

100
Variations
on a
theme



Introduction

The phrase “variations on a theme” is typically used to describe a piece of music in which the central melodic theme is repeated in different forms throughout the work. However, this phrase is also a useful descriptor of a subset of Japanese picture books in which the pictures are similar in theme but differ in detail. Typically 100 variations (i.e., pictures) were included per book. This virtual exhibition includes eleven examples of these “100 variations on a theme” picture books, chosen from the Reader Collection of Japanese Flower-and-Bird Art. The eleven books are grouped by their theme in the table below.

Theme	Book Title	Book number
Flowers	● 100 Kinds of Flowers	1
	● 100 Varieties of Chrysanthemums by Bairei	2
	● 100 Chrysanthemums by Keika	3
Birds	● Picture Album of 100 Birds by Bairei	4
	● Picture Album of 100 Birds by Eishō	5
	● 100 Cranes by Tennen	6
Ideas for Craftsmen	● Picture Album of 100 Ideas	7
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Examples of Paintings by Famous Artists	● Picture Album of 100 Fan Paintings by Celebrated Masters	9
	● 100 Drawings by Kōrin	10
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For each of the eleven books, a sample of the 100 variations (i.e., pictures) are shown below and the following information is provided: book’s theme, title, author and date, names of the flowers and (or) birds depicted, picture size and printing method.

Flowers

1 *Sōka Hyakushu* (i.e., 100 Kinds of Flowers) by Bairei Kōno, 1901-04, woodblock prints, 155 x 240 mm

Top left – Morning-star lily (*Lilium concolor*)

Top right – Japanese kerria (*Kerria japonica*)

Bottom left – cobra lily (*Arisaema sikokianum*)

Bottom right – Japanese flowering cherry (*Prunus lannesiana*)



Flowers

2 Bairei Kiku Hyakushu (i.e., 100 Varieties of Chrysanthemums) by Bairei Kōno, 1891-6, woodblock prints, 330 x 250 mm

Top and Bottom – varieties of florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum grandiflorum*)



Flowers

3 Keika Hyakukiku (i.e., 100 Chrysanthemums by Keika) by Keika Hasegawa, 1893, woodblock prints, 220 x 300 mm

Top left – florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum grandiflorum*) variety 'crimson beard'



Top right – florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum grandiflorum*) variety 'crimson leaves of evening'



Bottom left – florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum grandiflorum*) variety 'crane against the rising sun'



Bottom right – florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum grandiflorum*) variety 'luster of sword'



Birds

4 Bairei Hyakuchō Gafu (i.e.,
Picture Album of 100 Birds by
Bairei) by Bairei Kōno, 1881,
woodblock prints, 165 x 250 mm

Top left – brown-eared bulbul
(*Ixos amaurotis*)

Top right – golden eagle (*Aquila
chrysaetos*)

Bottom left – blue rock-thrush
(*Monticola solitarius*)

Bottom right – golden pheasant
(*Chrysolophus pictus*)

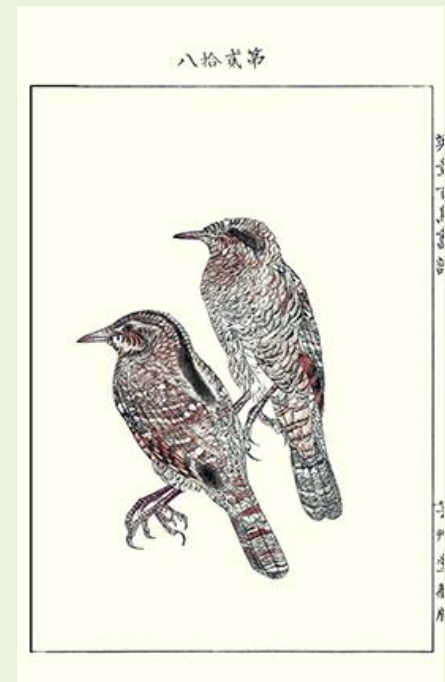
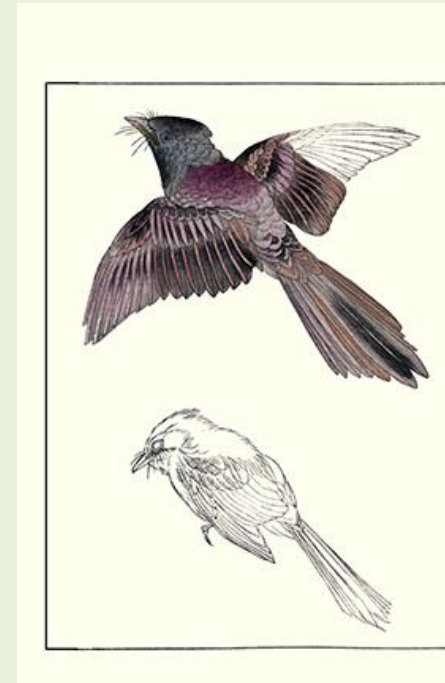


