The Humble Critic
—Symbolism and Poetry in the Work of Richard Keith Steiner—

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(Received May 8, 2006; Accepted for publication August 18, 2006)

Richard Keith Steiner is a modern woodblock print artist and founder of the Kyoto International Woodblock Association (KIWA). He studied under master Masahiko Tokumitsu, whose artist name was Shito, or ‘Thoughtful Knife,’ in Hiroshima for ten years from 1970–1980, whereupon he was given the artist’s name Tosai and a license to teach. He has dedicated himself to teaching and creating woodblock prints ever since, though he once tried unsuccessfully to give it up. Steiner, awarded the “New Talent Prize” in 1976 by the Nippon-Kai Print Association, has held numerous private and group exhibitions in Japan. He has also submitted work internationally to exhibitions in Spain, Poland, Canada, the United States, and Brazil. In keeping with the original Sosaku hanga movement, or the Independent School, he has broken away from depicting the more traditional themes in his work though he is not an abstractionist. Rather unusual for his genre, he considers himself first and foremost a poet. This paper will examine the themes expressed through symbolism and poetry embedded in Steiner’s woodblock prints, and will consider the underlying values which inform those choices. Influences upon the artist, his teaching style and methodology, and his work with KIWA will also be elucidated.

Key words: Woodblock printmaking, Richard Keith Steiner, Poetry, Symbolism

Part I—Independence:
Historical and Personal Background

Historical background

Upon arriving at Steiner’s studio in Kyoto, I expect to find prints of elegant Japanese women in kimonos and peaceful scenes of the Japanese landscape, the unconscious image I have absorbed of what a woodblock print should be from having observed Ukiyo-e woodblock prints and exhibitions. Much to my surprise, the artwork Steiner presents is free from those stylistic constraints and is more reminiscent of a modern painter working with oil or watercolor. Images of Picasso and Keith Haring come to mind as I browse through Steiner’s collection of prints, not to compare his art with theirs, but rather because of the sense of freedom of spirit and expression which exudes from the work. Finding such completely untraditional work is a bit of a shock to me, as I had expected Steiner to fit into a mold which clearly he does not.

To properly understand this situation, it is necessary to gain a historical perspective, for in a sense Steiner’s work represents a microcosm of what has happened in the wider world of woodblock printing in Japan. Beginning with the early 20th century, in approximately 1915, there was a crisis in Ukiyo-e due to rapid modernization, and this led to the growth of two separate and distinct movements. The first one, called the New Ukiyo-e movement (or Shin hanga) is quite

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famous and has modernized traditional Japanese printmaking while using the same subjects as before. In Ukiyo-e, there had been a separation of skills: drawing, carving, printing, and publishing, and this division was maintained in the New Ukiyo-e movement (artelino.com, Merritt 1990, Statler 1956).

On the other hand, the Independent Artists' movement (or Sosaku hanga—literally translated as "Creative Prints") boldly broke away from traditional Ukiyo-e. These artists wanted to protect their individual identity and integrity, and to create their work solely and totally by themselves. Having been exposed to European art during the Meiji era, they had assimilated the idea of art as the product of creative genius (artelino.com, Merritt 1990, Statler 1956). Ikue Yoshitome, Assistant Director of the Kikai Gallery, explained to me that "in those days, due to the historical background of printmaking in Japan, artists had to be daring to use the term Sosaku hanga because 'hanga' was recognized only as Ukiyo-e among the people. Ukiyo-e was a print art under control of the publishers, whereas the Sosaku hanga movement embodied a piece of art drawn, carved and printed by the artist to express his creative sensibility for life."

While the New Ukiyo-e movement enjoyed success and popularity, particularly among Westerners, the Independent Artists' movement did not. According to Naoteru Yoshitome, Director of the Kikai Gallery, "While the artists were active, their printed works were not accepted as serious expressions of art and were often mockingly called 'half art', which resulted in scanty sales opportunities" (Yoshitome 1995). Artist Tomikichiro Tokuriki offered confirmation of this when he lamented, "I'd rather do nothing but creative prints, but after all, I sell maybe ten of them against two hundred for a publisher-artisan print" (Merritt 1990, Statler 1956, artelino.com).

