowers, lanterns, the moon, night and decorative design.' **Right:** 'Kioto' from 'The Golden Flower: cards titled 'Kioto' and 'Neesima' with text by Margaret Deland and Edith M. Thomas; depicting flowers, stars, candles, sun, moon and decorative ornamentation.'

For further confirmation, we can see in a variety of illustrated books Japanese style lanterns being used as outdoor lighting, and for garden parties. In Adrien Marie (1848-1891 French)'s illustrations for *Tout à la Joie* by ZARI (1890), of which examples are shown below (center and right), many scenes depict Japanese lanterns, with hiragana lettering at times. In the detail of the illustration (right), written on the blue lantern in the upper left hand corner, is the Japanese hiragana lettering 'まり', probably a shortening of 'まつり', meaning festival, often written on lanterns when used for that purpose, because the 'つ' was written smaller and interconnected with the other letters in such cases.

Left: Evelyn Lance (1851-1933), Illustration for *The Christmas Hamper and Other Stories with Color Plates by Evelyn Lance*, (book cover 17.8 x 14 cm, illustration slightly smaller), Berger Publishing Company, Buffalo, NY, 1907 (1st edition 1906 published by Holiday Publishing Company, Buffalo, NY), private collection. **Center:** Adrien Marie (1848-1891), Illustration for *Tout à la Joie par ZARI Illustrations en couleurs par Adrien Marie,* chromolithograph illustration (book cover 27 x 21,5 cm, illustration slightly smaller), Paris: Editions Théodore Lefèvre et Emile Guérin, 1890, private collection. **Right:** Detail of an illustration from the same book, showing in the upper left hand corner the Japanese hiragana lettering 'まり' probably a shortening of 'まつり' (meaning festival, written on chochin lanterns when used for that purpose) because the 'つ' was written smaller and interconnected with the other letters.

The following is what is probably an Edwardian Christmas postcard, 'Wishing You High Jinks This Christmas', c. 1890-1915, done in a style somewhat reminiscent of that of the French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, very much in vogue at the time, next to a surimono by Yashima Gakutei (1786?–1868) of dancers on a covered corridor, similarly lined with chochin lanterns overhead, from the early 19th century.

Left: Christmas postcard, 'Wishing You High Jinks This Christmas', c. 1890 -1915 (at dailymail.co.uknewsarticle-2869918Kittens-suffragettes-snowball-fights-Londoners-wished-merry-Christmas-Victorian-Edwardian-cards.htmlChristmas_card) London Museum collection © Museum of London. **Right:** Yashima Gakutei (1786?–1868), 'Furuichi Dance, No. 1 of a Set of Four' surimono, early 19th century (21.1 x 18.7 cm), H. O. Havemeyer Collection (object no. JP1964), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Another colorful example of the popularity of chochins is an international series of embossed Christmas and New Year's postcards, probably from the first decade of the 20th century (no publisher nor designer imprint), with winged cherubs in the sky, holding up to five such lanterns, with messages such as: 'All good wishes for Christmas', in English, 'Bonne Année' (Happy New Year) in French, 'Prosit Neujahr' (Happy New Year) in German, and other such season's greetings in various European languages. Here, unlike the postcards above, the Japanese chochins are held by winged cherubs with blonde hair, rather than Japanese children in kimonos.

Left: Christmas postcard, 'All Good Wishes for Christmas', embossed paper, handwritten '1909', c. 1905-1909, private collection. **Right:** Umekawa Tonan (梅川東南 active 1830-1860, Kyoto), 'Amateur performers, fan format', surimono depicting senmenga of hung chochin lanterns and dancers, mid-19th century (39 x 51.7 cm), British Museum (no. 2021,3013.459), London © The Trustees of the British Museum.

The depiction of lanterns in haphazard clusters or hung in rows was of course common in surimono and other prints.


Left: Tenju Gyokuen (天授玉園 active 1851-1875), 'Children's dance', surimono, 1850s-early 70s, British Museum (no. 1987,0729,0.1), London © The Trustees of the British Museum. **Right**: New Year's greetings, 'Prosit Neujahr!', embossed postcard, c.1907, private collection.

The tradition of carrying chochin lanterns on poles, as a group activity was also adopted in the West, as can be seen in the examples below.


Left: Ellen H. Clapsaddle designed New Year card, 'New Year Greetings 1906' postcard of children caroling with Japanese lanterns, International Art Publ. Co. New York, No. 6103, 'Made in Germany', made c. 1905, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection (shelf locator: PC POC, Barcode: 33333201006729), New York Public Library Digital Collections (https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-4cac-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99), New York Public Library, New York. **Center:** Kubo Shunman (1757–1820), 'People with Lanterns in procession', surimono, part of an album of surimono, early 19th century (21 x 18.6 cm), H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (object no. JP2325, image ID: DP138982), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. **Right:** Christmas card, 'Frohe Weinachten' embossed with dancing children holding lanterns, German, c. 1900-1910, private collection.

This spread throughout Europe and North America, and illustrations of it can be found not only in season's greeting cards, but in paintings as well. Below is an interesting example from Poland, though probably distributed elsewhere in Europe as well (that being most commonly the case with such cards), of children holding lanterns while they ski.

Author unknown, Christmas postcard of Children skiing with Japanese lanterns, with greetings message in Polish, chromolithograph from a painting, imprinted 'chromolit 21' early 20th century (9 x 14 cm), private collection.

Lanterns being carried by children was common in Japan, and Western artists often painted such scenes on their visits to Japan, some of those being made into postcards, such as the Raphael Tuck & Sons (London) example shown below (center). The Christmas cards on both sides of it were part of a series with minor variations, popular in Europe, North America, and the card to the right is one sent within Australia.

Left: Christmas postcard, 'A Merry Xmas to You' image of a row of girls carrying Japanese lanterns on a pole, published by B.B. London & New York, (Birn Brothers Ltd. of London, publishers of cards and illustrated books), series no. 274, printed in Germany, c. 1909-1910, private collection. **Center:** Raphael Tuck & Sons 'Oilette' postcard, 'A Ride in a Ricksha', image of Japanese children holding lanterns on a ricksha, around 1890-1910, courtesy of Tuck DB Postcards. **Right:** Christmas postcard, 'With Fondest Xmas Greetings', approx.1906-1918, (3.5 cm), collection of B. J. Burton, State Library, South Australia (no. PRG-337-3-46). Part of the same series as the postcard to the left. All examples from this series of 4 similar postcards that this author has seen are dated 1910.

Hanging small chochin lanterns on the Christmas tree, or elsewhere in the home as Christmas decorations, also became popular towards the end of the 19th century, well into the 20th, in Britain and the Continent, as the following examples indicate.

