

# DAVID'S CHOICE

an invitation to a viewing of prints from the personal  
collection of Tokyo woodblock printmaker David Bull



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properly view the content)

(Volume One)

## David's Introduction

In his 1917 book 'Chats on Japanese Prints', Arthur Ficke discussed the relative merits of collections being held by major institutions vs private hands: *"Prints are inherently suited to private exhibition, and not to public display. To sit in the library of the collector and inspect and discuss the prints one by one is a great delight."*

It must indeed have been a wonderful experience to sit in his library and have him show you the masterpieces from his collection - the rare Sharaku actor prints, the large Kaigetsudo courtesans, and the astonishingly delicate early Harunobu impressions. But how many of us can ever hope to duplicate such an experience? Ficke went on to say, *"Any person who gives evidence of a reasonable degree of interest ... may have at his disposal the services of the owner of the collection to explain, interpret, and guide,"* but these days, as those wonderful collections amassed by the famous early-day collectors are now held tightly in the vaults of museums, such opportunities have become practically non-existent.

A short time ago a reporter from a Tokyo newspaper was visiting me, and before heading down to my workshop, we sat for a while in my own 'library' and looked at some prints. We ended up pretty much forgetting about the interview, and a couple of hours later, the small table in the room had become piled high with the books and print folders that we had examined together. I had not been able to show him any original Sharaku or Kaigetsudo prints, but the things that we looked at had plenty to offer, in terms of both beauty and general interest.

This little book is an attempt to re-create that kind of experience. I have selected ten items from my (modest) collection, and am presenting them here for your enjoyment. The prints are shown to you under a natural illumination, and each one is accompanied by an audio recording: *"... the services of the owner of the collection to explain, interpret, and guide."*

This may seem a bit 'one-sided', after all, I am here and you are there, so it might seem as though our 'conversation' must inevitably be one-way. To get around this barrier, I have created [a web page](#) to accompany this book, by means of which readers can ask questions, or make comments on what they have seen. It will be a slow conversation, but that's the way it should be. These prints have an astonishing amount of depth to them, and it is best that we enjoy them at a pace that acknowledges and respects this.



I never get more pleasure out of my print collection than on those occasions when I can sit down and show some favourite items to an equally enthusiastic visitor. Thank you for being 'with me' today.

Now ... is your room darkened? You are in 'Full Screen mode'? Got your headphones on? Good! Please turn the page and let's get started!

David Bull  
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