Birds

5 Eishō Hyakuchō Gafu (i.e., Picture Album of 100 Birds by Eishō) by Eishō Tsuchida, 1913-25, woodblock prints, 225 x 330 mm

Top left and right – Japanese paradise-flycatcher (*Terpsiphone atrocaudata*)

Bottom left and right – Eurasian wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)



Birds

6 Tennen Hyakutsuru (i.e., 100
Cranes by Tennen) by Tennen
Kaigai, 1900, woodblock prints,
200 x 315 mm

Top and bottom – red crown
crane (*Grus japonensis*)



Ideas for Craftsmen

7 Hyakukō Gafu (i.e., Picture Album of 100 Ideas) by Kitarō Hayashi, 1893, intaglio prints, 175 x 120 mm

Top left – bunchflower daffodil (*Narcissus tazetta*) and black-billed magpie (*Pica pica*)

Top right – white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*)

Bottom left - florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum grandiflorum*) and red-flanked bluetail (*Tarsiger cyanurus*) with wind orchid (*Neofinetia falcata*) below

Bottom right – cormorant (*Phalacrocorax* sp.)



Picture Lessons

8 Shūga Hyakudai (i.e., 100 Subjects for Lessons in Painting) by Gyokushō Kawabata, 1898, woodblock prints, 330 x 250 mm

Top – eulalia grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*) and great tit (*Parus major*)

Bottom – heavenly bamboo (*Nandina domestica*) and brown-eared bulbul (*Ixos amaurotis*)



Examples of Paintings by Famous Artists

9 Meika Hyakusen Gafu (i.e., Picture Album of 100 Fan Paintings by Celebrated Masters), edited by Shōkei Yamada, 1896, woodblock prints, 255 x 165 mm

Top – Japanese chestnut (*Castanea crenata*) and varied tit (*Sittiparus varius*) by Ōkyo Maruyama

Bottom – purple magnolia (*Magnolia liliiflora*) and Japanese bush-warbler (*Cettia diphone*) by Goshun Matsumura



Examples of Paintings by Famous Artists

10 Kōrin Hyakuzu (i.e., 100 Drawings by Kōrin), edited by Hōitsu Sakai, 1812, woodblock prints, 180 x 255 mm

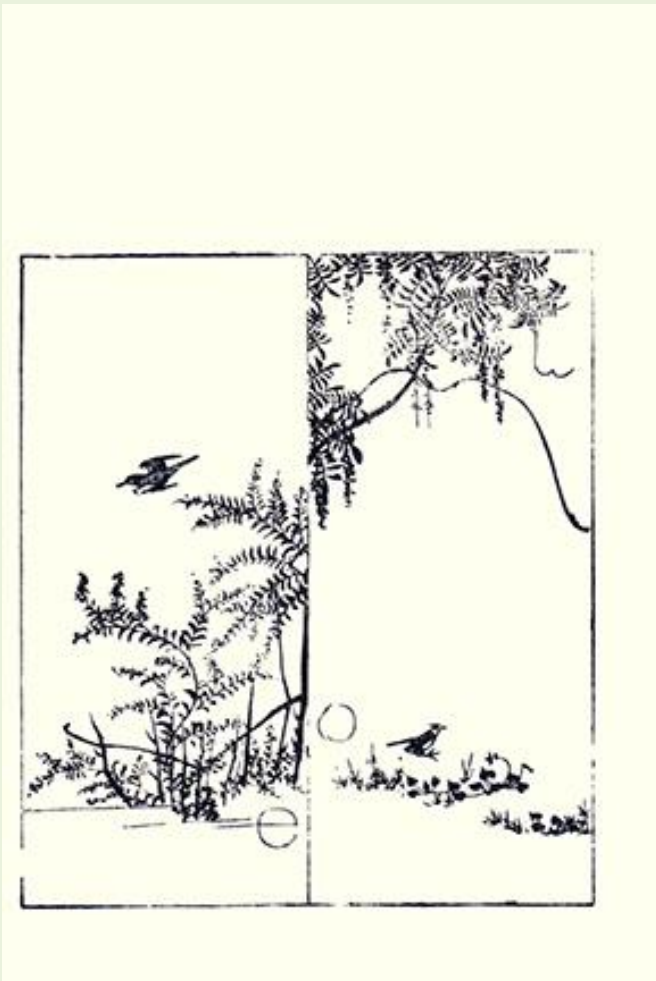
Left – lespedeza (*Lespedeza* sp.) and lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*)

Right – Japanese wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*) and skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Top – Japanese wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*)

Middle – plum (*Prunus mume*)

Bottom – tree peony (*Paeonia suffruticosa*)



Examples of Paintings by Famous Artists

11 Kōrin Shinsen Hyakuzu (i.e., 100 Newly Selected Pictures by Kōrin), edited by Teizō Matsumoto, 1891, woodblock prints, 190 x 260 mm

Four panels from a screen painting by Kōrin Ogata showing lespedeza (*Lespedeza* sp.), red-crowned cranes (*Grus japonensis*) and white-naped cranes (*Grus vipio*)



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