Left: Artist unidentified, Christmas card, Children putting up Christmas lanterns, depicting an Edwardian boy and girl holding up a string of Japanese lanterns, c. 1899 (mary evans peter and dawn cope collection apiwkotyy__57833 r 1899 permission required). **Right:** Christmas postcard, Mother and children, one with a Japanese lantern as a Christmas tree decoration. c. 1900-1910 (Alamy permission required).

Left: Artist unknown, backside of Christmas card, probably around 1905-1910, private collection. **Right:** Raphael Tuck & Sons, 'Santa in red robe hangs Japanese lantern on tree' from a set of 'Christmas Santas' (C1062), imprinted 'OILETTE, PRINTED IN ENGLAND', first use 22/12/1908, sold in the USA and Canada, Prefix C Number 1062, Greetings variations: 'CHRISTMAS GREETINGS' or 'JOYEUX NOEL' or 'FROHE WEIHNACHTEN', Courtesy of Tuck DB Postcards.

Of these there are many variations, in quantity beyond which could possibly be shown here. These images of Japanese lanterns, displayed indoors and the tradition of marching outdoors with them permeated the countryside, not only in Europe, but in North America as well. In the Christmas and New Year cards, at times the lanterns they hold are no longer faithful depictions of Japanese lanterns, but their evolutionary roots are clear. Below to the right is a New Year's card at the Missouri History Museum of a 1909 New Year's postcard, showing three children and a dog holding digit signs for year, with the caption "A happy New Year." The dog in the postcard is holding a pail not a lantern, giving it a rustic touch, and the artist has colorized and stylized the lanterns in his own way, but they still possess the horizontal ribs that are the hallmark of chochin folding lanterns. The lanterns in the two Pauli Ebner cards (left and center) have been 'streamlined' but they too come in the classic two iconic chochin shapes of a sphere or a cylinder, in red and white.

Left and center: Pauli Ebner season's greetings cards. **Right:** Author unknown, New Year postcard, 'A happy New Year', chromolithograph showing three children and a dog holding digit signs for the year 1909, created in 1908, MHS Photographs and Prints Collection (identifier: N38792), Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

Such decorations as Japanese folding lanterns, and the oriental porcelains we saw earlier, were very much the fad in Victorian times. Another indispensable item, especially for the more exclusive circle of Japonists, a mark of aesthetic sophistication and luxury, was the Byobu---the painted folding screen. James Tissot's 'Young women looking at Japanese objects' was one of many that situated the byobu as a central element of a picture's composition, but his seems to have had particular appeal and became an iconic image of refined aestheticism and an inspiration to other artists, such as William Coleman, in his design of a Christmas card for the Thomas De La Rue Company of London. De La Rue, for a decade or so (c. 1874-1885) was one of the major players in the greeting card market, known for its original and unusual designs, which often incorporated a Japanese aspect into them.

Left: William S. Coleman design with a byobu folding screen for De La Rue and Co. (from 1878-85) in Gleeson White, *Christmas Cards and Their Chief Designers* Christmas extra of *Studio,* London, 1894, New York, 1895. Unfortunately, the book's illustrations are monochrome. The Coleman picture is one where yellow/orange floral designs are scattered on a beige screen, and the dishes above and the pot with plant in the foreground are blue and white. **Right:** James Tissot's 'Jeunes Femmes regardant des objets japonais' (Young women looking at Japanese objects), oil on canvas, c. 1869 (61 x 48.3 cm), The Dobra Collection (private), New York. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, public domain.

The William Coleman designed De La Rue card (c. 1878-1885) above to the left, with a woman and girl admiring a Japanese or Japanese style byobu folding screen, clearly takes from James Tissot's 'Young women looking at Japanese objects' (1869), though it is somewhat less obviously oriental in the motifs it uses compared to Tissot, but still, the folding screen, and the blue and white porcelains in the background and plant potter clearly are all part of an exotic, Eastern theme.

Hildesheimer & Faulkner Company introductory card to set, 'Hildesheimer & Faulkner's Christmas and New Year Cards 1885', Appleton & Co. publishers, New York, April, 1885, chromolithograph card stock (5 1/8 x 7 7/16 inches), verso at top: 'Extracts from Opinions of the Press', followed by comments from eleven different British local newspapers, and at the bottom: 'Gold Medal (Highest Award), International & Universal Exhibition, London, 1884.'

Here we see the folding screen, though decorated with scenes of a more typical English countryside, nevertheless part of an arrangement conscious of Japan, with a large red ogi, or Japanese folding fan in the foreground, and a celadon-like bluish vase partially hidden by the screen and vines asymmetrically extending from it. ---What brings them together, in this surimono reminiscent composition, is the common theme of japonaiserie.

The following Christmas cards are another example of this style of japonaiserie, though with a satirical aspect:

Albert Ludovici II designed Hildesheimer and Faulkner Co. season's greetings card, onet of four from the "Quite too-too!" set, a prize-winning design (each 12.5 x 8.5cm) printed by improved color lithography. 'May You Have a Quite Too Happy Time', 1881. V & A Museum accession no. E.2415-1953 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The Albert Ludovici II (1852-1932, Czech) designed season's greeting card depicts a woman holding what is likely a Japanese or Chinese teapot, standing in front of a Japanese byobu (folding screen) decorated with a pair of tsuru cranes (though only the lower half of one and the upper half of the other is visible due to the teapot). The Victoria and Albert Museum online commentary describes it as: "A woman in a terracotta-pink dress with high waist and puffed sleeves and black satin poke-bonnet with orange feathers holding a big brown teapot. Behind her, a Japanese four-fold screen with cranes painted on it and a blue and white porcelain vase with lilies on a table." And as to the meaning of the image:

> "The set of cards of which this is a part parodied the Aesthetic Movement, with its followers' love of Chinese and Japanese objects and certain plants, such as lilies and sunflowers. Their fascination with tea pots was satirised in particular. George du Maurier drew a number of cartoons satirising the Aesthetic Movement for 'Punch' magazine, including a cartoon entitled 'The Six-Mark Teapot'. In it, the 'Aesthetic Bridegroom' and his 'Intense Bride' are looking at a teapot. He declares 'It is quite consummate, is it not?' and she replies 'It is, indeed! Oh, Algernon, let us live up to it!' "

While Ludovici's painting may be a caricature in terms of thematic message, it is a serious artistic work in terms of technique and motif, exemplary of the Aesthetic Movement. And it is also true that teapots, as well as other oriental wares, whether Japanese or Chinese, were collected with great earnestness in the late 19th century in Britain.

