

MIKOŁAJ MELANOWICZ

(Warszawa)

Vision of History in the Japanese TV Drama

Abstract

The present article is the first attempt done in Poland to present the Japanese television dramas called *taiga dorama* ('river-drama'), their origins, themes, main protagonists and their literary sources. *Taiga dorama* are the historical series of the NHK television (Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai = Japan Broadcasting Corporation), playing an important role in national education. They are based on novels by popular writers, they tell about the heroes and historical events, and have been broadcast since 1963. They resemble novel series of the type of *roman-fleuve*, although they prefer to exhibit connections between the protagonists and the history of Japan against a wide social and historical backdrop rather than to present their spiritual growth. Most of these dramas depict historical figures known from the front pages of history books, not infrequently surrounded by legends. An inexhaustible source of the stories are the days of Japan's modernization in the 19th century and the heroes of those times. The author proves his thesis about the change of the history's vision in the dramas. He points out that since the 1980s a vision which has dominated is the positive depiction of the regime and rulers overturned in 1868. Viewers become aware of the fact that the customs of their country were probably shaped around the 17th or 18th centuries, and not only at the close of the 19th century under the influence of the West. Criticism and slandering of the Tokugawa rulers is driven out by identifying with the customs and ideas originated in the days prior to the 19th century. There is yet another trend of modern history exhibited in the dramas, namely glorification of the common samurai from the 18th century. Naturally in all the 47 serials there are other visions of history as well.

I shall start with an assumption that narratives, such as historical novels and TV dramas, are made for the purpose of shaping collective memory and they might provide clues for examining the attitude of the Japanese toward their past. It is possible to explain

many features of the Japanese civilization by referring to ways of regarding time that are typical for this culture. These ways are most often an expression of helplessness against passing away and against the flow of the great river in which we are immersed.¹

Among the types of time there is the so called historical time, according to which we date beginnings of a given culture. Thus it embraces an event from which we begin to measure time and to be aware of tradition, national heroes and other figures of collective imagination, usually mythological and legendary ones (for example the beginning of the Japanese state in 660 BC is symbolized by the first emperor – Jimmu). Referring to such “events” serves the purpose of legitimizing (or negating) a specific present condition. Hence it is a method of approaching the past pragmatically, “a peculiar attempt to gain power over the present time in order to find any individuality in its flow”.² It is visible in recalling the heroes of the past, especially the objects of a legendary and mythological adoration, such as e.g. Yoshitsune, Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, Ieyasu, Ryōma...). Thus we pick up some excerpts from the past, or new interpretations of a bygone time, as a reservoir for all explanations.³ Some fragments of the past are simply excluded from our field of interest. The above mentioned questions and convictions constitute a motivation for taking up interest in “history” used in television dramas. Before I draw conclusions and present a synthetic formulation of the vision of history, I shall first try to describe a cultural fact of television drama, which is the object and the source of research.

Creating a river drama and other TV dramas

In the Japanese television, since its conception, that is since 1950th, there has ruled a fashion for producing television dramas. Depending on a station, there are “Monday”, “Tuesday”, “Thursday”, “Friday” and “Saturday” dramas. Each day of the week has one particular and special theatre-and-film event.⁴ Let us add that every TV station has its chosen day and an evening hour for a television drama. And so on Mondays a drama is shown by the Fuji Television, while NTV airs a serial drama. Also on Wednesdays NTV shows a melodrama (called Tears Wednesday) etc. There are also broadcasting schedules with “continuous morning dramas”. Presently these are mainly TV series. Some are being cancelled, others renamed. The only thing that does not change is the attachment to the invariable broadcast scheduling for a TV form called drama.

¹ See Mikołaj Melanowicz, “Time in Japanese Culture”, in: *Categories of Time and Space in Eastern and Western Poetics*, ed. Eugeniusz Czaplejewicz, Mikołaj Melanowicz, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 1992, pp. 9–24.

² Andrzej Sepkowski, *Kształty pamięci zbiorowej. Wzję historii w polskiej powieści historycznej po 1945 roku*, Dom Wydawniczy DUET, Toruń 2007, p. 14.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ See: *Suiyo dorama* [Wednesday drama] (Nihon Terebi), <http://ja.wikipedia.org>; See the ‘List of Japanese television dramas’ at the end of the paper. Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org>. Japanese television drama, <http://en.wikipedia.org/>; *Nihon no terebi dorama ichiran* (List of the Japanese television dramas), Wikipedia, 2008.