Varying dates are listed for the end of the original Sosaku hanga movement, but Yoshitome places it "some years after World War II" (1995), and John Fiorillo agrees: "The personal and experimental nature of Sosaku hanga makes it difficult to group the prints into easily identifiable categories, yet it is that very eclecticism which made the movement so vital just before and for a brief time after the Second World War" (2004). Ikue Yoshitome further clarified this for me: "After the war, the concept of creative prints got to be normal for us as Western art concepts came into the Japanese world of art. Therefore, the term Sosaku hanga, used as a proper noun, covers the period extending from the late Meiji era to the end of WWII, which is approximately the first half of the 20th century. The current Creative Prints movement is different from Sosaku hanga of that period."

Nevertheless, there are those who continue to work in the same manner as the original Sosaku hanga artists (Fiorillo 2004), carrying on in their own unique way, with Steiner among them. As was true of the original genre, the current one is rather heterogeneous making it difficult to compare artists with one another. Therefore, this paper will examine one artist in detail (Steiner) to gain a greater understanding of the sensibilities involved in his poetic and artistic expression in the hopes that this will shed light on the overall trends and tendencies among modern creative printmakers.

Personal background and training

Perhaps it is not surprising that Steiner became a woodblock print artist, given that he likes to work with his hands and he has a penchant for flat (two-dimensional) art. He spent his youth in the country where they raised goats, rabbits and ducks. He was born in Saginaw, Michigan, in 1939 and grew up between Saginaw and Bay City, which is on one of the Great Lakes, Lake Huron. Bay City had a thriving lumber industry in the late 19th century,
including many sawmills and shipbuilders, and legend has it that the fictional lumberjack, Paul Bunyan, was based on a man from the area.

As a young man, Steiner left Michigan to pursue a career in photography in New York City. He came to Japan in 1970 whereupon he began studying woodblock printmaking under Masahiko Tokumitsu, whose artist name was Shito, or ‘Thoughtful Knife’. Steiner took to this new art immediately. In his own words, “Without a doubt, Masahiko Tokumitsu was the initial and main influence on me. His attitude towards the looseness of the techniques I appreciated and readily imbued. His carving was unsurpassed.” Steiner explains that he himself made rapid progress in carving and printing, despite his inability to speak Japanese: “It is a see-and-do art/craft form. That is the way I teach my deaf students, too.”

In addition, Steiner studied color printing under Hiroshi Yoshida’s oldest son, Toshi. He describes it thus:

I studied color printing from Toshi Yoshida during his special two-week autumn sessions up in the mountains of Nagano. I took this opportunity three years in a row. Toshi was by far the most informed and yet the most modest printmaker I have ever met. His family is an art family of some fame, and his father, Hiroshi Yoshida, was world famous in his day, during the Taisho and Showa eras. Hiroshi was very instrumental in creating the New Ukiyo-e Movement with his like-minded friends.

The camp was actually a very large, abandoned middle school composed of several buildings including a gym, pool, workshop, and coffeehouse. The population of children in the area had declined to the point where it was not viable to keep sending them to this out-of-the-way place. Toshi got it and converted it into an art colony of sorts. Besides printmaking, there were also classes in watercolor, glass blowing (they had a hot-glass kiln!), furniture making, dyeing, and more. During summers, several hundred children with teachers would spend a few days there for their summer camp.

There was nothing but nothing in the vicinity, only soba fields and mountains. Not one other building could be seen from any window. The area was famous for being the escape grounds for other renowned Tokyo artists and musicians. In the evening, we would all sit in the coffeehouse listening to music or more likely talking with Toshi or with some guests who dropped by for coffee and talk. These were highlights of the experience. The buildings burnt down several years ago, after Toshi had already passed on.

Although Steiner has said that he likes nature, his chief concern is the human drama. Therefore, he does not shy away from creating prints with people in them, and usually his prints tell some kind of a story or illumine some aspect of human suffering. “In my prints, for the most part and over the years, people appear. I like people and have never been intimidated by the old saw that people are the hardest subject matter for an artist to draw. True, faces and hands are difficult to render realistically. But I do not draw people with photographic reality. I like deformation in art, though not an extreme or violent sort.”

When asked about influences upon his work, Steiner replied, “As for my style, themes, and subject matter, I can’t find who or what was a direct influence. Some of the techniques, yes, but the aesthetic? I want to think that all my work is my work solely, that it comes whole cloth out of my life experiences, as a male, as a Westerner, as an American, as a farm boy, as a one-time photographer, a child of a divided family, and so on.” In fact, Steiner says that he did not directly choose his path, but that in a sense it chose him. “I did not drift into the movement which followed on the heels of Sosaku hanga. Tokumitsu was already there, having been a
friend of Munakata Shiko. When I arrived in Japan, I knew nothing about the divisions of prints. So, I had no choice, in a way. Only after having studied for ten years, and then studying ‘briefly’ under Yoshida, did I come to understand the differences. I would have chosen this anyway, because it better suits my temperament.”