The following is a comparison of a surimono, by Ryuryukyo Shinsai (1764-1820), one of leading masters of the surimono art form, from the early 19th century, next to an illustration in Buday, of a Christmas card by Angus Thomas, probably from 1895, since a check for 'five thousand a year', dated Dec. 25, 1895. is attached to it according to Buday (1954: 166).

Left: Ryuryukyo Shinsai, New Year's surimono, 'Wine pot and cup' early 19th century (14.8 x 19.7 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. **Right**: Angus Thomas published 'Good Fortune Christmas card' of a tinsel teapot, 'May Christmas Joys, both Strong and Hot, Be yours, and Troubles go To-pot.' The check for 'five thousand a year' is attached to the top of the pot; Plate 140 in G. Buday, 1954, photo of a color printed card.

There are variations of this card in the color and darkness of imprinting (Buday's illustration makes it somewhat darker than most) and as to the check being attached or not, but nevertheless, it can be observed that it seems to reflect not only the visual impression of the surimono pot itself, with strong contrasting outlines against a plain backdrop, but the effect of scattered, vertically oriented, unaligned writing as an aesthetic component of design, characteristic of Japanese greetings. The tinsel added to the Angus Thomas teapot design, though not discernable from the monochrome image here, perhaps echoes the metallic pigments used in surimono. Furthermore, "the wording on the card is a play on drawing tea and cheques and other words reminiscent of teatime." (Buday, 1954: 166) Such a play of words with the object depicted, and linked to the season's greetings, was also a characteristic of surimono, though the former was mostly in the form of facetious punning, while the latter was more often learned poetic allusions.

Porcelain Japonaiserie (and Chinoiserie):

Christmas cards that simply depicted East Asian porcelains, such as Chinese blue and whites, or Western imitations of them, and Japanese Imari, for instance were popular (Hildesheimer and Faulkner Company, with bases in Britain and Germany, was one of the biggest greeting card publishers of the time, in particular, produced many of them). A few examples are shown below, together with some Japanese New Year's surimono, to point out that chinaware as a motif too, had its precedents in Japan. Surimono often depicted porcelains and drinking utensils, often for the tea ceremony. There were a good number of Christmas cards produced with a variety of oriental cups and the like, especially 'blues and whites' which are also found in abundance in surimono, of which we show only a few here.



Left: Ryūryūkyo Shinsai (1764?–1823) 'Utensils with Decorations for the New Year', early 19th century (19.5 x 16.7 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC. **Center:** Christmas card of porcelain teapot, vase, and lacquer cabinet, with the message 'A Bright and Happy Christmas', probably late 1870's to early 1890s, from 'Scrapbook of Victorian greetings cards' by anonymous, a scrapbook dated as a gift in 1874, collection of the Glasgow School of Art (at www.archive.org). **Right**: Ryūryūkyo Shinsai, 'Picnic Equipment: Teapot and Cups, Brazier, Charcoal Container, and Lacquer Food Box' (重箱に土瓶、茶碗、火鉢、木炭), surimono c. 1799-1823, kokonotsugiri (13.3 x 18.3 cm) William Sturgis Bigelow Collection (accession no. 11.20037), Museum of Fine Arts Boston. "Much of Bigelow's collection of Asian art was formed during his residence in Japan between 1882 and 1889, although he also made acquisitions in Europe and the United States. Bigelow deposited many of these objects at the MFA in 1890 before donating them to the Museum's collection at later dates."

Above we have in the center a tasteful Christmas card from a scrapbook at the Glasgow School of Art, originally given as a gift dated 1874; we may presume the card is one published after that date, given the fine color lithography of the card, probably from the latter 1880s or 1890s, though possibly from the first years of the 20th century. In any case, it shows a teapot with what appears to be a shishi lion or koma dog design, and next to it, to the right, a vase usually used for one stem or so (一輪挿し), but here somewhat stuffed with several. In the background is a dark brown urushi (lacquer) cabinet, reminiscent of those made in Kyoto. These sit on a tan, sandpaper colored surface, somewhat recalling Japanese paper or tatami mats, and very unlike the color of wooden tables, floors, or carpets in a Victorian interior. On both sides of the Christmas card are examples of surimono, both by Ryuryukyo Shinsai, a master of surimono design in the early 19th century, and of similar conception, likewise with blue and white teapots, along with other porcelains, and objects---bonsai plantings in the surimono to the left, and a lacquer urushi picnic box in the one on the right.

Next is a season's greetings card, also from the same Glasgow scrapbook, of six blue and white porcelain cups of 'Old China' from the 1880s, a card from a series of similar cards, of blue and white cups or pots singular or multiple, not so uncommonly found in other card collections. The six porcelain cups have a distinctly chinoiserie style design of a landscape with multistorey palatial structures with curving roof lines. On both sides are surimono, this time one by Katsushika Hokusai of an iron teapot and tea wares, at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam; and another by an unidentified artist, of 'Six Wine Cups' at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, some of which are blue and white porcelain of varying designs, others probably lacquer and one of glass, both from the early 19th century.


Left: Katsushika Hokusai, 'Ceramics from Soma', surimono with embossing, metallic pigments, and polishing, 1822 (20.6 x 18.3 cm, object no. RP-P-2000-211) © The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. **Center:** Christmas postcard of six cups of 'Old China', c. 1880s, from 'Scrapbook of Victorian greetings cards' by anonymous, dated as a gift of 1874, collection of the Glasgow School of Art (at www.archive.org). This card was part of a series of similar Christmas cards of porcelain blue and whites, such as a teapot and accessories, or a single cup on a saucer, and the like. **Right**: Unidentified artist, 'Six Wine Cups', surimono with poem, early 19th century (10 x 13.7 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

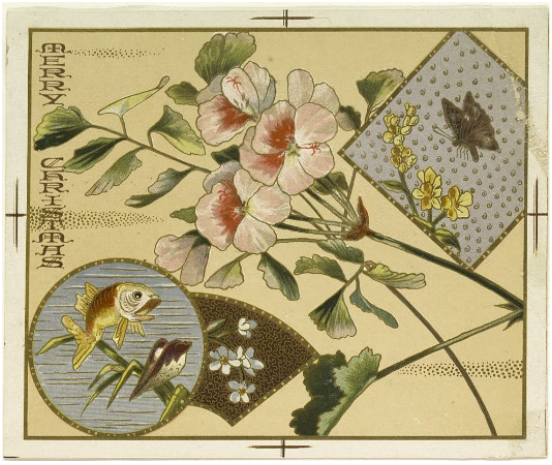
The chinaware on Christmas cards was not limited to blue and whites. A variety of brilliantly colored porcelains can be found, such as in the following rather straightforward cases of japonaiserie in the last decade of the 19th century. These are simply paintings of Japanese Imari and probably Kutani or Satsuma wares, the former of a traditional design exported from the late 17th century and the latter with conspicuous reds in the second half of the 19th century with an eye towards overseas markets. Below them are some actual examples of the corresponding ceramics from Japan in Western Museum collections. While the porcelains in the Christmas cards are highly likely to be based on Japanese porcelain pieces, during this time some imitative products, difficult to distinguish from the originals, were produced in Europe, especially in the 18th century (In 2024, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, had a magnificent display on the second floor of the influence of Japanese porcelains upon Western ceramics with Arita/Imari porcelains and their European look-alikes).