Two forms broadcast by the public TV station NHK proved to be most stable, namely a “morning serial television novel”, popularly referred to as a “morning drama”, televised as 15-minute episodes between 8.15 and 8.30 from Monday to Saturday. “Morning dramas” are devoted to contemporary people and affairs, most often seen from the point of view of women. The most important, however, form of a television spectacle on NHK is *taiga dorama*, that is “a drama of a great river” or a river drama. Of course other TV stations also air many series referred to as historical. They have not, however, earned such renown or viewers’ attention as river dramas. That is why while researching on various types of Japanese television dramas, I decided to take a closer look at the visions of the past proposed by the authors of historical serials and the novelists, whose works became the basis for the afore mentioned river dramas. Since 1963 NHK television has been annually airing series about heroes and historical events. The series are based on the twentieth-century novels by popular writers, such as: O s a r a g i Jirō, M u r a k a m i Genzō, S h i b a Ryōtarō, Y o s h i k a w a Eiji. The scripts are most often written by dramatists who specialize in particular epochs of Japan’s history.

River dramas resemble *roman-fleuve*, that is series of novels showing in detail spiritual development of their protagonists, or they are family novels depicting histories of families in a broad moral and historical context. Although the Japanese television river dramas do not avoid presenting spiritual development of their protagonists, they expose their connections with Japan’s history. Thus they show their heroes engaged in political involvements with other historical – or fictitious – figures helping create the history of Japan. Not infrequently authors of such series concentrate also on the family life of a protagonist, presenting them in a broad and historical context. In some dramas a family – a husband, wife, relatives and servants – are brought to the forefront, whereas public responsibilities – especially service for a prince or other ruler, involving also taking part in battles – are moved to the shadow and often become a source of fears and miseries for a family, or else of their success and contentment. The best example of such composition is the serial *Kōmyōgatsuji* [Crossroads of Glory, 2006], a drama about a wife named Chiyo and her husband Kazutoyo of the Y a m a u c h i family at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In the majority of river dramas the historical figures depicted are those from the main pages of history books. Frequently they are the figures enwrapped in a legend of great heroes, such as brothers Yoshitsune and Yoritomo of the M i n a m o t o family (12th century), considered to be the creators of the samurai state of the Middle Ages. Two favourites of the authors of river dramas are O d a Nobunaga and T o y o t o m i Hideyoshi (16th century), hegemon of the era of wars of unification of Japan. In a colorful cultural scenery the controversial founder of the second shogun dynasty, A s h i k a g a Takauji (14th century), is brought to life, as well as T o k u g a w a Ieyasu (17th century) – founder of the third shogunate dynasty at the dawn of modern times. An unfailing source for stories and television dramas are the times of modernization of Japan in the 19th century and the heroes of those days (S a k a m o t o Ryōma, S a i g ō Takamori, and even the last shogun Y o s h i n o b u). The roles of these characters were initially played

by theatrical actors of the new school drama *shingeki* and of the traditional *kabuki* theatre or its renewed form – *shimpa*. Film actors had a difficult access to television shows due to restrictions resulting from contracts they signed with motion picture companies. That is why in river dramas there frequently appeared actors almost or completely unknown to a wider audience. Yet, owing to their presence on TV they gained popularity and became stars, for example Ogata Ken, Takahashi Hideki, Ishizaka Kōji, Watanabe Ken and others.

NHK television station introduced and maintained a rule stating that a given *taiga dorama* begins in January, ends in December and that it has at least 48 or 50 45-minute episodes, aired once a week on Sunday evening and repeated on Saturday afternoon. Up to the sixth consecutive drama (“Here comes Ryōma, 1968) river dramas were recorded and televised in black-and-white, subsequently from 1969, in color. The new *high vision* system was introduced in the year of airing the drama “The Mallow or Three Tokugawa Generations”, namely in 2000. Examining through all the 47 series (including the 2008 one) I paid attention to three elements, which were:

1. the literary source of an audio-visual story referred to as a river drama,
2. the characteristics of a drama and its main protagonists, as well as possible deviations from the original novel, and
3. thirdly, certain issues of the cast, the role of film music, as well as the scenery and presentation of the Japanese culture of a given epoch.