**Part II—Prescence and Intuition**

In speaking with Steiner’s wife, Kimiko, I learn that he creates his woodblock prints from inspiration, he does not think things through intellectually and cannot describe off-hand why he created what he did. When he is holding an exhibition, he will spend hours in the gallery reflecting upon his work which enables him to answer questions posed by visitors. However, it is not a natural response for him to be able to explain his work. She says that often when his work is freshly created it is “too weird” for her, and she does not want him to exhibit it. Yet, a few years later, the work makes sense and she and others can relate to it. Therefore, she feels that an artist is a few steps ahead of the rest of society, and can perceive things which seem strange to the public at large but which in fact are slowly coming into people’s consciousness.

Steiner himself explained the situation this way:

Over time, I came to learn that imagination was a betayer - that inspiration was where I could “go” to get ideas. But one doesn’t go there; the ideas come from inspiration-land of their own accord. We just have to believe this, and await their arrival. And, do they ever come when we have this mindset. In recent years, I have had no problem with ideas for prints; my biggest problem is having time to go to the studio and sit before a blank sheet of paper.

Being in touch with that creative source, as Steiner is, can be seen in a work he created called ‘The Eighth Day’. This is an image of an insect done in five or six colors, the antennae of which are formed by the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. On the forehead of the bug are depicted symbols of three of the major religions of the world: a cross for Christianity, the Star of David for Judaism, and a crescent moon for Islam. Planets can be seen on the body of the insect, indicating the cosmos, and humanity is expressed through numerous human faces in its eyes. The Twin Towers are bent back over the body of the insect. This woodblock print was created in May 2001, four months prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In Steiner’s own words:

God made the world in 7 days, or rather 6, and then rested on the 7th day.

What He did was good. But on the 8th day, evil arose in the form of highly organized, business-like religion. It is a cockroach-like animal or insect, bent on destroying human-kind. It is everywhere in the cosmos, seemingly, and could possibly be everything material in the cosmos. God didn’t make the material universe but the spiritual one. So, evil, error or whatever name you want to use, rules in its world, only.

Aside from the three symbols on the forehead of the insect, there are not really any other clearly indicated symbols. But it was religion which brought down the Towers, and which holds so many people in its gaze.

The theme of religious persecution occurs again in Steiner’s work called ‘Pontius’ (December 1989), which is about Pontius Pilate and the Crucifixion. Steiner’s disdain for organized religion and the damage it has done is a sentiment shared by John Lennon, who said when being interviewed by a friend in 1966, “Jesus was all right but his disciples were thick and ordinary. It’s them twisting it that ruins it for me” (Cleave
Lennon's comments were misinterpreted and he later apologized and explained, "I never meant it to be a lousy anti-religious thing" (Lennon 1966). Steiner, while quick to make "slams against hypocrisy," concedes that the ideals behind religion are good, it is the human execution of them which causes trouble. He does not single out any particular religion but feels this way toward them all.

In addition, Steiner shares no love for governments that disappoint him. In a large woodblock print called 'PEACE PEACE,' created in September 1990, the following vignette forms a central part of the work:

PEACE PEACE we cried for with great shouts, we prayed for, talked up, published essays on, pondered over, argued after, predicted, legislated, painted, sculpted and declared our love of. Then across our sun comes one small, queer, crazy cloud -- suddenly we flex our fat, hiss horrible threats, redden our faces in hate, and with awesome energy we cry out for arms and havoc.

This is Steiner's impression of what some governments are doing, particularly in the wake of 9/11, though the print was made more than fifteen years ago, eleven years prior to the attacks. Clearly, Steiner has been disgruntled with various governmental policies for some time.

Steiner does not hesitate to take aim at society at large either, including the customs and habits which people participate in unthinkingly. In 'Attention Please' (1995), beautiful men with shaved heads are looking wide-eyed at a sign. It reads:

Attention Please

What are you thinking? Why do you continue to permit these lies? What do you gain? Is it really worth it? Living as fools, you sicken yourselves and then die, the biggest lie. Knowing the truth of living, nevertheless you waste life and earth through greed and fear. Open season on everything that moves, is alive or in your way. Fools for accepting The Cheater's lies, you suffer yet think you don't know why. Moaning in despair, regretting the fate you so cleverly created, sliding out of a last, false spasm of glee, to whom can you turn? The fools' reward: in the next great darkness, there is only no-seeing, no-hearing, no-feeling; an endless aloneness in no-body.