Left: Sockl and Nathan Christmas card of classic Imari-ware of the 18th -19th century type, or a faithful reproduction of them, printed c.1895, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London (permission to be obtained). **Right**: Sockl and Nathan company Christmas card of Kutani or Satsuma ware of the latter 19th century type or faithful reproductions of them; cards printed c. 1895. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London (permission to be obtained).

Imari dish, 1675-1725. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

Kutani ware, 19th century. Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati.

Also of interest are the L. Prang & Co. Christmas cards with designs based on Japanese styled European porcelains, as in the following case. Compare **1)** the circular framed fish in the Christmas card (center) with the fish similarly framed in the Minton 'Vase with Aesthetic Japonisme birds' (left); **2)** the butterfly with a spotted background (in a rectangular frame) in the Christmas card with the butterfly in a similar spotted background (in a circular frame) in the Minton vase, seen from a different angle (right); **3)** the crisscrossing floral designs in the open spaces in both; and finally the added touch of **4)** the vertical style writing on the Prang card (center), with the vertical orientation of Japanese writing, adding to the exotic effect.



Left and right: Two aspects of 'Vase with Aesthetic Japonisme birds', bone china vase, produced by Mintons (UK) and sold by Bailey, Banks & Biddle (US), 1879 (21.6 × 14.6 × 10.2 cm), Gift of H. Fortunoff and R. Grossman (object no. 2018.62.58), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. **Center:** Front side of a Christmas card, 'Merry Christmas' from a page of publisher's proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co. Volume 2, 'Christmas and New Year cards depicting birds, fish, trees, and flowers', chromolithograph, L. Prang & Co., Boston, 1880, the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection (shelf locator: MEYK+), New York Public Library Digital Collections, New York Public Library, New York.

We also find colorful porcelain still-lifes, composed of simple groups of three or four objects, often including a horizontally placed element (often a flowering stem or branch) in the foreground, were considered appropriate as season's greetings in surimono, and are also found in Christmas cards:

Left: Shozo Ittei, 'Porcelain bowl and scissors, issued by followers of the poet Tsurunoya Osamaru,1824 (21.1 x 23.6 cm). Museum of New Zealand, Wellington. **Center**: Christmas card from 'Ring-binder album containing 112 Christmas and New Year cards given to Queen Mary'; stamped: 'The "Oriel" Binder / Rd. No. 93024 / Marcus Ward & Co. Ld.' and inscribed: '1872 to 1893'. © The Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). **Right**: Yashima Gakutei, 'Specialties of Bizen Province', early 19th century (20.5 x 18.3 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Regarding the surimono above left, the Museum of New Zealand comments on its website:

> "Matthi Forrer [a Dutch authority on surimono] describes the simple arrangement of Shōzo Ittei's charming *surimono*, identifying the bowl's contents as dandelion leaves, and the textured battledore-shaped implement as a grater. The characters on the bowl are those for *fuku* (luck) and *fu* (long life), while the flowing silver emblem is that of the poetry club that assembled around Tsurunoya Osamaru (c. 1751-c. 1839). The cloth bag in the form of a monkey attached to the scissors indicates 1824, the year of the monkey. The poems are by Ki no Takane, Numakane Jun and Tsurunoya."

This sort of play on words is also to be found in early Christmas and New Year's cards, and we will encounter a few examples of it later, mostly in the form of punning in the West.

Left: Katsushika Hokusai, 'Horses money'(Paarden-geld), surimono with embossing, metallic pigments, and polishing, 1822 (21.6 × 18.3 cm, object no. RP-P-1958-282), © The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Alternative title 'Leading-a-horse money'---Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis. **Right**: Rintei Yūshin (林亭雄辰 active 1780s – 1820s), 'A vase with plum twigs and a crab on a court hat', Year of the Rooster New Year's surimono, probably 1825, kokonotsugiriban format (16.5 x 20.4 cm), Ashmolean Museum, London.

As in the New Year's surimono we saw earlier, the choice of objects, the symbols they carry, and other details all have interactive meaning and are not simply a pretty arrangement of objet d'art as in the case of most Christmas cards. It would be impossible to expect the average Western observer to comprehend those nuances, but the general impression received, of mysteriously assembled objects and their exotic designs must have stimulated artist imaginations.

The surimono above right, by Rintei Yushin, active in the two decades of the 18th century up to the 1820's, is a baffling combination of items---"a blue-and white vase containing twigs of plum blossom and a crab on an *eboshi*, a type of lacquered black hat worn by high-ranking nobles"---yet possessing a congruent message, that could hardly be deduced in the West unless a specialist in the field. We will quote at some length the Ashmolean Museum article 'Surimono and Poetry' by Kiyoko Hanaoka (at https://blogs.ashmolean.org/easternart), to drive this point home. Here is her unlocking of the surimono puzzle of word and object---first the words:

> "The theme of this *surimono* is puzzling---the meaning of the picture only becomes clear once the poems have been fully appreciated. The key to unlocking the *surimono* lies in the place name 'Akama', found in the second and fifth verses. Akama is also known as Akamaga-ga-seki (modern Shimonoseki City of Yamaguchi Prefecture) and is the place where the Battle of Dan-no-ura took place in 1185, at which the Heike clan suffered a final defeat and was vanquished. … This battle marked a cultural and political turning point in Japanese history: Japan was to be ruled by Shoguns and warriors instead of Emperors and aristocrats."

Then the objects:

> "At the site of the battle at Akama-ga-seki is found a type of crab whose shell bears a pattern resembling a fierce human face, like the crab depicted in the *surimono*. These crabs are called the *Heike-gani* (Heike crabs). It is locally believed that these crabs are reincarnations of the Heike warriors defeated at the Battle of Dan-no-ura as told in *The Tale of the Heike*. The black *eboshi* court hat on which the *Heike-gani* is placed represents the Heike family, who gained power by matrimonial links to the imperial court. The *surimono* was produced probably in the year of the Rooster, which can be surmised from the inscription around the base of the vase indicating of the date of production, the Bunsei era (1818-30)."

This is a level of the arcane the average European of the 19th century could hardly be expected to appreciate. The basic concept, on the other hand, of a season's greetings accompanied by verse, containing a play on words and frequent allusions, and where a set of objects were chosen to convey a message, was something that could be readily understood by Western collectors.

