

Column 5: Diversification of Depicting Humans

Ukiyo-e prints started with portraits of beautiful women and kabuki actors, but over time, the subjects of prints have become varied, including scenes of nature, flowers, birds, and caricatures.

The depiction of humans also became more diverse, portraying not only beautiful women and kabuki actors but also various types of people. Notable examples include “Hito katamatte hito ni naru” (Men come together to make a man), “Karanoko ga yorikatamatte hito ni naru”, (IV- , 37), and “Kumanaki kage”, which depicts a side profile as a silhouette (IV- 38).

Moreover, “Hokusai Manga” is a series of art manuals by Katsushika Hokusai. It includes not only “One Hundred States of People” (reference drawings) but also illustrations of various human movements, such as dancing and shooting guns. In “Kazeno itazura” (IV- 46), which was displayed during the first half of this exhibition, invisible winds are visualized through the movement of people and objects, such as clothes billowing with the wind and flying paper.