All of the above-described works are rather dark in imagery and symbolism, and do not leave the viewer with a feeling of comfort, but serve instead to create a sense of unease. While this group of Steiner's works cannot be called uplifting or peaceful in feeling, the message contained within them is nevertheless reminiscent of Lennon's song, 'Imagine' (Lennon 1971). (See Appendix A for the full lyrics.) According to the BBC, Lennon described 'Imagine' as "Anti-religious, anti-nationalistic, anti-conventional, anti-capitalistic, but because it is sugar-coated it is accepted. . . . Now I understand what you have to do. Put your political message across with a little honey" (bbc.co.uk/radio2). (This worked so well that on National Poetry Day 1999, 'Imagine' was voted Britain's favorite song lyric.)

In fact, just a week and a half after 9/11, on September 21, 2001, Neil Young chose to perform 'Imagine' as part of a large televised benefit concert to raise funds. According to Neil Strauss of The New York Times,

'Imagine' quickly became the soundtrack of hope in the wake of Sept. 11. Chief among its many attractions is this verse:

\textbf{Imagine there's no countries}
\textbf{It isn't hard to do}
\textbf{Nothing to kill or die for}
\textbf{And no religion too}
\textbf{Imagine all the people}
\textbf{Living life in peace...}

Written on the back of a hotel bill on an
airplane, 'Imagine' has been embraced as a universal anthem since its release in 1971. The song's critics, however, see Lennon's sentiments as naive, ... a completely impractical proposition put forth by a man far removed from reality. But the reason critics dislike 'Imagine' also happens to be exactly why the song, and all such art, is necessary. It envisions, and in doing so creates, a world we can't in real life (Strauss 2001).

While Lennon "presented the challenge like a master speaking to you, the listener and disciple, who must change yourself in order to change the world" (Strauss 2001), Steiner prefers to shake up the status quo by portraying injustice and discrimination as he sees it, however painful and grotesque that may be. Both of these individuals are striving for a better world through their artistic expression, though it is difficult to mention anyone else in the same breath as John Lennon.

Part III—Romance and Spirituality

As is well known, Ukiyo-e prints were frequently accompanied by poems of a classical or contemporary nature, including death poems (Fiorillo 2001). However, gradually this tradition died out and modern woodblock printmakers do not usually put poetry with their work unless they are reprinting or recreating items from the past, such as David Bull's Hyakunin Isshu or 'One hundred poems from one hundred poets' series. This series was "reproduced from an old book containing illustrations of the poets accompanied by calligraphic renderings of their poems. It was designed by the Ukiyo-e artist Katsukawa Shunsho and published in Edo (old Tokyo) in 1775" (Bull, 2000). Steiner is an exception in this regard. Steiner's wife, Kimiko, describes her husband as "a very poetic person," and he agrees. He considers himself primarily a poet, and therefore uses poetry and other literary devices in his work. In addition, he expresses his ideas with lyricism in tone, color combination, flow and movement. In spite of his poetic tendencies, however, because woodblock printmaking is his primary creative outlet, I believe he will be remembered more as an artist than as a poet.

Similar to William Blake (Frye 1947), Steiner views his work as coming from a spiritual source:

These ideas come from a divine, or spiritual source, and not from our brain. The human brain is capable only of poor or even harmful thoughts. Selfishness, greed, hatred and fear are what it is mostly capable of conceiving. Through prayer and meditation, we can overcome the human brain's willfulness and weakness, and reach a somewhat higher level of thinking and acting. As for my creative process, I now rely solely on this technique.

So, mostly ideas come at the studio table. But they also come when I am walking, riding, talking, and most importantly, when I am rising up out of deep sleep into a waking state in the morning. Some of my best prints have come to me as "visions" seen in that brief moment between sleep and wakefulness. I see the image, remember it if it was powerful, and at the studio put it onto paper.

One of the prints Steiner created in January 1989, 'Lingering Doubts,' contains a poem which displays tenderness and vulnerability. It was printed on off-white postcard-size paper with orange-red lettering.

Lingering doubts,
today were
dispelled~

Word of your love
heard in winter's
wind~

Further evidence of the romance in Steiner's work can be seen through the 'Red Poem' series, a total of seven poems conceived and executed over a twenty-five year period beginning with
his days in Hiroshima. One day, the poems naturally stopped. Following are the words of the poems which were printed on off-white postcard-size paper, lettered in red or pink, with one word per line in each poem. (The spacing has been condensed.)