As for the Hokusai piece (above left), of a lacquer lidded red porcelain cup and a bag of money, we shall leave that for the reader to ponder, what is and how 'horses money' relates to a cup of tea. Perhaps then, and after looking carefully at the surimono that follow, it might dawn upon him how these small, mysterious prints might have stimulated the

imaginations of those with an artistic bent, whether in Europe or the Americas.

Kimono Japonaiserie

Next, we come to perhaps the most common expression of Victorian Christmas card japonaiserie, the kimono. Images of kimono clad women were popular back then, though hardly shown nowadays online in popular sites on Christmas card history. We saw earlier an example of a 'Japanese Belle' by the popular illustrator Rebecca Coleman, whose Japonaiserie style pictures are difficult to find. Here we have some charming Christmas postcards first issued in 1902 by one of the largest Christmas card publishers in Britain, Raphael Tuck and Sons, from their 'Little Geishas' series, by the illustrator Eddie J. Andrews. The clothing, fans, and hairpieces are not the only parallels to surimono; even the poses, the color combinations as well as specific kimono designs echo surimono imagery. A few comparisons with surimono with female dancers, holding fans, are shown below the 'Little Geishas'.

Eddie J. Andrews designed 'Little Geishas' series Christmas postcards for Raphael Tuck and Sons. **Left**: 'Japanese girl with green fan' with the message 'Wishing you a Bright and Happy Christmas'. **Center**: 'Blond Japanese girl in green kimono', with the message 'A Happy Christmas to you'. **Right**: 'Japanese girl with fan and chrysanthemum' with the message 'With Best Christmas Wishes'. First used in 1902, the 1904/1905 printing, chromographed in Saxony, Germany.

Two surimono prints by Yanagawa Shigenobu (1787 - 1832), both c. 1823. **Left**: 'Danseres' with poem by Mochizuki Kagenari signed left, the surimono depicts a dancer of the Osaka Nerimono festival, shikishiban format (21.5 x 18.6 cm), Rijksmuseum (object no. RP-P-1958-581), Amsterdam. One of two at the image of the same surimono image, this one with red collector's mark in the lower lefthand corner. **Right**: 'Dancing Girl and Violets', shikishiban format, ink, color, metallic pigment and embossing on paper (21.6 cm x 18.9 cm), Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of the Friends of Arthur B. Duel (object no. 1933.4.1458), Cambridge © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Two early 20th century Raphael Tuck & Sons Christmas postcards. **Left:** 'A Christmas Greeting' depicting 'two Japanese girls, vase & insert of flowers' (no. 7661), lithograph of colored crayon, verso inscribed 'Printed in the United Kingdom Copyright London', sold as a set of two images in packets of six, first use 21/12/1918, sold in the USA, Canada, and the UK, courtesy of Tuck DB Postcards (category of 'Christmas, Japanese culture'). **Right:** 'A Christmas Greeting', described as 'Japanese girl stands playing music' (no. 6007), lithograph of colored crayon, c.1912-c.1919, verso inscribed 'Printed in the United Kingdom Copyright London', sold as a set of two images in packets of 6 cards in Great Britain, courtesy of Tuck DB Postcards (category 'Christmas, people in Japan').

Uchiwa (round fan) and Ogi (folding fan) Japonaiserie

Now if we look at just at fans, including but not limited to the folding type held by the kimono clad figures above, we encounter a similar phenomenon. Besides the 'ogi' i.e. the folding fan, in Japan the flat, rounded fan called 'uchiwa', became extremely common from the Genroku period onward, that is the early 18th century, and this too became popular in the West. Uchiwa were faster and easier to make, and were produced in great number, and appear in paintings by artists such as Monet, Gauguin, and countless others. Uchiwa style Christmas cards were also popular. A few examples of such cards, juxtaposed with actual Japanese uchiwa fans, are shown below. The shaggy silk fringes attached to greeting cards further below (introduced in the 1880's, see Blair, 1986: 123-4, 'Chronology') were a that became popular (not found on Japanese uchiwa) were Victorian eccentricity that perhaps reflected the Victorian desire to fill spaces and edges with soft material, whether it be carpets, peacock feathers, curtain tassels, lampshades, or skirts for piano legs.

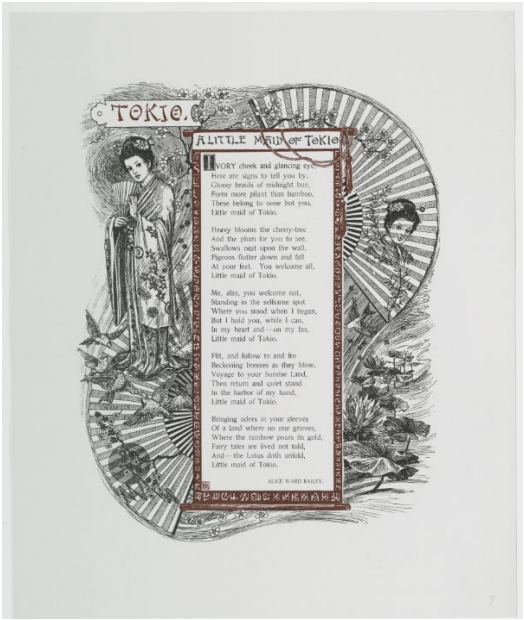
Left and right: A pair of die-cut Christmas cards, American or British, depicting a girl among daisy flowers (left), and forget me nots (right), probably late 19th, possibly early 20th century. No identifying company imprints on the backside. Both approximately 11.4 x 8.9 cm (the cards are shown enlarged relative to the uchiwa fan for comparative purposes). Private collection. **Center**: Uchiwa type fan, depicting a woman surrounded by flowers, part of the E. S. Morse Collection, acquired in Japan between 1877-1883 by Morse or though additions made in the following years up to c. 1900, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem.

Left: Die-cut Christmas card in the shape of an uchiwa fan, c. 1880s-1900s. Approx. 20 cm from top fringe to end of tassels. Front with birds and "May Christmas fill the heart with gladness", and agricultural scene on backside; blue silk fringe; no inscription. Private collection. **Center**: Japanese uchiwa fan, depicting a sparrow and flowers, E. S. Morse Collection, acquired in Japan between 1877 and probably 1890, possibly after, until c. 1900. Peabody Essex Museum, Salem. In Konishi Shiro and Tanabe Satoru (eds). *Peabody Museum of Salem E.S. Morse Collection / Arts and Crafts* (セイラム・ピーボディー博物館 モースの見た日本 モース・コレクション [民具編]). Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1988, 2005. **Right**: Christmas card in the shape of a fan with depicting a swallow in flight, c. 1880-1899. Mary R. Schiff Library and Archives, Cincinnati Art Museum. The cards are shown enlarged relative to the uchiwa fan for comparative purposes.

