

What about Matsui, Aseki and Keikai Junsekikan and Yoko Junsekiken's book *Bonsan hyakkei zudai* from 1785?

Copilot said:

Copilot

Bonsan Hyakkei Zudai / *Bonsan Hyakkeizu* (盆山百景図, 1785)—associated with **Matsui Aiseki (artist), Junsekiken Keikai, and Junsekiken Yōkō (editors/authors)**—is one of the **most important late-Edo bonsan manuals**, and in many ways a *more developed and systematic successor* to works like *Bonsan Ippōshō*.

Here's a clear breakdown of what it is and why it matters.

Basic facts

- **Title:** 盆山百景図 (*Bonsan Hyakkeizu*) — “Illustrations of One Hundred Bonsan Landscapes”
- **Date:** Preface dated 1785 (Tenmei 5)mfa
- **Authors/editors:**
 - **Junsekiken Keikai (順石軒馨海)**
 - **Junsekiken Yōkō (順石軒瑤江)**waseda
- **Illustrator:**
 - **Matsui Aiseki (松井愛石)**britishmuseum
- **Format:**
 - Woodblock-printed illustrated book
 - Typically **two volumes (or more in later editions)**britishmuseum

What the book contains

1. “One hundred views” format

As the name suggests:

- The book presents **around 100 model bonsan compositions**
- Each is a **distinct scenic design**

This follows a wider Edo cultural pattern:

- “Hyakkei” (百景, “100 views”) books were common in art and travel culture (e.g., landscape prints like *Fugaku Hyakkei*)

👉 Meaning:

It treats bonsan as a **catalog of archetypal scenic motifs**

2. Fully illustrated design plates

- Each composition is rendered in **detailed line drawings**
- Focus on:
 - **rock formations (mountains)**
 - placement of **trees and vegetation**
 - spatial balance

These are:

- Not just decorative images
- But **prescriptive visual models** for practitioners

✅ This is similar to:

- Painting manuals
 - Garden design pattern books
-

3. Emphasis on rock-centered landscapes

Like other Edo bonsan works:

- The compositions strongly emphasize:
 - **stones as mountain forms**

- plants as supporting elements

This aligns with:

- the broader tradition of **bonkei / bonsan / bonseki**
- where the goal is recreating **natural scenery in miniature**

How it differs from *Bonsan Ippōshō* (1774)

The two books are close in time, but *Bonsan Hyakkeizu* is clearly **more developed and systematic**.

◆ 1. Scale and ambition

- *Ippōshō*: smaller, more like a **manual or notes**
- *Hyakkeizu*: a **large, structured visual corpus (100 designs)**

👉 It moves from:

“examples” → “comprehensive design vocabulary”

◆ 2. Formalization of models

- *Ippōshō*: relatively loose composition guidance
- *Hyakkeizu*: **codified archetypes of landscape design**

✅ This suggests:

- Bonsan had reached a stage where:
 - styles could be **categorized**
 - compositions could be **replicated systematically**

◆ 3. Artistic sophistication

- The involvement of **named illustrator Matsui Aiseki** shows:
 - a higher level of **artistic production**
- The book functions as:
 - both a **horticultural reference**
 - and a **visual art object**

What it shows about bonsai's evolution

This book captures a **critical moment in late Edo culture**.

1. Mature bonsan culture

By 1785:

- Bonsan is no longer experimental
- It's a **fully developed popular art form**
- There is:
 - a **market for books**
 - a shared visual language

👉 The existence of a “100 views” book proves:

Bonsan had a **stable canon of forms**

2. Strong connection to broader visual culture

The format parallels:

- Ukiyo-e landscape series
- Illustrated travel books

✅ Meaning:

- Bonsan is part of a **broader “landscape imagination” culture**
 - Not just horticulture—it’s **visual storytelling**
-

3. Still firmly pre-bonsai (modern sense)

Crucially:

- This book is still about **landscapes (盆山)**, not individual trees

Compared to later bonsai:

- Trees are:
 - secondary
 - integrated into scenery

👉 This confirms:

Even late Edo “bonsai books” are still fundamentally **bonsan books**

Relationship to later bonsai (Meiji and beyond)

Bonsan Hyakkeizu represents the **peak of the old paradigm**.

Edo model (this book)

- Landscape scenes
- Rock-centered compositions
- Learn by copying canonical designs

Meiji transformation

- Shift to:

- individual trees (盆栽)
- technical cultivation
- naturalistic forms

👉 So:

Hyakkeizu is the **end point of bonsan culture**, just before the pivot to modern bonsai



Why this book matters

Historically, it's one of the most important pre-modern bonsai texts because it:

- Preserves **fully developed bonsan aesthetics**
- Shows the **standard repertoire of Edo compositions**
- Demonstrates how the art was **taught visually**
- Marks the moment just before bonsai becomes:
 - tree-focused
 - technical
 - professionalized



In one sentence

Bonsan Hyakkeizu (1785) is a comprehensive illustrated catalog of 100 canonical bonsan landscapes—representing the mature, highly codified form of Edo-period miniature landscape art just before the emergence of modern bonsai.



Results from a few moments of research on MS Copilot, 05/27/26 p.m.