During the Edo period (1603–1868) in Japan, a time when Tokugawa Ieyasu and his descendants ruled, economic growth gave rise to a more literate, sophisticated, and affluent culture, hungry for the trappings of luxury, including extravagant art. This cultural shift was described by the phrase ukiyo, or “floating world,” which was associated with the pursuit of pleasure and hedonism in urban areas. The art of the Edo period, dominated by painting and woodblock prints, came to be known as “pictures of the floating world” or ukiyo-e.

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Revealing Details in Light and Shadows

Byron Breedlove and Reginald Tucker

As an artist who successfully fused motifs and ideas from Japanese and Western art, Kobayashi Kiyochika occupies a unique niche among Japanese illustrators of the Edo period. Japanese art historian, dealer, and collector Richard Lane considers Kiyochika to be both the last important ukiyo-e artist and the first exponent of the modern Japanese woodcut. Kato Yosuke, curator of Nerima Art Museum, Tokyo, explains that “Kiyochika is often referred to as the last ukiyo-e artist” because he stuck to colored woodblock prints and “kept pinning his hope on their potential until the end, despite the diversification and development of printing techniques in modern times.”

Kiyochika’s ukiyo-e color woodblock prints, as well as his newspaper illustrations and wartime propaganda art,
Although mosquito nets were introduced to Japan from China as early as 720 ACE, during the Edo period, silken nets were desired as luxury items and were widely used well into the 20th century, until glass windows and doors, air conditioning, and pesticides became commonplace. Mosquito control with long-lasting insecticidal nets continues to offer simple, inexpensive, but not infallible protection to people in many parts of the world. However, a confluence of demographic, environmental, and societal factors are enabling mosquitoes and other vectors that spread disease-causing pathogens to expand their territories. Developing diverse integrated, innovative approaches to use alongside those measures that remain effective and to replace those that are no longer effective at controlling the spread of vectorborne diseases remains a critical public health imperative.

Bibliography


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