Left: Detail of page of 'Christmas and New Year cards depicting flowers, fans, landscapes, winter and birds', publisher's proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co., Volume 6, chromolithograph cards issued in 1884, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection (shelf locator: MEYK+, Universal Unique Identifier (UUID): 13f0b630-c5c5-012f-220a-58d385a7bc34), New York Public Library Digital Collections, New York. **Right:** Christmas card, 'A Christmas Greeting' depicting birds and flowers on fan, c. 1880-1900; private collection (© Valerie Jackson Harris Collection / Bridgeman Images permission to be obtained).

Left: Albert Ludovici II designed Hildesheimer and Faulkner Co. season's greetings card, one of four from the "Quite too-too!" set, a prize-winning design (each 12.5 x 8.5cm) printed by improved color lithography. 'Wishing you an Utterly Charming Time' 1881, V & A Museum (accession no. E.2413-1953) © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. **Right:** Yanagawa Shigenobu I (1787–1832), 'Momotsuru of the Kaideya (かいでや　もゝ鶴), as the God of Writing' (水茎の神 Mizukuki no kami) from the series 'Costume Parade of the Shinmachi Quarter in Osaka' (大阪新町ねりもの Ôsaka Shinmachi nerimono),1822 (Bunsei 5), 6th month nishiki-e, vertical ôban (37.2 x 26.4 cm), William Sturgis Bigelow Collection (accession no. 11.25826), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

This Albert Ludovici II card, one of the same set we saw before, which wishes the receiver an "Utterly Charming Time" depicts a young man contemplating a flower arrangement near a wall with a Japanese uchiwa fan. Also on the wall is a blue and white fan-like shaped, asymmetric object, perhaps a shallow blue and white porcelain Japanese dish, with a design of flowers in a Japanesque style. The artist pokes fun at the aesthete, wasting away due to some probably frivolous doubts about himself or the world at large.



Left: Detail of Ferdinand Schuyler Mathews, (1854-1938), 'Cards titled Tokio and Laciniatium with text by Alice Ward Bailey; depicting a woman in a kimono, fans, flowers, birds…' a design for 'The Golden Flower' series 1890 (see book version *The Golden Flower: Chrysanthemum* cover proof), publisher's proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co. (Boston), Volume 13, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection (shelf locator: MEYK+, Universal Unique Identifier: bbd34de0-c5c5-012f-9c5b-58d385a7bc34), New York Public Library Digital Collections, New York. **Right:** British weekly illustrated newspaper *Black & White* published on November 15, 1897, private collection.

Tesai Hokuba (蹄斎 北馬 1777-1844) 'Two Fans', surimono, c. 1820 (20 x 27.9 cm), Gift of Louis W. Hill, Jr. (accession no. P.75.51.28), Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis.

Left: Season's greeting card associated with Queen Mary of Cambridge, dated by hand 1894 (or 97) museum reference number 1947,1011.2.37 in 'Ring-binder album containing 85 Christmas and other cards, family photographs and drawing given to Queen Mary'; stamped 'The "Oriel" Binder / Rd. No. 93024 / Marcus Ward & Co. Ld.', and inscribed: '1891 to 1910'. © The Trustees of the British Museum. **Right:** 'Fan', Japanese, made of feathers and ivory, 1886, Gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Fisher, 1942 (object no. C.I.42.16.3), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The card to the left, sent between royals in the mid-1890's, is typical of the late Victorian stye of fairly realistic representations of ogi-type folding fans, and in terms of card composition, emphasizing asymmetry, both in its tilted, off-center positioning and its floral decoration, both showing adoption of Japanese design conceptions. The surimono by Tesai Hokuba (1777-1844), above it, c. 1820, is a delicately designed surimono, for not only is the fan in the foreground with the tsuru (crane) over the ocean waves done artfully, but so too the fan in back of it, with its cut-outs, delicate floral designs, and red tassel like cloth. Small red and white flowers, with their leaves, jut out from behind the corner of the fan, as flowers do in the Christmas card.

Fans were a popular motif of surimono, sometimes also cut in a fan shape, as the following by Yashima Gakutei from the 1820's:

Yashima Gakutei, Fan shaped surimono, 'Court Lady at Her Writing Table' (墨をする官女), The Spring Rain Collection (春雨集 Harusame-shū), vol.3, c. 1820s (12.5 x 28.3 cm), H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (object no. JP2352), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Left: 'Fan-shaped Christmas and New Year cards decorated with leaves and flowers', verso 'Wishing you a very Happy Christmas', section of page from publisher's proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co. and other firms, Volume 5, c. 1865-1899 (probably 1880s-1890s), The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection (shelf locator: MEYK+, Universal Unique Identifier fe04d6a0-c5c4-012f-07e2-58d385a7bc34), New York Public Library, New York. **Right:** Tenju Gyokuen (天授玉園 active 1851-1875), 'Open fan with design of cherry and mandarins', c. 1851-1875 (37.6 x 51 cm), British Museum (reg. no. 2021,3013.629), London © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Left: Art International Publishing Co. Christmas postcard, 'Xmas' and 'With all Kind Thoughts and Greetings', with line for sender name to be written at the bottom, with a framed harimaze fan design as a backdrop, c. 1906, private collection. **Right:** Utagawa Hiroshige II (二代目歌川広重 1826-1869), 'Sugoroku' (日本六十余州名所真景図会 振分すごろく Nihon rokujūyoshū meisho shinkeizue furiwake sugoroku), publisher Koshimura Heisuke (越村屋平助) of Kinyodo (錦陽堂), nishiki-e, 1850s -1860s, horizontal oban format, British Museum (reg. no. 1906,1220,0.619), London © The Trustees of the British Museum. Additional museum description: 'Cover for game of sugoroku, on central fan, Furiwake sugoroku, shuffle sugoroku.'

L. Prang & Co. (Boston) publisher proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co., Volume 5, two card images from a page of 'Christmas, New Year, birthday, and Valentine cards depicting flowers, feathers, and decorative fans', between 1865- 1899 (probably mid-1880s), The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection (shelf locator: MEYK+, Universal Unique Identifier: 028b1c00-c5c5-012f-f920-58d385a7bc34), New York Public Library Digital Collections, New York.