I began describing river dramas starting from the oldest ones, about which we possess least information, mainly due to the fact that we have no access to original recordings. Not many fragments of the earliest television recordings survived, because in those days tapes were expensive and so after having been broadcast the shows were erased in order to record new ones. In the 1960s VCRs were virtually unavailable in houses, hence we cannot hope to find any copies in private possession. Information about this one may obtain from the Internet and find out which *taiga dorama* are available as VCR tapes or DVDs produced by NHK.⁵ Having access to the recordings of newer dramas I was able to analyze them in greater detail. I got acquainted with most spectacles of this kind, namely I examined 47 series, each of them being a one-year show (50 to 52 weekly episodes).

In search of symbols of national identity (Legends of mass culture)

Historical series of the Japanese NHK television station play an important part in national education. Especially river dramas, that is long, lasting for one year (with two exceptions) series deserve special attention from critics and scholars of the Japanese culture.

⁵ See *Taiga dorama*, <http://ja.wikipedia.org>

Since television programs were commenced in Japan (1st February 1963), television – mainly in the news programs – had been presenting views close to those of the government. Gradually, however, television distanced itself from official opinions concerning particularly important in the 1960s Japanese-American relations. This tendency began to crystallize in 1960 during the May protests and it subsequently strengthened during the Vietnam war, whose opponents in Japan were plenty. At that time much of the television information expressed dissatisfaction and unfavorable comments from viewers concerning the American policies in Eastern Asia. They were not, however, a direct criticism of the Japanese government.⁶ Hence the citizens' criticism towards the authorities was focused mainly in the information on military activities conducted by the Americans, which is easy to imagine, if we remember the recent war in the Pacific. Such attitude was common – as it may seem – to many Japanese, who after 1945 had no positive symbols of national identity: the national flag and the national anthem were defiled by imperialist military activities of the imperial army in the 1930s and 1940s. Thus both symbols were associated with the then condemned nationalism.

In these circumstances the socio-psychological sense of national unity of the Japanese people was being rebuilt by the radio and later also by public television NHK (Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai – the Japanese Broadcasting Society), as well as by several other TV stations competing among themselves to gain viewers, most notably TBS (Tokyo Broadcasting Television, from 1955), and later NTV (Nippon Television Network, from 1951, the first broadcast in 1953).

This sense of national unity was enhanced by the annual concert gala of Japanese songs *Kōhaku Uta Kassen* (a competition between 'red' [female singers] and 'white' [male singers]) initiated in 1953. Later it was organized on the last day of the year. It united before the TV screens almost the entire nation. What the viewers shared was not only a desire to see and listen to their favorite artists performing in a rich and colorful scenery. It was also a nostalgia for the passing year and a yearning to experience solidarity and a sense of safety in a community, that made many people abandon the habit of visiting a temple and gather instead before a TV set for the afore mentioned concert.⁷

The second position in popularity ranks fell quickly to morning "television novels", or daily aired episodes related to seasons of the year in which they were broadcast, and river dramas at the weekends.

If "morning novels" can be compared to Latin American soap operas, although they are much more realistic, then river dramas play a role which goes far beyond cheap entertainment. And perhaps they are, on a world scale, a unique means of shaping historic imagination and popularizing national values. They also develop a sense of unity between the country's centre and other regions of Japan. Moreover, they provide an opportunity to get acquainted with the relics and places associated with a drama's plot.

⁶ Shunsuke Tsurumi, *A Cultural History of Postwar Japan 1945–1980*, Kegan Paul International, London and New York [1987] 1994, p. 62.

⁷ Ibidem.

The authors of the idea of river dramas attempt to keep a certain balance between the centre of the country and the provinces, between Tokyo and Kyoto, as well as between the capital's centers in general (Tokyo-Kyoto) and the north-eastern and south-western parts of the country. They enjoy much confidence, because they create these series mainly on the basis of novels that were known before, which depicted decisive for the nation's history events or legends. Many dramas are adaptations of several novels by Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–1996), who offered new interpretations for understanding his country's history.

While constructing program of the serials the time of the plot is also taken into account. The assumption is to avoid showing events from the same region in consecutive dramas, so as not to glorify one epoch. Of course one may notice repeating of certain legendary and mythological events, although the aim of this is to present a new concept of seeing history and historical education.

This does not mean, however, that there are no favorite historical periods or favorite legends. For example in the 1970s two out of ten river dramas were devoted to transformations and people of the Meiji era; three, to events from the beginning of the modern era (about the forty-seven loyal samurai from the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, about quarrels in the Date family from the 17th century and about Yagyu's road to championship in fencing) and two, to medieval history (a new story of the Taira family and of the times of the Hōjō regents in the 12th i 13th centuries).