Always listening for the music of love I can hear you singing

Truly this golden love enfolds everything just necessary for eternal joy

Wandering among various women what a wonder to finally find one like you

Seeing your face even from afar delights the eyes soothes the soul

Yes chances missed today do become promises for tomorrow’s encounters

More than words your eyes speak of love love love

And thinking about the world’s noisy troubles always reminds me of our own quiet love

These poems speak of tenderness, hope, and intimacy, themes which are diametrically opposed to the ones examined previously. It seems there is an allowance for love and beauty in individual relationships which shines through Steiner’s work, while the darker themes of the human condition are reserved for larger entities such as government, religion, and society. This is in keeping with Steiner’s approach and identity as an artist, in that he perceives and comments on what is happening around him. He adopted a ‘nom de plume’ from Chinese called Chinshe Yu Shin, which translated directly means ‘Humble Censor’. Steiner chose this name with the awareness that censors of the Chinese court were sometimes listened to and at other times banished for their opinions. It is a risk and condition he embraces wholeheartedly, yet it is difficult to assess the impact he is having on the world of woodblock printmaking at this time. This is due in large part to the fact that he is still creating, as are numerous other artists in Japan and around the world, and thus that job belongs to the future, to art critics and popular opinion. As Robert Henri has stated, “Art appreciation, like love, cannot be done by proxy” (Henri 1923, painterskeys.com).

Part IV—Isolation and Loneliness

A recurring theme in Steiner’s work, and one that emerged immediately when he began showing me his prints, is that of isolation and loneliness. His most recent exhibition, from March 7–12, 2006 in Kyoto, was called ‘Some Other Friends,’ a reference to being different (Tomonari 2006). Steiner often associates the awareness of being different with learning to adjust to life in Japan as a foreigner, but it can also be interpreted more broadly, as a comment on modern industrialized society as a whole and the isolation we all feel at times. Steiner likes insects and frequently expresses human relationships through them. For example, in a work called ‘Fred’ (1989), Fred is a caterpillar that is climbing toward some dried flowers and is about to be thrown out of the apartment by the anxious female inhabitant. The words encircling the print read, “Fred is in big trouble! And he doesn’t even like dried flowers.” Fred has not done anything wrong that he is aware of, but even so he is vulnerable and is considered scary and threatening.

In a similar vein, there is a larger work by Steiner called ‘Webbly’ which was created in July 1990. Webbly, a darling pink insect rather like a ladybug with numerous legs, is wandering away on the grass in shame. The words, in large print in the sky above Webbly read, “Webbly can’t even spell his own name correctly.” In smaller letters is written, “That’s him,” with an arrow pointing toward Webbly. It is a commentary on the pain of being different, and the shame of failing to live up to the expectations of others or to fit in comfortably with the social
milieu for whatever reason. The ache for human beings to connect with one another in our very disconnected world is inherent in Steiner's work. Mother Teresa describes this as a lack of love. When asked whether or not she felt that the hunger in America was worse than in India because of the spiritual poverty, Mother Teresa replied, "Oh yes, because there's a terrible hunger for love. [People] are just left alone, unwanted, unloved. Left alone. And so I find that much more difficult to forgive because it's in the heart, and they find it difficult to forgive. That's a terrible hunger" (Coniker 1976).

Part V—Humor and Irony

Steiner's work frequently offers a serious social commentary on life, but it would be unwise to ignore the lighter side of his work. Humor was also a theme which came up very early in the works he showed me in his studio. One was a print done in 1995 called 'Fentel,' about a daddy-long-legs named Fentel which was an exercise in carving fine lines. The words read, "Fentel often gets confused about just how many legs he really is supposed to have when he climbs a tree." It is carved in such a way that it is quite difficult to spot the spider among the lines and curves. Another piece, entitled 'Swabble' (1997), shows a rabbit named Swabble with carrots on her mind surrounded by the words, "Swabble likes to think about food almost all the day through."

In 'Standing by' (October 2004), a man is walking along a country road with a huge billboard in front of him which says, "Stand by for today's reality check." And the words at the bottom, outside of the picture read, "Standing by". And finally, 'Save this Ticket,' done about twenty years ago in October 1986, shows people dancing all over a ticket, and in large green letters near the top is written "SAVE THIS TICKET". Below, in smaller letters the caption says, "It could be worth millions." This is an inference for each person to live their life to the fullest and not throw it away.