Left: Totoya Hokkei, 'Two Fan Designs: Plum Blossom and Wave' part of a set of 5 prints, early 19th century (21.1 x 18.3 cm), H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (object no. JP1812), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. **Center**: Totoya Hokkei, 'Fans decorated with motifs of the three auspicious dreams of the New Year' (初夢の扇と団扇), New Year's surimono, c. 1821, shikishiban format (20.8 × 17.8 cm), Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo. **Right**: Ishikawa Kazan (石川歌山 active 1810–1823), 'Design of Fans for Dance' (舞扇五座之内), early 19th century (20.6 x 18.4 cm), H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (object no. JP2097), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

A few more examples of fan motifs are shown above to give some indication of the variety of surimono designs. Regarding the 'Two Fan Designs' (above left) by Totoya Hokkei (魚屋北渓筆 1780–1850), the MET comments, "On each sheet in this set are two fans set against a decorative river motif in deep blue embossed with silver that is contiguous across all five prints in this pentaptych. The red color of the wave in the top fan indicates the title of this design; others in the group are blue, yellow, white, and black." Note in his New Year's surimono of 'Three Auspicious Dreams' (center), the uchiwa lying sideways in the lower part of the picture depicts a bird in flight much like the Christmas cards we looked at earlier. As for Ishikawa Kazan's fan designs to the right, they are strikingly modern in conception, much more so than the fans ogi type fan designs used in Christmas cards, which clung mainly to floral designs, though, as can be seen in the some of the Prang greeting card examples below, did nevertheless incorporate a Japanese ogi fan aesthetic, as in the case of the New Year card below to the far right, where autumnal leaves are strung out on a backdrop of subdued gold.

From the pages of L. Prang & Co. greeting card proofs, at The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection (shelf locator: MEYK+), New York Public Library Digital Collections, New York. **Left:** Page of publisher's proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co, Volume 4, 'Fan-shaped Christmas, New Year, Birthday, and Valentine cards depicting flowers', c. 1881. **Right:** Detail of page of publisher's proofs of the publications of L. Prang & Co, Volume 3, 'Birth announcements, birthday, Christmas and Easter cards depicting babies, angels, a stork, a cabbage patch, boats and fans', 1881, handwritten at the top: 'Proof #1193 / Xmas #924 (left), New Year #1324 (right), Birthday #47 (center).

Left: S. Hildesheimer & Co. season's greeting card, 'With best wishes of the Season.', one of a series of similar fan still-lifes no. 257, c.1890-1910, private collection. **Right:** Umekawa Tonan (梅川東南 active 1830-1860, Kyoto), 'Surimono, colour woodblock print. Drum, fan. Programme (bangumi) listed above', mid-19th century (37.9 x 50 cm), British Museum (reg. no. 2021,3013.462), London © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Left: Ryūryūkyo Shinsai (active c. 1799–1823), ' Musical Instruments for the Noh Dance', surimono, early 19th century (14.6 x 17.5 cm), H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (object no. JP1975), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. **Right:** S. Hildesheimer & Co. Christmas card, 'A Bright and happy Christmas.', one of a series of similar fan still-lifes no. 257, c.1890-1910, private collection.

The Christmas postcard below, from the first decade of the 20th century, though decked in holly, and perhaps a rural New England scene, nevertheless traces its lineage to the Japanese senmen-ga, and the surimono depicting senmen-ga, of which sufficient examples have been given above for the reader to recognize for himself. Even the style of landscape depiction, with lines crossing diagonally, we shall see, also owes to Japanese painting composition (as well as other aspects of the card have subtly assimilated Japanese aesthetic elements), which we will discuss in the chapter on 'Floral Japonisme'.

Left: Tanomura Chokunyu (田野村直入 1814-1907), 'Painting, fan leaf. Scholars in mountain landscape.' Ink and colour on paper, mid-late 19th century (14.4 x 46.3 cm), British Museum (reg. no. 1973,0226,0.61), London © The Trustees of the British Museum. **Right:** International Art Publishing Co. Christmas postcard, 'A merry Christmas', printed in Germany, 1900-1908 (card postmarked 1908), embossed (9 x 14 cm), The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection (barcode: 33333200992812), New York Public Library Digital Collections, New York.

What we have looked at is simply the tip of the mammoth iceberg of the japonaiserie phenomenon. We could have examined innumerable examples of Christmas cards like those we have seen already seen above, or focused on other objects such as Japanese umbrellas or dolls or kakemono (hung paintings for the tokonoma) and other such things identified in the Victorian mind as quintessentially 'Japanese' (as to what that was, see for instance, Grace Lavers, *Quaint, Exquisite: Victorian Aesthetic and the Idea of Japan,* 2019).

Three Raphael Tuck & Sons, London, season's greeting cards, courtesy of Tuck DB Postcards. **Left**: E.J. Andrews (unsigned) designed Christmas card, one of the set 'Little Geishas' with the message 'Wishing you a Bright and Happy Christmas' and verso 'Art or Japanese Chromographed in Saxony' edition no.1605, where 'a girl in kimono holds parasol with right hand, large Japanese doll in dress in her left', first use 22/12/1904, sold in Great Britain. **Center:** Christmas card 'Best Wishes for a Happy Christmas', and verse 'All pleasure crown / this happy day / Your cares be light and few / And as you go / Life turn for aye / It's sunny side on you.' colored crayon, 'lady in blue kimono travels by rickshaw, holding flowers and yellow parasol', from set 'Christmas, people in Japan', no. 6007, c. 1912 -c1919 (corrected from 1856 on the Tuck DB Postcards website), printed and sold in the United Kingdom as two images in packets of 6 cards. **Right:** New Year card, 'For a Happy New Year Prefix N Number 3066' from the set 'New Year floral, Japanese Set', gilt embossed, 'chromographed in Bavaria', first use 30/12/1918, sold in Great Britain, with the verse: ' This sunny / message / goes to you / fragrant with / the dew of / happy memories, / and laden / with the best / of all Good Wishes'.

To mention one example from the kakemono category, we will quote Gleeson White (1895) on Charlotte Horn Spiers (1844–1914), who by the way, designed, besides Christmas cards, a variety of wallpaper patterns which to a varying degree, remind one of Japanese patterns found in katagami compendiums, as well as a fan shaped watercolor of flowers and insects very much in the senmen (Japanese fan painting) style:

> "Miss Charlotte Spiers, sister of the architect [Richard Phené Spiers], whose private cards I have mentioned, designed many sets, all of conspicuous merit. These include the well-known series of open envelope with flowers and a fan-fold "Kakemono" screen, both issued by Marcus Ward; …" (*Christmas Cards and Their Chief Designers*, 1895: 49)

Whether it be kakemono or any of the other plentiful Japanese motifs we have looked at, these are not isolated incidents but rather expressions of what might we call a 'Christmas Mundi Japonicum', or Japanesque world of Christmas design,

or even a Japanese design 'Weltanschauung'. White, speaking of the general quality and problems with quality of early Christmas card designs by the major card designers, including "Messrs Raphael Tuck & Co., S. Hildesheimer & Co., Hildesheimer & Faulkner, Ernest Nister and the rest" that nevertheless,