From among historical and legendary events the one which was exploited most often was the topic of the vendetta of the forty-seven samurai. First, in 1964 the series "The Stray Knights of Akō" was aired. Then, in 1975 – "The Chronicle of the Great Peace in Genroku", in 1982 – "A Group from Above the Precipice", and in 1999 – "The Splendor and the Frenzy of the Genroku Era".

There is no doubt that the ideas carried by the samurai of the Akō province, who avenged death of their master, are still a challenge for the authors of historical series. This provides ground for the claim that the history and legend about loyalty of the samurai (the so called *chūshingura*) has also an exceptional meaning in the plan of reconstructing history, or rather perhaps – in reinterpreting the legend. Why is this event of 1701–1703 so significant in Japan? I explained this problem already.⁸ As I mentioned, the authors of river dramas made use of popular historical novels of such writers as Shiba Ryōtarō, who had been writing about the reformers of the mid-19th century, that is about those who contributed to creating modern Japan and were successful. But he was mainly interested in those who never tasted the fruits of modernization, because they died in a young age, as for example Sakamoto Ryōma, Yoshida Torajirō, Takasugi Shinsaku or Saigō Takamori. There are also those among his characters who managed to live to the new era of Meiji (1868–1912), yet they never became rich, nor obtained

⁸ See Mikołaj Melanowicz, „Legends of mass culture: 'dramat-rzeka' w latach 1998–1999", in: *JAPONICA*, 16/2002, p. 25–43. Mikołaj Melanowicz, „Protest i gniew w japońskim 'skarbcu wartości'”, in: Anna Duszak, Nina Pawlak (eds.), *Anatomia gniewu. Emocje negatywne w językach i kulturach świata*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2003, pp. 99–108.

high positions. In Shiba Ryōtarō's novels they rather represented disinterested values of the deceased warriors from before the Restoration of Meiji. He was interested mostly in values that were later disregarded in the course of transformation, among them the spirit of republicanism expressed best by Sakamoto Ryōma, who was fascinated with the American young democracy. Two serials concerning this topic and based on Shiba's novels were broadcast in the 1960s and 1970s. These were "Here comes Ryōma" (1968) and "The Gods of Flowers" (1977).

On the other hand the authors of "The Last Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu" (1998), which was based on Shiba Ryōtarō's novel, created an epic vision of history as a story about that which is already gone, but to which the Japanese readily go back in the times of the crisis of values. And thus they receive with understanding a tale about the forgotten "fighters for the cause" (*shishi*), who attacked the old system and yet they do not feel any need to judge the rulers against whom those warriors fought. It is worth mentioning that in the 1990s the interest in the country's past grew in Japan. This phenomenon was accompanied by losing faith in the truths and stereotypes taught in schools with the help of official history books. Shiba Ryōtarō gave an apt answer for this demand for a new vision of history.

When watching the river drama about Yoshinobu, viewers might also consider the alternative history of Japan and ask the question: what would have happened if Yoshinobu had not abdicated in the right time, that is if he had not given power to the emperor and his followers? What would have happened if he had positively responded to the will of fighting of the majority of his subordinate samurai? Or if he had kept his honor himself supporting a conviction that a samurai never yields? Undoubtedly there would have broken a civil war with the participation of foreign empires wanting to insure their influences after the war. And then – after the bloody civil war – could Japan develop so dynamically, as it did in the end of the 19th century and later? Such questions come to the mind of the reader of Shiba Ryōtarō's novels ⁹, and of the viewer of the river drama about "The Last Shogun" when they discover the facts concealed or disregarded in the official history of the Meiji and Taishō periods, as well as the beginning of the Shōwa era (until 1945).

When we watch a compelling story about the collapse of the old system, we are ready to believe that Yoshinobu, the last shogun, belongs to those figures of the 19th century who accomplished something impossible. Similarly to his great ancestor Ieyasu, who had been able to establish such political and administrative mechanism that insured stability of the country for the upcoming centuries, he – the fifteenth shogun Yoshinobu – was as wise, because he knew in which moment to give away his power. He realized that the mechanism of shogunate had already worn and now required radical changes.

At that time the line of political division ran between the fighters for a new order in the country, guaranteed by restoring the emperor's power, and the followers of shogun. The warriors supported those values which were impersonated in the emperor. The series,

⁹ Shiba Ryotaro, *Saigo no shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu*, Bungei Shunju, Tokyo 1997.

on the other hand, shapes a vision of history in which a positive role of the last shogun of the Tokugawa dynasty is discovered, though the dynasty was hated in the mid-19th century by the major part of society.