Part VI—Service and Dedication

Steiner is a woodblock printmaker, a teacher and an active member of the art community. Answering the question, "What is an artist?" to his own satisfaction has helped to determine the direction not only his artwork but also his entire life has taken. For example, he founded the Kyoto International Woodblock Association on very egalitarian principles which he is determined to remain true to. Steiner explains, "I have never wanted to be aligned with some municipal organization because I have always wanted to be the boss. That is, I have some ideas on how a large, international art organization ought to be run, and I don't want to compromise. Membership is open to anyone, printmaker or not. Having works in the exhibitions is not tied to membership."

When an exhibition is held, Steiner invites woodblock print artists from around the world to submit their work, the only requirement being that it will not be returned because the Association does not have the funding to do so. However, once a work is received, regardless of the quality, it will be exhibited and placed in the permanent collection. The amount of effort and time required for producing an international woodblock print exhibition staffed completely by volunteers, led by Steiner and his wife, Kimiko, cannot be underestimated. (For the fourth KIWA exhibition, held in 2003, 331 prints were received from 123 artists representing 25 countries. Over 170 works were displayed in the museum, at least one by every printmaker. Notably, one artist came all the way from Turkey to receive his prize. According to Steiner, "He subsequently got some sort of scholarship to return to Japan to study woodblock printmaking in the Japanese manner, and is now teaching at the same university in Tokyo where he studied. He
has sent us a couple of prints for the next KIWA event, and they do indeed show some Japanese printmaking influence.”) The premise behind this approach is that an international art exhibition should show what is actually being done in the world, not simply what certain people determine to be worthy. This break with the elite traditions of the art world is again reminiscent of Keith Haring who wanted to create a truly public art and spent a lot of time teaching children.

Not surprisingly, Steiner’s teaching style is unique and fosters independence and autonomy. He doesn’t give his students assignments, not even from the first lesson. He encourages them to choose themes which resonate with them. If a student is struggling with that he will ask them to draw a picture of their room, for example, or give them some other ideas, but he encourages them to develop their own style. Moreover, Steiner places great emphasis on drawing. “First, as with all art, comes the idea sketch. As an artist, and I stress this when I teach, we have to spend time on this stage. This is the most important; woodblock printmaking is a combination of art and craft, but the art comes first and is the most vital. The two cannot exist alone, but art is first in order and importance.”

While Steiner was in high school, he took a creative writing course which has had an impact on his teaching style and has helped both himself and his students get over dry spells.

The teacher taught us a neat technique for when we have no ideas of what to write. He said we should sit before our typewriter and simply type one word, any word. Space, then another word, any word. And continue this for several words. Soon, a sentence would come to mind, followed quickly by an idea for an essay or story or whatever. This almost never failed. It was a wonderful way to open up the door to our ideas.

I applied this to drawing. I teach the students this and I also do it constantly. I sit and simply draw a line or shape at random on the paper, then another and another. Soon, I “see” an image or a potential image, and then I simply complete it. Details may be added or not, but the idea was there all the time, just waiting for the chance to appear. I have come to believe that every idea I have for a picture, a print, is already within me, in some room in my heart, as it were.

According to David Bull, the original Ukiyo-e prints were “a vital force for social change, as revolutionary as any political pamphlets could have been,” though this was not their intended purpose (2004). Steiner has entitled a recent print ‘Chaos is balance is perfection’ (February 2006). Perhaps this acceptance with the way things are, coupled with his acute observations and criticisms of government, religion, and modern industrialized society, will eventually lead to a more peaceful world. I believe Steiner would like differences, particularly among human beings, societies and cultures, not only tolerated, but celebrated. Steiner’s 1997 piece, ‘End of Evolution,’ mentions adoration, warmth, tenderness and delight, among other qualities. If Ukiyo-e prints will “stand forever as symbols of the power of art to change the world,” as Bull expects, then hopefully Steiner’s artwork and his dedication to serving others will bring his own life and the lives of others closer to the ‘end of evolution’ he so desires.

Appendix A

Imagine there’s no heaven
It’s easy if you try
Oh hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today...

Imagine there’s no countries
It isn’t hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace…

You may say I’m a dreamer
But I’m not the only one
I hope someday you’ll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world…

You may say I’m a dreamer
But I’m not the only one
I hope someday you’ll join us
And the world will live as one
(Lennon, 1971)

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