> "New ideals arose, and new efforts were made to raise the art of the card---with marked success in a hundred instances. But these ideals, as a rule, were satisfied with **reproductions of Japanese Drawings**, and a comic series by Ernest Griset the quaint delineator of animal life…" (1895: 22-23, bold added)

---that is, first and foremost Japanese art, after which he mentions the designer Ernest Griset already discussed above, whose works elsewhere exhibit the marks of an observer of Japanese art. Then White follows with a few other names, primarily Charles Aubert, not directly connected to Japan, and yet, even there, regarding Aubert's decorative style, in his presentation of patterns of exotic cultures, from all but Japan (as did Owen Jones, who he was a pupil of), an approach reminiscent of katagami Japanese patterns, common in book form, is noticeable (see *Katagami Style*, unabridged version, edited by the Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo: Nihonkeizaishinbun, 2012), and those published by TH (Théodore) Lambert in his *Motifs Décoratifs tirés des Pochoirs Japonais* (Paris: Ancienne Maison Charles Schmid, 1st edition, 1878), an extremely popular work going through many reprints over the decades well into the 20th century.

The same can be said of many who were considered medieval revivalists, as noted in studies of the Aesthetic Movement. Elizabeth Aslin, one of the leading authorities on the movement wrote that while the likes of Oscar Wilde claimed that "The secret of the influence of Japanese art here in the West is that it has kept true to its primary and poetical conditions and has not laid upon it the burden of its own intellectual doubts, the spiritual tragedy of its sorrows"---though this last part sounds more of a preoccupation of Western intellectualism towards religious art than that of the Japanese-- be that as it may of keeping true to Japan's primary and poetical conditions, according to Aslin, William Burges (1827-1881), architect and primary figure in the Neo-gothic movement and closely affiliated to others in the Arts and Crafts movement, were inspired by Japanese art:

> "On the other hand, Burges and his medieval followers admired Japanese ornament for the conditions which they believed produced it and without any real understanding of purpose or aim they opened up a rich new source of design motifs for trade. With the architect's enthusiasm for light colours and elegance on one hand and for Japanese-derived ornament on the other, plus the great flood of Japanese goods reaching Europe after the Japanese revolution of 1868, the mania knew no limits. The Japanese made their contribution to the Queen Anne interior just as surely as they did to asymmetrical magazine layouts. There were provincial exhibitions of Japanese art, Japanese balls, a Japanese village set up briefly in Knightsbridge, Japanese furniture, Japanese books and, of course, Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *The Mikado*." (p. 96)

Naturally that enthusiasm would permeate into ephemera, such as season's greetings cards, even those which were ostensibly medieval in theme, or at first glance of a contemporary domestic scene. Aslin concludes:

> "By 1878 a writer in the Society of Arts Journal explained that 'there has been such a rage for Japanese design of late that we are tolerably well acquainted with it. From the highest to the lowest, from the Worcester Royal Porcelain Works to Parisian children's fans we have had imitations of Japanese style.' **Directly or indirectly Japan was the strongest external design influence in England from the mid-'sixties until the end of the century.**" (p. 96, bold added)
>
> ---*The Aesthetic Movement, Prelude to Art Nouveau*, 1969

Yet as we have mentioned earlier, the vast majority of books on the history of the Christmas card or Christmas traditions rarely touch upon this topic (and the vast majority of these cards have vanished from the market). One of the few exceptions to this absence of Japan in Christmas card histories, especially in the latter 20th century, is Arthur Blair, who, in his book *Christmas Cards for the Collector,* published in 1986, was perhaps the most knowledgeable writer on the Christmas card in his day. Written from the perspective of someone who himself had spent decades gathering and observing many specimens and albums of such cards, he was more in touch with them than most academic researchers who spend their time not so much with the cards themselves, but with other researchers' writings about them; thus he was aware of the undeniable existence of the Japanese factor.

In Blair's fifth chapter, 'Novelties and Photography', he starts with a section on 'Japanese Styles' and includes several

fine examples---all different from those shown here---of japonaiserie type Christmas cards, complete with kimono clad figures in Japanese settings.

The simple historical facts---about the craze for things Japanese at the time in Britain---with which Blair prefaces his reasons for the appearance of Japanese style Christmas cards, however, is missing in the multitudinous overviews of Christmas card history that exist online, of which a sampling has been included in the bibliography, should the reader wish to verify this for himself. These commentaries almost always start with the Coleman card, and thereafter provide a few images which hardly demonstrate the peculiar nature of early, Japanese-influenced card designs. Yet after seeing the examples provided here, perhaps the reader can more readily agree to what Blair has to say:

> "A delightful group of cards can be found depicting Westernized drawings of Japanese characters and scenes. But why the sudden appearance of designs from a faraway country in the Far East on Christmas cards bought chiefly by English ladies?
>
> The fashion (or craze) for things Japanese started towards the end of the nineteenth century. Perhaps it was a mild revolt against the austerity of Victorian patriotic feeling or the development of the aesthetic movement. Whatever the reason it was a fact that objects from Japan and imitations of them occupied the leisure moments of some gentlewomen whilst they floated about their boudoirs in brilliantly coloured kimonos, or shaded themselves from the sun with sunshades of oiled silk or paper instead of the normal parasols.
>
> Much favoured, too, were Japanese fans, one of which could be used effectively during a social evening to act as a silent messenger able to convey a discreet invitation across a ballroom.
>
> When the craze spread to certain Christmas cards, many attractive series produced in Britain came on the market. But although there had always been great originality in Japanese art, British publishers were not very original in their choice of subjects to represent the culture of Japan. Was the work of a master such as Hokusai … too original, his views of Mount Fuji on his surimono (greeting card prints) too delicate for popular Western Christmas cards?
>
> Japanese paintings reveal an art form that no other country, except perhaps China or Korea, can successfully emulate. However, as far as Christmas cards were concerned, some British publishers produced a number of designs that captured the popular conception of certain Japanese social activities." (pp. 49-51)

Yet where are the Japanesque cards he mentions, and shows us in his illustrations, or those in Buday, such as Rebecca Coleman's series of 'Japanese Belles', when we go to major museums and libraries? If they are there, they are stashed away from our sight, and largely un-available in online collections.

And while Blair recognizes the appearance of obviously Japanesque elements in Christmas cards---the kimono, the fan, the Japanese sunshade and the like---the less superficial aspects of Japanese influence have escaped his attention. But actually, much else was emulated---especially in terms of artistic approach. That now, which is of far more pervasive and profound influence, is what we turn to in the next section.