We must recall here the fact which was readily excluded from official histories, namely the way *Yoshinobu* acted after receiving the title of a shogun in 1866, when he immediately began to reform the machinery of state using the theories imported from the West. He could have succeeded and modernized the old system of power by adjusting it to new challenges if he had ruled for several more years. But the opponents of the old regime, namely the leaders of the south-western clans, especially *Satsuma* and *Chōshū*, were afraid of the “restoration of the *Tokugawas*”. It was their young activists who strove for changing the system of power and for taking over. They could not let the restoration of the emperor’s rule and simultaneous introduction of the elements of Western political system and Western technology be done under the reign of the *Tokugawas*. Hence they commenced activities which provoked the war. Fortunately for the Japanese, the war was short-lasting, because *Yoshinobu* in the right time handed the instruments of power over to the emperor.

In the river drama “The Last Shogun” an important role is played by the author’s polemics with the black-and-white vision of Japan’s transformation in the latter part of the 19th century, a polemics intellectually bringing to life the layers of facts previously discarded to the garbage of history (following the loyalists’ victory). Namely in the old, mythologized vision of that period’s history the good party was represented by the emperor and those who stood by his side. Thus these were the activists who established the government, for which the emperor became a saint icon, the centre of power and morality, a god-man, in whose name the attitudes of students and soldiers were shaped. *Shiba Ryōtarō* presented the last shogun (*Yoshinobu*) in a new and brighter light, though he had belonged to the detested *ancien regime*. Nevertheless he depicted him as a participant of the modernization process of Japan, thus bringing him to the light which beamed from the only source, that is from the idea of the emperor.

The process of reviving the memory of the *Tokugawa* shoguns had begun earlier: positive military rulers were depicted in such river dramas as *Tokugawa Ieyasu* (aired in 1983), which was a serial about the first shogun of the Tokugawa dynasty seen as a creator of order in the modern state. Subsequently the eighth shogun – a ruler with reforming aspirations – was presented in the series “The Eighth Shogun Yoshimune” (aired in 1995). The thirty-ninth river drama entitled “The Mallow or Three Tokugawa Generations” (2000) is a huge epic devoted to the era of the first three shoguns – creators of the modern political structures and national ideology.

Conclusion

1. The above mentioned facts may mean that since the 1980s the river dramas have been dominated by the vision of history created by the *Tokugawa* shoguns as rather

positive and powerful rulers, who can become good role models even for the managers of companies. And more importantly, by watching serials about them, the viewers realized that the country in which they live was shaped precisely in the 17th and 18th centuries, that is in the Tokugawa epoch, known also as Edo. Owing to this the sense of foreignness towards that epoch, which has been shaped since the Restoration of Meiji, gives way to the customs and ideas created at that time and hence to discovering the new identity.

2. This view of shoguns has not been changed by the latest series “Duchess Atsu-hime” (2008), in which the narrator is situated alternately – in the Satsuma clan on the island of Kyushu or in the mansion of the wives and widows of shoguns, that is in the Edo Castle in the 1850s and 1860s.

3. There exists another trend in viewing the modern history. It is exhibited in dramas and it is not in conflict with the exhibition of the samurai era’s rulers. What is more, it confirms interest in that epoch. It is a vision, in which the common samurai are shifted to the forefront and idealized in “the treasury of the faithful vassals”, that is, in the legend of the 47 loyal samurai from Akō province.

4. The third trend comes from the late Middle Ages – from the time of fighting for the unification of Japan divided into independent provinces, and here the protagonists are Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (16th century).

5. It is worth noticing that there are no river dramas about the earliest epochs, namely Nara (8th century.), and only very few refer to a relatively peaceful period of Heian (9th–12th centuries).

Additional References

1. Video and DVD recordings of the following river dramas: *Taiheiki*, *Nobunaga*, *Ryūkyū no kaze*, *Genroku ryōran*, *Aoi Tokugawa sandai*, *Yoshitsune*, *Kōmyōgatsuji*, *Atsu-hime*.

