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NAKAMURA, Minori. Cover Image Modifications of *Le Japon artistique*: The Reception of *Ukiyo-e* in France around 1890

Le Japon artistique was a monthly art magazine published in French, English, and German from 1888 to 1891 by Siegfried Bing (1838–1905), an art dealer in Paris. The articles written by *Japonisant* (Japanese art enthusiasts) and the color reproductions of Japanese art featured in the magazine are valuable materials for the study of Japonisme. The substantial content of the magazine, which covers not only art but also culture and history, has also shown how French people perceived Japanese art at the time. Until today, the majority of research on this magazine has focused on the discourse of the articles as secondary sources for scholarship on Japonisme. However, there has been little research focusing on *Le Japon artistique* itself and fully examining the artworks included in the magazine.

With that in mind, this article will focus on the covers of *Le Japon artistique*. Each issue has a different cover image, many of which refer to various *ukiyo-e*. However, the original artworks on which the covers are based have yet to be identified. In order to shed light on this point, I investigated these magazine covers to identify them and found the sources for twenty-seven works among the thirty-six issues. My analysis reveals that many of the images on the *Le Japon artistique* covers did not just reproduce *ukiyo-e* images, but made changes to their original pictorial elements. The alterations were not standardized, rather, depending on the cover, they varied from bold changes to minor ones. For example, the cover of the fifth issue was altered by omitting the main central figure in Eishi's *Furyu nanakomachi* (1781–1789). As a result, the cover lost a visual allusion (*mitate*) to the classical theme of “Nanakomachi” and became a genre painting depicting a laundry scene. The modification suggests that the publishers might have not understood the allusion. In other words, the modification of the image used on the cover reflects how Bing's and French readers viewed *ukiyo-e*.

The period around 1890, when *Le Japon artistique* was published, was a transitional stage of Japonisme, as the popularity of exoticism was evolving into a new kind of artistic creation. According to the introduction of *Le Japon artistique* by S. Bing, he hoped that the magazine would not merely introduce Japanese art but would also provide readers with guidelines on how to understand Japanese art. If they imposed the role on the cover image, which was the first thing to draw readers' attention, then the alteration on the cover perhaps had an aspect as a vehicle to evoke the *ukiyo-e* that they experienced and learned. Furthermore, I discovered two postcards that borrowed the altered cover images. These findings indicate that the new *ukiyo-e* created in France were carried into the new visual medium of postcards.

In these ways, by focusing on the cover image modifications of *Le japon artistique*, it is possible to understand how *ukiyo-e* was received around 1890 in France, as well as get a clearer view of the artistic interaction between Japan and the West.

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