2. Internet sources on NHK *taiga drama* in Japanese:

<http://ja.wikipedia.org>.

http://www.nhk-book.co.jp/tv_r/taiga

Nihon no terebi drama ichiran. Nendaibetsu (Wikipedia)

Terebi drama deeta beesu (<http://www.tvdrama-db.com>)

3. List of the Japanese television dramas:

/1/ *Hana no shōgai* (Life of Flowers), 1963; /2/ *Akō rōshi* (The 47 Ronin), 1964; /3/ *Taikōki* (*Toyotomi Hideyoshi*); /4/ *Minamoto no Yoshitsune*, 1966; /5/ *San shimai* (Three Sisters), 1967; /6/ *Ryōma ga yuku* (*Here Comes Ryōma*), 1968; /7/ *Ten to chi to* (Heaven and Earth – Uesugi Kenshin), 1969; /8/ *Momi no ki wa nokotta* (The Fir Tree Remains), 1970; /9/ *Haru no sakamichi* (Spring Hill), 1971; /10/ *Shin Heike monogatari* (The New Tale of Heike), 1972; /11/ *Kunitori monogatari* (Saitō Dōsan, Oda Nobunaga, Akechi Mitsuhide), 1973; /12/ *Katsu Kaishū*, 1974; /13/ *Genroku Taiheiki* (Oishi Yoshio, Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu...), 1975; /14/ *Kaze to kumo to niji to* (Wind, Cloud and Rainbow; Heian Period Taira no Masakado), 1976; /15/ *Kashin* (Gods of Flower, Chōshū han: Ōmura Masajirō, Yoshida Shōin, Takasugi Shinsaku, Philipp von Siebold’s daughter Ine), 1977; /16/ *Ōgon no hibi* (Golden Days – merchant Sukezaemon of Luzon), 1978; /17/ *Kusa moeru* (Burning Grass, Hōjō Masako), 1979; /18/ *Shishi no jidai* (Lion’s Period; bakumatsu, young man from Satsuma and Aizu meet in Paris), 1980; /19/ *Onna Taikōki* (Women’s Taikōki,

Nene, the wife of Toyotomi Hideyoshi), 1981; /20/ *Tōge no gunzō* (A Group from Above the Precipe, the 47 ronin), 1982; /21/ *Tokugawa Ieyasu*, 1983; /22/ *Sanga moyu*, A nisei family during WWII) 1984; /23/ *Haru no nami/hajū* (Waves in Spring), 1985; /24/ *Inochi* (Life, a woman's doctor after WWII), 1984; /25/ *Dokuganryū Masamune* (One Eye Dragon Masamune), 1987; /26/ *Takeda Shingen*, 1988; /27/ *Kasuga no Tsubone* (Lady of Kasuga, influential nurse of the shogun Iemitsu), 1989; /28/ *Tobu ga gotoku* (Like Flying, Saigō Takamori, Ōkubo Tadahiro, 1990; /29/ *Taiheiki* (Chronicle of the Great Peace, Ashikaga Takauji), 1991; /30/ *Nobunaga, King of Zipangu*, 1992; /31/ *Ryūkyū no kaze* (Winds over Ryūkyū, time of Satsuma invasion), 1993; /32/ *Homura tatsu* (Rising Flames, four generation of the Fujiwara family of Hiraizumi in Mutsu), 1993/1994; /33/ *Hana no ran* (Disturbance Among Flowers; Hino Tomiko, wife of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa, Ōnin War), 1994; /34/ *Hachidai shogun Yoshimune* (The Eighth Shōgun Yoshimune), 1995; /35/ *Hideyoshi*, 1996; /36/ *Mōri Motonari*, 1997; /37/ *Tokugawa Yoshinobu*, 1998; /38/ *Genroku ryōran* (The Splendor and the Frenzy of the Genroku Era- The 47 Ronin), 1999; /39/ *Aoi Tokugawa sandai* (Three Generations of the Hollyhock [the Tokugawa crest]) 2000; /40/ *Hōjō Tokimune*, 2001; /41/ *Toshiie to Matsu* (Toshiie and Matsu – Maeda Toshiie and his wife Matsu), 2002; /42/ *Musashi*, 2003; /43/ *Shinsengumi* ('group of new choice'), 2004; /44/ *Yoshitsune*, 2005; /45/ *Kōmyōgatsuji* /Kōmyō ga tsuji (Crossroads of Glory), 2006; /46/ *Fūrin kasan* ('Wind, forest, fire, mountain', Takeda Shingen's strategists Yamamoto Kansuke), 2007; /47/ *Atsu-hime*, 2008, /48/ *Ten – chi – jin* (The Heavens – The Earth – A Man), 2009.